

News from the center

CAROLINA CENTER for JEWISH STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL • SPRING 2008 • CCJS.UNC.EDU

celebrating five years 2003–2008

This spring, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies reaches the five year milestone!

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR TOP FIVE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ⑤ an active speakers' bureau that allows our faculty to visit community groups throughout North Carolina;
- ④ generous friends that provide meaningful support for our academic endeavors and public programs;
- ③ nearly 50 entertaining and enlightening lectures, all free and open to the public;
- ② two new academic minors and an ever-increasing number of Carolina students who take courses in Jewish Studies;
- ① the momentum to ensure that the next five years are even more productive and relevant for both the campus community and the general public.

Professorship named

David M. Rubenstein provides \$500,000 to establish a professorship in the name of Stuart Eizenstat '64

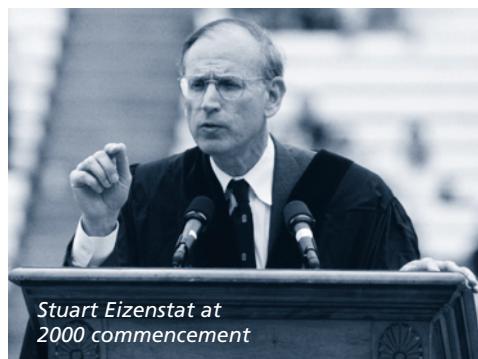
A \$1.5 million distinguished professorship in Jewish studies will be named in honor of alumnus Stuart E. Eizenstat '64, who served as the lead negotiator for Holocaust reparation agreements and deputy secretary of the treasury during the Clinton administration.

David M. Rubenstein, co-founder and managing director of The Carlyle Group in Washington, D.C., has pledged \$500,000 to help establish the professorship.

"Stu's service to our country and to the Jewish community are without parallel," said Rubenstein. "I had the privilege of working with him for four years and I have observed his dedication to humanity. It's appropriate that he be recognized in this way by the University he loves and the community he has served so well."

The Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat Distinguished Professorship in Jewish History and Culture will be in the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in UNC's College of Arts and Sciences. In addition to the Rubenstein gift, the professorship is being funded by additional contributions totaling over \$500,000 from many private donors, and it will be eligible for \$500,000 in matching funds from the N.C. Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund. When the chair's endowment is fully funded, the College will search for a rising scholar in modern Jewish history to fill the position.

"I am humbled and deeply grateful that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which has played such a formative role in my life, would honor me with this distinguished professorship," Eizenstat said. "The remarkable gift by my former White House colleague and friend David Rubenstein has catalyzed a nationwide and indeed



Stuart Eizenstat at 2000 commencement

worldwide outpouring of support from my friends. I have always combined an active involvement in the secular and political world with a deep engagement and commitment to strengthen the Jewish community in the U.S. and around the world. This professorship will bring both aspects of my career together by deepening awareness of the contributions of Jewish history and culture to the world and to the Jewish community itself at the University I love."

Eizenstat helped acquire more than \$8 billion in compensation from European companies for victims of the Holocaust and Nazi era. His book, "Imperfect Justice: Looted Assets, Slave Labor and the Unfinished Business of World War II," tells about securing property restitution, insurance payments and reclamation of looted art and bank accounts. Eizenstat graduated from UNC in 1964 Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude with a degree in political science. He received an honorary degree from the University and was commencement speaker in 2000. He is currently a partner at the Washington, D.C. law firm of Covington and Burling LLP. Eizenstat also serves on the Advisory Board for the Center.



from the director's desk

Looking Ahead to the Next Five Years

Dr. Jonathan M. Hess

Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies

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When interacting with the 100 students in my undergraduate course on Jews in German culture this spring, I'm often drawn to reflect on how vibrant our program in Jewish Studies has become in such a short time. This spring, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies celebrates its fifth anniversary, and we have plenty to be proud of. We've created a program in Modern Hebrew from scratch and secured funding for seven new faculty positions, three of which we've already filled with dynamic teacher-scholars in Jewish Studies. Thousands of undergraduates from the most diverse backgrounds now take Jewish Studies courses as part of the exemplary liberal arts education that the College of Arts and Sciences offers its students.

Nothing that we do would be possible without the hard work of our faculty, the enthusiasm of our students, the support of the College and the generosity of Carolina alumni and friends. We'd like to celebrate our fifth anniversary by extending a special thank-you to all our supporters.

We'd also like to invite you all to be a part of what lies in store for the Center in the next five

years. In the past five years, our public programming has brought thousands of people onto campus and sent our faculty to speak to diverse audiences across the state. Our public events program for the coming year promises to be even more dynamic. Please stay on the lookout in the coming months for more information about our community lectures, continuing education efforts and outreach initiatives across the state.

As our faculty continues to grow in the next five years, we will be able to offer the next generation of Carolina students even more opportunities to study Jewish history, culture and thought in depth. In the years ahead, we will be moving closer to our goal of creating a comprehensive undergraduate program, complete with a B.A. in Jewish Studies. But Jewish Studies is hardly just for those students who elect to major or minor. As an interdisciplinary program with courses in departments across the humanities and social sciences, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has a dramatic influence on the undergraduate experience of Carolina students as a whole.

Please join me in celebrating the Center's fifth anniversary!

The breakfast club – starting the day with Biblical Hebrew

At 8:00 on a rainy morning—a time many of us are just finishing our coffee and getting ready for a new day—a group of students has gathered in a small classroom in the heart of campus. They are flipping through their Bibles, all in search of Judges 2:6. It is the start of the spring semester and they are embarking on their first attempt to read and translate from the Bible.

A student begins reading the passage in a quiet voice, the voice of someone who is just learning a new language. Then their teacher Carrie Duncan, a doctoral student studying ancient Judaism and Mediterranean religions, asks what they all feared, "So who can

translate that first sentence?" She then encourages them, "You already know all the words."

After a short pause, followed by cross referencing with dictionaries and a bit of discussion, they successfully translate the passage: Joshua sent the people away and the Israelites went, each to his own property, to inhabit the land.

"See how exciting this is?," exclaims Duncan. "You can all translate real passages now!" The students all grin and nod in response.

They read on and discuss what the passage says and what they think it means. They sip their coffees, chew their pen caps and

occasionally stretch and yawn. An observer must ask, what compels these students to get up so early to study Biblical Hebrew?

"Hebrew is like a jigsaw puzzle with a missing section. I really like that there are particularly difficult and confusing sentences. I will one day be able to familiarize myself with it enough that I can quickly piece it together, but it will always hold the mystery of the missing pieces. I also like the historical content of the class. We can always draw advice and ideas from those who came before us," said Linnea Olsson, a Classics major, class of 2009.

"For me personally, many of

the books written in the language keep grabbing hold of me. To get a better feeling for them, it only seemed right to learn the language," said Daniel Fox, a Religious Studies major, class of 2010. "Plus, it's all just great fun—I recommend the class 100 percent."

Added John R. Stevenson III, an Economics major, class of 2010, "Biblical Hebrew offers students the capacity to encounter the cultural and religious origins of Judaism and Christianity in a way that translations and commentaries cannot possibly hope to. I believe this is an invaluable course for one's education."

student profile

Diana Gergel '09

Diana Gergel is one of those people who make everyone else look like they're standing still. Her campus involvement would overwhelm most of us—she co-chairs Student Government's Academic Affairs Committee, serves as Peer Advising Program Director for the Office of Undergraduate Research, coordinates the Bina Initiative at Hillel and is the student representative on the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies' Advisory Board.

Her busy schedule does not slow one bit during summer breaks. Last summer, she headed off to Washington, D.C. to work at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. There, she reviewed and chronicled newly-acquired documents. The team's work will be published next year as primary source content for professors teaching the Holocaust.

"This internship was one of the best experiences of my life—I enjoyed every minute. The ability, as an undergraduate, to work so closely with Holocaust scholars and graduate students was a great learning experience," said Gergel. "I felt the importance of the work because it is vital to continue to teach the lessons learned from the Holocaust."

When not working at the museum, she was often found at the Library of Congress working on a research project that was funded by the UNC Office of Undergraduate Research. The focus of her work was the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as related to the



Nuremberg Trials' "Never Again" legacy. This coming summer, Gergel hopes to continue this work in South Africa, interviewing people from the hearings.

"These types of research opportunities, plus knowing that Carolina had a Jewish Studies program and active Hillel, were all important factors in my decision to study here," added Gergel. A History and Political Science major with Modern Hebrew minor, she plans to attend law school after graduation from Carolina in 2009.

news briefs



Spring Lectures

On February 4, Eric Goldstein delivered the Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lectureship on the Jewish Experience in the American South.

Jodi Magness wins teaching award

Jodi Magness, a Jewish studies professor and member of the Center's steering committee, has won the Archaeological Institute of America's Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award. Magness is the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism and she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in early Jewish history, literature, religion and archaeology.



Online Exhibit: Jewish Life at Carolina

The University Libraries has created an online exhibit of Jewish Life at Carolina. Visit the virtual museum at <http://museum.unc.edu/exhibits.html>.

MAKE A GIFT — The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies is dependent on private support for its programs. Please consider making a gift today, either by clipping and sending this coupon with your payment or online via our Web site at ccjs.unc.edu. Thank you.

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Contact Rob Parker at 919-962-6182 or rob.parker@unc.edu if you have any questions.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Now that we've completed our lecture series for this academic year, we are finalizing plans for next year. Some of our speakers and topics for next year include: **Walter Zev Feldman**: Klezmer revival; **Omer Bartov**: the Holocaust; **Stephen Spector**: relations between Jews and evangelical Christians; and **Nora Rubel**: *the Settlement Cookbook*.

More details will be provided in the next edition of this newsletter, on our Web site and via email. If you would like to receive e-mail updates regarding our public events and programs, please send an e-mail to ccjs@unc.edu with "subscribe" in the subject line. In the body of the message, please provide your e-mail address and your postal address.

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event or program.

a closing word

The close of a successful campaign

Among the most important events in the University of North Carolina's recent history is the *Carolina First* Campaign. Over an eight and a half year period concluding last December 31, UNC successfully raised \$2.38 billion, making *Carolina First* the fifth largest among completed campaigns in higher education in the U.S. and the largest to date in the South.

As part of this larger effort, the College of Arts and Sciences raised more than \$387 million, including over \$9 million for the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies. With nine affiliated faculty—not including three new searches underway this year, more than 30 courses, an undergraduate minor, over 1,000 students enrolled annually in courses, and an ambitious public outreach program, the Center's remarkable accomplishments during the past five years provide ample testimony to what private support can achieve on this storied campus.

And, as Jonathan Hess and his colleagues prepare to celebrate the Center's fifth anniversary, our efforts continue to gather momentum. We have plans to launch yet another new faculty search next year for the first Van der Horst



Professor and, as you have already seen in this newsletter, we have recently completed fund raising for the Eizenstat Professorship.

By now, I trust that you are well aware that none of this would have been possible without the consistent and generous support of alumni and friends like you. Gifts at all levels help ensure the Center's continued excellence. My colleagues and I are grateful to you for assisting us in this endeavor.

If you have not yet made a gift, I invite you to do so by the end of our fiscal year on June 30, using the coupon on page 3 or visiting us online at ccjs.unc.edu. If you have questions about the different ways of making a gift, please contact Rob Parker at the Arts & Sciences Foundation at (919) 962-6182.

Sincerely,

Holden Thorp
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences



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celebrating five years
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