Sonja's Story:

Sonja van der Horst was still a teen when the Nazis invaded Poland, executed her father and sister, sent her mother to die at a concentration camp, and began the systematic elimination of 18,000 Jews in her hometown. She survived the Holocaust by assuming false identities and working under Nazi watch in German labor camps.

After the war, Sonja and her husband, Johannes (Hans) van der Horst, immigrated to the United States and spent their lives supporting organizations that promote public education, civil rights, religious freedom and Jewish culture. Hans, a chemical engineer who was fluent in seven languages, died in 1978.

Last fall, Sonja, nearly 82, learned that she had a brain tumor. It was time to decide what more she could do with the Holocaust reparation funds she had collected and invested since the early 1960s. She wanted to establish a distinguished professorship at Carolina to be filled by an expert in Jewish history and culture, enhancing knowledge of the culture that Hitler had tried to destroy.

In January, as Sonja’s illness was advancing, her grown children acted quickly to fulfill her wish. Charles van der Horst, a professor of medicine at Carolina; Roger van der Horst, an education editor at The News and Observer in Raleigh; alumna Jacqueline van der Horst Sergent ’82 MPH, a health promotion coordinator at the Granville Vance District Health Department in Oxford, N.C.; and Tatjana Schwendinger, chief administrative judge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in St. Louis, established the JMA and Sonja van der Horst Distinguished Professorship in Jewish Studies in honor of their parents. Sonja van der Horst passed away on March 1.

The family’s gift qualifies for matching funds from the state endowment trust funds. UNC’s College of Arts and Sciences will conduct a search to fill the position with a scholar whose teaching and research will contribute to the work of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

“My parents were always interested in public education and religious and racial tolerance,” said Charles van der Horst. “It is fitting to honor them through this distinguished professorship at the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, where the teaching and study of Jewish history and culture is flourishing at a leading public university committed to providing a first-rate education to a diverse student body.”

“We’re deeply moved that the family has chosen to honor Hans and Sonja van der Horst in this manner,” said Jonathan Hess, director of the Center. “Close to 1,000 undergraduates enroll in Jewish Studies courses at Carolina each year, and student interest in Jewish history and culture is clearly on the rise. The van der Horst Professorship will enable us to recruit another leader in the field to teach at UNC, bringing us closer to our goal of creating a Jewish Studies program with national prominence.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
With more than 1,200 Carolina undergraduates enrolled in Jewish Studies courses this year, our faculty has been busy in the classroom. This semester alone we are offering two small seminars for first-year students, large lecture courses on the archaeology of ancient Israel, modern Judaism, and the history of the Holocaust, and more specialized courses for upper-level students on the Arab-Israeli wars, Jewish women in America, and on the representation of Jews in Russian and Polish literature. Enrollment in Biblical and Modern Hebrew courses is growing steadily, and we are proud of the broad impact we are having on undergraduate education at Carolina.

Inspired by what happens in classrooms in Chapel Hill, our students are also pursuing Jewish Studies abroad, in Europe, Israel, the Czech Republic and Australia. This summer Jodi Magness, the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism, will welcome a group of Carolina students on her archaeological excavations to Yotvata, Israel, which students can participate in for academic credit. When our faculty members are asked why Carolina students take such an interest in our courses, they typically respond that Jewish Studies is by its very nature both global and interdisciplinary—in short, the model of an undergraduate liberal arts experience for the 21st century.

In this issue of News from the Center, you’ll experience what goes on in Jewish Studies classrooms at Carolina and learn about exciting major gifts that will have a profound impact on the future of Jewish Studies at UNC. You’ll also read about our thriving outreach programs on campus. As always, current information about Center events can be found at our website, ccjs.unc.edu. Please check our web page for information about the Uhlman Family Seminar in Jewish Studies, our continuing education weekend seminar, held annually in the fall. The Center sees its mission as serving the Carolina community in the broadest possible sense, and I invite you to participate.

The Center has made enormous strides in the last three years. None of this would have been possible without the passion and dedication of our faculty, the vision and commitment of our administrators, and the inspiration and support of UNC’s committed alumni and friends. We at the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies are grateful for the enthusiasm and energy that you bring to our endeavors. As always, please feel free to get in touch with me directly should you wish to learn more about the Center.

A word from Eli N. Evans, ’58, Advisory Board Chair

The last few years of our efforts have been exciting, and we’re humbled by the outpouring of generous support of UNC alumni and friends. The origins of this most recent gift creating the JMA and Sonja van der Horst chair are profoundly moving and create a deep responsibility for all of us. The donors understood that UNC is a “university of the people” that reaches into every community in the state, and we accept the gift with that vision.

In combination with other recent endowed chairs given by Leonard and Tobee Kaplan, Moses and Hannah Malkin, and the Crown family, the campaign is already transformative for undergraduate education and outreach at Carolina. The University is in a position to offer an even deeper story of the Jewish journey across history and the contributions of its teachings and heritage to civilization as a whole.
Center receives $350,000 gift from Hannah and Moses Malkin, ’41

Malkin endowment will establish professorship in Jewish history and culture

When Moses ’41 and Hannah ’41 Malkin read a copy of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies’ brochure, they were impressed with the story it told. So much so that it spurred them to make a gift to the College of Arts and Sciences to create a term professorship.

In the brochure, they read about the Center’s goals to create an academic program second to none and to nurture a community of bright, motivated students and faculty engaged in the study of a complex and resilient culture and community. And they also saw something else: photos of people Hannah had been connected with early in life.

“When we got that brochure, and we recognized pictures of an uncle and several cousins as well as childhood neighbors, all of whom were UNC students, we began to think of the long connections our family had with the University,” Hannah said. “The brochure told us how the program was set up; it really captivated us, and we are very happy that we are able to do this.”

They since have met with Jonathan Hess, director of the Center. He told them how the Center, founded just three years ago, sees itself as the crossroads of instruction and research in a field that is integral to the study of civilization, in all its tragedies and achievements.

The result is the Moses M. and Hannah L. Malkin Distinguished Professorship Fund in Jewish Studies. The Malkins contributed $350,000 toward the professorship, and the University has applied for matching funds from the state’s Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund, which will eventually bring the endowment of the professorship to $500,000.

The Malkin term professorship will be awarded to a deserving faculty member in the College who teaches regularly in the Jewish Studies program and whose teaching and scholarship are distinguished.

“We’re all enormously grateful to the Malkins for their vision and commitment to the future development of Jewish Studies at Carolina,” said William L. Andrews, E. Maynard Adams Professor of English and Senior Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences. “Faculty form the backbone of the Center, and the Malkins’ generosity will make a tremendous difference in our ability to support Carolina faculty teaching and doing research in Jewish Studies.”

The Malkins, who divide their time between homes in Florida and Massachusetts, cherish their experiences at Carolina.

“You first university is like your first love,” Moses said. “My studies at Chapel Hill were very meaningful to me.”

“Attending UNC was a great experience,” Hannah said. “It had an enormous influence on our lives; it helped shape the direction of our lives. I am a native North Carolinian; I love the state and the University. It was a great university then, and I think it is an even greater university today.”

Did you miss one of our Jewish Studies lectures on campus? You can watch them online! Visit our public events page, www.unc.edu/ccjs/events.html, and follow the link to Jewish Sparks.
New lectureship focuses on the Jewish South

This spring the Center launched its first annual Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lecture on the Jewish Experience in the American South, thanks to a $125,000 endowment gift from Alan and Gail Fields. Alan Fields, '60, MBA, '65, is a member of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies advisory board.

Gail Fields was one of the first Jewish teachers in Durham, North Carolina. The gift honors Gail Fields' parents, long-time residents of Williamston, North Carolina. Gail’s father, Irving Margolis, co-owned and ran a clothing business for 52 years, and her mother, Sylvia Margolis was the first Jewish teacher in the Williamston, North Carolina school system. Because of their deep connections to the Jewish South, the family wanted to create an annual lecture that would focus on the southern Jewish experience.

“The study of the Jewish South—a region once ignored by historians—is now recognized as an area of cutting edge scholarship and research,” said Marcie Cohen Ferris, associate director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and author of Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South. “The Sylvia and Irving Margolis lectureship allows a new generation of scholars to explore women’s history, black/Jewish relations, the role of politics and economic life, popular and material culture, and changes wrought by industrialization and urbanization in the twentieth century.”

This year’s inaugural Irving and Sylvia Margolis speaker was Joyce Antler, the Samuel Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture at Brandeis University. In a lecture entitled “Passing the Torch of Idealism: Gertrude Weil as Southern Jewish Citizen-Activist,” she explored the life and career of Gertrude Weil, a Goldsboro, North Carolina native who exemplified the progressive Jewish tradition in the American South. Antler was introduced by Eli N. Evans, UNC class of 1958, and chair of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies advisory board.

All lectures are free and open to the public. For more information about our annual lecture series, see ccjs.unc.edu.

Sonja van der Horst was born Chaya Eichenbaum Teichholz on December 16, 1923 in Tarnopol, Poland. The Nazis entered the town on July 2, 1941 and killed 5,000 Jews in one week alone. After her family was destroyed, Chaya hid under a series of false identities, the last being Sonja Tarasowa. She eventually boarded a train carrying non-Jewish workers to labor sites in Germany, where she worked at a coal mine, a lumber yard and a farm. At the end of the war she served as a translator for the English forces.

Johannes Martinus Arnold van der Horst was born Sept. 22, 1918 in the Netherlands. He fought the Nazis in the Dutch Army and served as a scout with the U.S. armed forces invasion of southern France in 1944. At the end of the war, he worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and met Sonja when he took Russian lessons from her.

In the summer of 1945 the Soviets began the forced repatriation of displaced persons to their countries of origin. English friends agreed to hide Sonja. When she told Hans her story, he asked her to marry him.

Sonja and Hans were wed in the Netherlands that year and left for the United States in 1952, eventually settling in Olean, New York.

To learn more about Sonja and Hans van der Horst see www.sonjavanderhorst.org.

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THE STUDY OF THE JEWISH SOUTH...IS NOW RECOGNIZED AS AN AREA OF CUTTING EDGE SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH
An outstanding scholar and world-renowned expert in the field of Israeli history is visiting Carolina this spring, and he brings more than just stellar academic credentials to the classroom. Born and raised in Israel, Yoav Gelber has published nearly twenty books on the history of Israel and served as a career officer in the Israel Defense Forces.

“I believe that military service, participation in war and certainly combat experience instill a singular view of military history,” said Gelber, and his military experience informs both his scholarship and teaching.

His course, “Arab-Israeli Wars, 1948-1982,” is a survey of Jewish-Palestinian encounters and Jewish-Arab wars in the 20th century. Students in the course explore the roots and causes of contemporary controversial issues between Israel and the Palestinians and/or the Arab states, and the difficulties in finding a satisfactory solution to this ongoing confrontation.

“I do not know anyone else with such broad knowledge and an ability to weave the different pieces of information together so well and to offer insightful and comprehensive explanations to the course of Israeli history,” said Yaakov Ariel, professor of religious studies at UNC. “I am particularly happy that Gelber is here at UNC this semester sharing his knowledge with students and faculty.”

Yoav Gelber is chair of the department of the Land of Israel Studies and head of the Herzl Institute for Research and Study of Zionism, at Haifa University, in Israel. He was brought to Chapel Hill by three units on campus: Jewish Studies; Peace, War, and Defense; and International Studies.

For more information about Jewish Studies courses offered at Carolina, go to www.unc.edu/ccjs/courses.html

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Student Profile: Sharon Lintz ’06

When Sharon Lintz was a high school junior in Charlotte, she began the college search, but she was conflicted. On one hand, attending Charlotte’s Hebrew High, she had always been part of a small, closely-knit Jewish community, and she hoped to attend a college that offered the same kind of experience. On the other hand, ever since she was a little girl she dreamed of attending UNC-Chapel Hill.

When the time came to commit to a university, Lintz seriously considered several other schools. “Ultimately,” Lintz says, “I realized that UNC has a magnificent Hillel and exactly the warm community I was looking for.”

Since arriving on campus, Lintz has been involved in many aspects of Jewish life. She serves on the Hillel student board, on the Greek Chai committee (which creates programming for Jewish students involved in Greek life), and this year she was invited to serve on the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies advisory board.

“It has been such a wonderful experience to serve on the advisory board,” says Lintz. “I can really see how beneficial the Jewish Studies program is to non-Jewish students and to the entire community at large.”

Lintz’s social and academic immersion in Jewish Studies at Carolina has created new connections with a truly global reach: “I took archaeology classes with Jodi Magness and then had the opportunity to visit historical sites in Israel —I could truly envision the kings and battles as I stood there. And I took courses with Professor Browning who amazed me every day with his lectures. I knew he was a noted scholar, but when I visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and my tour guide frequently referred to the work of Chris Browning I realized how fortunate I was to have a lecturer so highly revered in his field.”

A recent winner of UNC’s prestigious Frances L. Phillips Travel Scholarship, Lintz will have the opportunity to design her own trip abroad this summer. “I’ll travel to Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to explore the Holocaust, and both past and present Eastern European Jewry,” said Lintz. “I will spend three months visiting concentration camps, museums, memorials, synagogues, and Jewish quarters, absorbing and connecting with lost family connections.”

Lintz’s experiences at Carolina have been all that she hoped for, and more: “I absolutely made the right choice in attending Carolina!”

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Yoav Gelber
Deborah Lipstadt headlines lecture series

In a 2000 London courtroom, Deborah Lipstadt, an internationally renowned Holocaust scholar, defeated David Irving, a Holocaust denier and white supremacist who deliberately altered historical evidence in order to support his claims that the Holocaust never happened. Lipstadt proved that Irving and the claims by deniers of the Holocaust were distortions of history.

This April Lipstadt will visit the Carolina campus to discuss her involvement in the libel case that was front page news across the world. Her lecture, “History on Trial: My Day in Court with the World’s Leading Holocaust Denier,” will speak to a variety of groups. Christopher Browning, Frank Porter Graham professor of history at UNC, and a world expert on the Holocaust, has invited Lipstadt to speak to the more than 150 undergraduates in his course, “The History of the Holocaust.”

“Lipstadt has been a major figure in examining how various elements in society have reacted to and understood the Holocaust,” said Browning.

Lipstadt will also give a special presentation at the School of Social Work. Jack M. Richman, dean of the School of Social Work, is excited about Lipstadt’s visit: “Dr. Lipstadt’s lecture will address the present global realities of growing anti-Semitism, the multi-generational impact of the Holocaust on individuals and families, and the politics of Holocaust denial—all concerns that social work practitioners need to understand in terms of diversity.”

Lipstadt’s public lecture will be at 7:30 pm on April 10 in the Tate-Turner-Kuralt auditorium. For more information, visit www.unc.edu/ccjs/events.html.

In addition to Lipstadt, the Center’s spring speaker series included:

- Samantha Baskind, “Raphael Soyer and the Search for Modern Art”
- Paula Hyman, Kaplan-Brauer Lecture on the Contribution of Judaism to Civilization, “Antisemitism and Jewish Identity in Europe Around 1900”
  *This lecture was cancelled due to weather — to be rescheduled in fall 2006.*
- Joyce Antler, Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lecture on the Jewish Experience in the American South, “Passing the ‘Torch of Idealism’: Gertrude Weil as Southern Jewish Citizen-Activist”
- Mark Slobin, “Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World”

These lectures are co-sponsored by a variety of units on campus, including the Department of Art, the Center for the Study of the American South, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, the Department of Music, the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies, the School of Social Work, the Department of History, the Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense, and North Carolina Hillel.

For the most up-to-date information about our outreach efforts, consult ccjs.unc.edu.

Outreach Efforts Across North Carolina

One of the primary goals of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies is to provide educational outreach programs that bring the excellence of our academic program to all North Carolinians.

The Center’s North Carolina Jewish Studies Lecture Series, funded by a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation in honor of Eli N. Evans, ’58, makes Carolina faculty available to speak throughout the state at no charge, to Jewish and non-Jewish institutions, to secular and interfaith groups.

For more information, visit www.unc.edu/ccjs/lecture.html or contact the Center’s associate director, Marcie Cohen Ferris, at 919.843.9881 or ferrism@email.unc.edu.
UNC provides free online source of information on Southern Jewish History

A new website created by UNC-Chapel Hill opens a digital window on Jewish history and life in the American South.

“A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life” chronicles the story of southern Jewish settlers and their descendants from the late 1600s through the 21st century.

“A Portion of the People” is a long-anticipated educational tool for those interested in American Jewish history,” said Marcie Ferris, associate director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

“It was important to preserve ’A Portion of the People’ for future generations of scholars and students of the American experience,” Ferris said. “Essentially, project scholars took the exhibit and put it online.”

The free site, www.lib.unc.edu/apop, recounts generations of history with portraits, maps, historical documents, ritual books and objects. Visitors can listen to interviews featuring voices from the past and read transcripts of the tales.

“Scrambled eggs and lox — that’s what I’d have every morning — with grits,” says Sandra Garfinkel Shapiro, a source in one of the site’s audio casts. Shapiro, a South Carolinian born in 1935, refers to the traditional Jewish dish of smoked salmon. “You’d say it’s Southern-Yiddish,” she says.

Collaboration among representatives of UNC’s Davis Library, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, the McKissick Museum and Dr. Dale Rosengarten of the Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston, who curated the exhibit, brought about the new UNC website.

Visit the website for A Portion of the People at www.lib.unc.edu/apop.

In 1825, Jews constituted a sufficient portion of Charleston’s population to warrant a page identifying Jewish holidays in the almanac section of the city’s Directory and Stranger’s Guide. Special Collections, College of Charleston Library.

At the dedication ceremony for the new building for Beth Elohim in March 1841, Beth Elohim’s hazzan, Gustavus Poznanski, celebrated the glories of America and proclaimed: “This synagogue is our temple, this city our Jerusalem, this happy land our Palestine, and as our fathers defended with their lives that temple, that city and that land, so will their sons defend this temple, this city, and this land.” Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, exterior; Photograph by Max Furchgott, ca. 1950; Jewish Heritage Collection, College of Charleston Library.

Caroline Agnes Moïse Lopez, pictured here, was the granddaughter of Charleston-born painter Theodore Sidney Moïse. In 1882, Caroline Moïse married Julian Lee Lopez, son of David Lopez, builder of the second sanctuary for Charleston’s Beth Elohim. Private Collection.
A Closing Word

With searches underway for three new faculty who will teach in Jewish Studies, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies is quickly establishing itself as a regional and national flagship for the study of Jewish history, culture and thought. Of course, this would not have been possible without the generous support we have received from friends and alumni like you. Your commitment to helping students, scholars, and the wider community achieve a deeper understanding of Judaism and its rich heritage has, in three short years, made the future of our program very bright indeed.

You may already have heard that I was recently asked by Chancellor Moeser to assume new responsibilities as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for the entire Chapel Hill campus, beginning this summer. While I will miss working directly with the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and its many friends and supporters, in my new role I will continue to watch with great interest and pride the progress that our Jewish Studies program is making. I will also work with the Chancellor to ensure a smooth transition as the university seeks a new dean for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Thank you again for your generous support of the Center. If you have not already done so, I hope that you will consider renewing your support before the close of the University’s fiscal year on June 30. Gifts at all levels assist us in our efforts to ensure the continued excellence of the Jewish Studies program. You can use the enclosed envelope, make a gift online at ccjs.unc.edu, or, if you have questions about the ways to make endowment and/or planned gifts, you can contact Kate Brown at the Arts & Sciences Foundation, (919) 843-9853.

Sincerely,
Bernadette Gray-Little
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Gifts to the College of Arts & Sciences are recognized in the following societies:

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