

HONORING HIS MEMORY

We're so grateful for the many inquiries about participating in initiatives to honor Jonathan's life, scholarship, and service. To honor Jonathan's commitment to supporting junior scholars and cultivating future faculty leaders, memorial gifts may be made to the **Jonathan M. Hess Career Development Term Assistant Professorship** in the College. The fund will support a term professorship for a tenure-track assistant professor in the fine arts and humanities.

Please visit jewishstudies.unc.edu to make an online gift. Direct questions to Shontel Grumhaus at the Arts & Sciences Foundation: (919) 962-6182 or shontel.grumhaus@unc.edu.

Faculty Showcase Talk – Jonathan gave a short talk during our 15th Anniversary Faculty Showcase on March 25, 2018. To view, visit jewishstudies.unc.edu.

Jonathan M. Hess Symposium: Moments of Enlightenment: German-Jewish interactions from the 18th century to the present. See event details inside.

Jonathan M. Hess: Defining “Jewish Studies the Carolina Way”

Our beloved colleague and friend, and former Director of the Center, **Jonathan M. Hess**, died April 9, 2018. Jonathan led the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies for its first 10 years, transforming a tiny, months-old start-up into a thriving, national leader and surpassing all the program goals that initially seemed so audacious. He channeled his unwavering dedication and strong leadership into a powerful vision for what Jewish Studies at Carolina could, and should, become. For Jonathan, it represented an opportunity to envision an academic program that integrated Jewish Studies into the liberal arts. He defined Jewish studies as an interdisciplinary field that studied the history, culture, and religious traditions of Jews in their interactions with others from the ancient period to the present. A committed educator, Jonathan led efforts to create a Jewish studies major for undergraduates and a certificate in Jewish studies

for graduate students. He personally mentored students and young faculty alike, and his dry sense of humor and honest viewpoints made it easy for others to approach him for ideas and feedback. He was a successful fund raiser, helping build support for endowed faculty chairs, named lectureships and student fellowships that, in turn, made Carolina the fastest growing center for Jewish studies in the nation. Jonathan's connections across the campus and with alumni, friends and the general community have created a lasting base of support that will help sustain the Center in perpetuity. It is difficult for us to imagine the Center's future without Jonathan's input, but we are committed to building on all that he achieved and to ensuring that this Center—that he cared about so deeply—continues to thrive and surpass all expectations.

— *The faculty and staff of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies*

Reflections

A dialogue
between professors
Ruth von Bernuth
and **Yaakov Ariel**

RUTH: Yaakov, do you remember the first time you met Jonathan?

YAAKOV: It was in 1995, long before the Center of Jewish Studies started. Jonathan and I participated together in a Doctoral Dissertation Committee, and I was immensely impressed by Jonathan's charismatic personality. It was immediately evident that he was a deep and intelligent person and at the same time friendly and humane. How about you?

RUTH: I met Jonathan in June 2007 when I came to UNC for the first time. We had coffee outside the Campus Y. We talked less than an hour, I showed him a Yiddish manuscript, which he tried to decipher, and since then I could have not imagined a better supporter and mentor for 10 years. And I know that I am among many others including graduate students and early-career professors. But let's go back to 15 years ago when the Center started. How was it?

YAAKOV: The early years of the Center were special, and I was happy to be part of the team that Jonathan led. There was a sense of mission, of pioneering something new and meaningful.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Wandering students and faculty— and wandering objects too

In March, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies celebrated its 15-year anniversary. At the event, Jonathan Hess remembered how the Center started and what it meant to establish Jewish studies at a public university. He mentioned that the foundation of the Center was one of the remarkable events of the 25 professional years he spent at UNC. We will miss his guidance and cheerful advice for the years to come.

The Center was directed last academic year by Michele Rivkin-Fish and I am very grateful that she guided the Center for the year, including in a time that was difficult for all of us. I would also like to thank Yaakov Ariel, who has served as the associate director of the Center for the past five years. His knowledge in the field of Jewish studies and his balanced views have shaped many of the enterprises the Center undertook, including the Reconsidering Antisemitism conference in 2016.

I would also like to welcome Michael Figueroa as the new associate director of the Center. Mike is a specialist in ethnomusicology—that is the study of music as culture—and he teaches as assistant professor in the department of music.

As I write this column, we have students and faculty members around the world doing research and gaining incredible life experiences that will bring their studies to a whole new level. I am especially

eager to hear from our students who are in Poland with professor Karen Auerbach and our students in Israel with professor Jodi Magness, but we also have dozens of students and faculty doing independent research outside of Chapel Hill this summer.

The upcoming year promises to have a rich events program. On top of our lecture program with speakers who will be talking about Yiddish literature in Russia, antisemitism here and now, and the dead sea scrolls, we also will host two academic conferences. The first symposium, *Wandering Objects: Collecting and Interpreting Jewish Things*, is a result of an exciting collaboration with the North Carolina Museum of Art. The second symposium will take place in mid-April and it will honor Jonathan Hess' legacy as a scholar and mentor in the field of German Jewish studies. Learn more about all our events on our web site and social media sites.

The richness of our academic and events programs would not be possible without your generosity and I am thankful for all your support. We are pleased to be participating in the Campaign for Carolina, with a goal of \$9,350,000, including endowed, expendable and estate gifts. Gifts to the Center also count toward the overall fund-raising goal of the campaign. Please know that gifts at all levels make a real difference in the programs we offer; and that we are thankful for all our wonderful donors.

Summer Enrichment



Dean Kevin Guskiewicz (second from left), hosted the final dinner for students and Center professor Karen Auerbach (far right) in the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz in Krakow.

SUMMER IN POLAND: The "Texture of Memory" trip to Poland, which was part of UNC's Burch honors study-abroad program, brought seven undergraduate students to sites of prewar Jewish life and the Holocaust throughout the country. This incredible learning opportunity received support from **Stuart Eizenstat, '64**, and was led by the Center's professor **Karen Auerbach**, assistant professor and Stuart E. Eizenstat Fellow, department of history.

Throughout the trip, students read about and discussed the history of Polish Jewry, Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust as they visited sites of both prewar Jewish life and the wartime genocide.

"We visited 16th-century synagogues in the old Jewish quarter of Kazimierz in Krakow and the refurbished synagogues in the towns of Zamosc and Tykocin," said Auerbach. "We walked through Jewish cemeteries in varying states of repair in large cities and small towns. We also visited the camps of Belzec, Treblinka, Auschwitz and Majdanek and stopped at small memorials to Holocaust victims along city

streets and in the cemeteries of former shtetlekh."

In addition, the group traveled through the Galician countryside and attended a prayer ceremony commemorating the massacre of tens of thousands of Jews killed in the forest near the city of Tarnow. The itinerary included a stop in the countryside at a mass grave of Roma victims of a mass shooting by the Nazis, as well as talks by Polish journalists of Jewish background who discussed Poland's current political debates about Polish-Jewish relations.

SUMMER IN ISRAEL: Recent discoveries by a team of specialists and students at Huqoq in Israel's Galilee, led by the Center's professor Jodi Magness, shed new light on the life and culture of an ancient Jewish village. The discoveries indicate villagers flourished under early fifth-century Christian rule, contradicting a widespread view that Jewish settlement in the region declined during that period. The large size and elaborate interior decoration of the Huqoq synagogue point to an unexpected level of prosperity. The first mosaics in the Huqoq synagogue were discovered by Magness' team in

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE: ROBIN BULLER

An unparalleled opportunity



*Robin Buller
in Paris, 2018.*

The prospect of spending an entire year in Europe would be a dream-come-true for many students. But for Robin Buller, graduate student in the department of history, it was more than a dream. It was a necessity.

"I study a population of Sephardi Jews who migrated to Paris in the first half of the 20th century from the Southeastern Mediterranean, as the Ottoman Empire receded and ultimately collapsed. Unlike other immigrant Jews in Paris at the time, many of these Ottoman Sephardim had legal connections to countries like Spain, Portugal, and even England. As well, they were often fluent in the French language, having been educated at French schools in Turkey or Greece," said Buller. "I have always been fascinated by language and multilingualism, and so this element is of particular interest to me. I ask how these characteristics presented opportunities for social and legal connections in the interwar years that opened options for rescue and survival during the Holocaust."

Buller was the 2017-2018 recipient of the Center's year-long dissertation completion fellowship. This fellowship supports a promising graduate student working in Jewish Studies and enables the student to focus full time on his or her dissertation research and writing.

"Private funding is crucially important to graduate-level research. Without the generous support I have received from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, I would not have been able to conduct my research in archives abroad. The graduate student grant gave me the unparalleled opportunity to spend the past nine months conducting research in Europe on a full-time basis. During this period, I have worked in six archival libraries in Switzerland and France, and have also acquired access to the private archives of a number of individuals whose family were members of the population that I study. Thanks to the private funding that enabled my research endeavors, I will

now be able to complete my dissertation on this important topic."

Robin, a native of Canada, speaks six languages, and was attracted to Carolina's department of history based on the strength of its faculty in her areas of interest, and due to firsthand knowledge of an alumna. A recruitment grant from the Center helped bring her to Chapel Hill in 2014.

"I was fortunate to have an incredible teacher of Jewish history and Holocaust history during my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto — Dr. Doris Bergen — who holds a Ph.D. from UNC's department of history. Her enthusiasm for the subject matter inspired me to likewise pursue a graduate degree in history," said Buller. "The faculty members in UNC's history department are truly

among the best in the world. I was thrilled by the prospect of being taught and mentored by such renowned scholars, many of whom had written books that were part of my undergraduate curriculum. And although the faculty members are incredibly busy, I recall feeling very warmly welcomed during the prospective student weekend."

Buller has held instructor, teaching assistant, advising and tutoring positions since arriving at Carolina, for courses such as *History of the Holocaust*, *History of the Modern Middle East*, *The World Since 1945*, *History of Europe to 1650*, and *First Year Seminar: What Concentration Camp Survivors Tell Us*.

"Teaching has been one of my top — if not my very favorite — experiences as a graduate student at Carolina. The students are curious, vivacious, and sharp. It is clear that they have a strong desire to learn, and that makes my job incredibly rewarding," added Buller. "My goal is to become a history professor at a post-secondary institution. I fell in love with the triangle area during my time at Carolina, and hope to wind up in a similarly buzzing college town."

"Without the generous support I have received from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, I would not have been able to conduct my research in archives abroad."



Fall 2018

EVENTS

CAROLINA
CENTER
for JEWISH
STUDIES

AUG 31–SEPT 1

CONFERENCE: 1968 in Poland and Czechoslovakia in Comparison (co-sponsoring)

The year 1968 was a momentous one in many spots on the globe, perhaps no more so than in Poland and Czechoslovakia. With a few exceptions, however, 1968 and its aftermath in these two countries largely have been studied in isolation from each other. This conference seeks to compare each "1968" while exploring transnational linkages that connected events, people, cultural expressions, and processes in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and beyond. Our goal is to explore a number of themes, including but not limited to Jewish history, the history of emigration, and the intertwining of performance, the arts, and politics.

SEPT 25, 4 P.M.

Community lecture with Stuart Eizenstat, '64 (Co-sponsoring)

OCT 7, 3 P.M.

Academic lecture with Miriam Bodian, University of Texas at Austin

OCT 8, 7 P.M.

Community lecture with Sidnie White Crawford, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

OCT 29, 7 P.M.

Community lecture with Jonathan Weisman of *The New York Times*

NOV 11–13

CONFERENCE: Wandering Objects: Collecting and Interpreting Jewish Things, (co-hosting with NC Museum of Art)

This symposium will bring together curators, scholars, journalists, private collectors, and community leaders from around the world to discuss the meanings of Jewish ritual objects. Why have people collected Judaica and Jewish material culture in the past, and why are they collecting Jewish "things" today? What can we learn about the roles that Jewish objects play in our social, cultural, and religious lives? How can we trace the afterlives of Jewish ritual objects and material culture as they travel into digital and imagined realms? The events will be held at both NC Museum of Art and UNC Ackland Art Museum and pre-registration will be required.

NOV 19, 5:30 P.M.

Academic lecture with Mikhail Krutikov (co-sponsoring with the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies)

Spring 2019

JAN 23, 5:30 P.M.

Academic lecture with David Biale, UC Davis, organized by the Center's Graduate Student Network

JAN 28, 5:30 P.M.

Holocaust Remembrance Day event with Barry Trachtenberg, Wake Forest University

APRIL 4, 5:30 P.M.

Community lecture with Edwin Seroussi of Hebrew University of Jerusalem

APRIL 13-15

JONATHAN M. HESS SYMPOSIUM: Moments of Enlightenment: German Jewish interactions from the 18th century to the present.

This three-day conference brings together colleagues and collaborators, as well as former students, of Jonathan Hess, former director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and department chair of the department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures. Co-sponsored by Duke Center for Jewish Studies, Duke University Germanic Languages and Literature and UNC department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures. This conference will be open to the public and pre-registration will be required.

Visit our web site at jewishstudies.unc.edu for more event information. If you'd like to receive email updates about upcoming events, please join our listserv by emailing us at jewishstudies@unc.edu or signing up via our web site. We're also on Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn and our social media links are available on our home page jewishstudies.unc.edu.

• the CAMPAIGN for CAROLINA •

Last fall, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill publicly launched the most ambitious fundraising campaign by a university in the history of the state. "For All Kind: the Campaign for Carolina" aims to raise \$4.25 billion by Dec. 31, 2022, to foster an innovation generation prepared to lead the world to a better future. The accomplishments of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies since its founding in 2003 are direct results of generous donations from alumni and community members, and likewise, the future success of the Center will depend on private support. This campaign will shape the legacy of the Center — our programs for students, our faculty research and teaching support, and our events and outreach to the community. The Center has an individual campaign goal of more than \$9 million and since the campaign started the quiet phase in July 2014, more than 400 donors made gifts to the Center.

The Fund for Jewish Studies is a key component of the Center's overall fundraising program. The unrestricted dollars provided by alumni and friends have a tremendous impact on everything we do and annual gifts at all levels are essential for the Center to maintain its reputation for excellence while expanding its academic and public outreach programs for future generations.

Donations made to the Center also count toward the fundraising goal of the Campaign for Carolina. To learn more about the campaign and how you can support the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, please visit: jewishstudies.unc.edu. You can use the enclosed gift envelope to mail in your gift, or use the online giving form, also found on our web site.

Reflections

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“There was a joke among our graduate students that you receive an answer from Jonathan before you hit the send button of an email with a question.”

—Ruth von Bernuth

RUTH: How did the students react?

YAAKOV: From the beginning it became evident that large numbers of students took courses in Jewish Studies and it was reassuring to see that our students came from varied ethnic and religious backgrounds and that interest in Jewish topics was more extensive than in many other institutions. This discovery helped validate the cause of the Center and boost the morale of its faculty. It offered the members a *raison d'être*, and motivated further growth and expansion.

RUTH: This became immediately clear to me when I arrived in 2008. He made sure that I became part of the Center, which became for me a way to meet and get to know colleagues and students from other departments. The many scholars Jonathan hosted at the Center offered me the opportunity to become acquainted with Jewish studies. How was your experience with him leading the Center?

YAAKOV: Jonathan was a wonderful colleague and leader, and I respected him enormously. He was smart, quick and pragmatic, and at the same time honest, straightforward, and generous. He radiated confidence as well as bestowed trust. Never argumentative, Jonathan always maintained a sense of proportion as well as tolerance of other people's idiosyncrasies.

RUTH: Oh yes, I do remember many situations when I came to his office to get advice—and I usually went away with a simple solution. It took usually only a few minutes. And do you remember how fast he replied to emails? There was a joke among our graduate students that you receive an answer from Jonathan before you hit the send button of an email with a question. What was even more remarkable that besides being an accomplished administrator, he was also a prolific scholar. Did you work with him on research?

YAAKOV: Jonathan and I exchanged manuscripts and read each other's work. Almost needless to say, I greatly appreciated his insights and writings. His scholarship was sophisticated, learned, and judicious. Among his topics of interest was popular, middlebrow, Jewish literature in 19th century Germany. Jonathan demonstrated



compellingly that such literary productions gave evidence to proud and tribal acculturated German Jews. In their commitments and sensibilities, the writers, playwrights, directors, and actors were committed to preserving Jewish cohesion and heritage, at the same time that they

wished to integrate into German society and become part of the larger German and European cultural scene. Jonathan treated the objects of his inquiry with empathy, but never placed them on a pedestal. There was insight and sensitivity, but not sentimentality.

RUTH: I agree. In his presentation Jonathan gave at the celebration of 15 years of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies he pointed out that Jewish studies are not a niche in research and teaching, but that it is connected to big questions about the humanities in general. He continued by explaining that studying the history of Jews' inclusion in, and exclusion from, German culture gives students tools to think critically not just about antisemitism but about the presence and function of white supremacy, Islamophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant hysteria in the world of today.

YAAKOV: His untimely death came as a terrible shock, shattering many. This has not been surprising, considering what a person Jonathan had been. We will miss him sorely—as a colleague, intellectual, administrator, interlocutor, friend, family member, father and neighbor.

RUTH: And a *mentsh*.

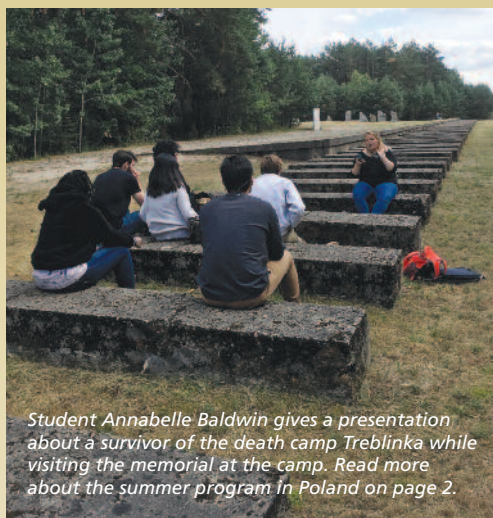
YAAKOV: Yes, this sums it up, a *mentsh*—even if Jonathan would have preferred the spelling as *Mensch*.

SUMMER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

2012. Since then the team has uncovered additional mosaics every summer. This year, the team's specialists and students focused their efforts on a series of mosaic panels in the north aisle. Magness said this series is part of the richest, most diverse collection of mosaics ever found in an ancient synagogue. Along the north aisle, mosaics are divided into two rows of panels containing figures and objects with Hebrew inscriptions. One panel labeled “a pole between two” depicts a biblical scene from Numbers 13:23. The images show two spies sent by Moses to explore Canaan carrying a pole with a cluster of grapes. Another panel referencing Isaiah 11:6 includes the inscription “a small child shall lead them.” The panel shows a youth leading an animal on a rope. A fragmentary Hebrew inscription concluding with the phrase “Amen selah,” meaning “Amen forever,” was uncovered at the north end of the east aisle. The following students received funding support from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in 2018 [shown L to R in photo]: Bradley Erickson; Jocelyn Burney; Lauren Rushing; Catherine (Katy) Atkinson; Shawna Milam.



Photo by J. Haberman



Student Annabelle Baldwin gives a presentation about a survivor of the death camp Treblinka while visiting the memorial at the camp. Read more about the summer program in Poland on page 2.

News Briefs

MARCIE COHEN FERRIS RESEARCH AND TRAVEL GRANTS: Marcie Cohen Ferris, professor in the department of American Studies, retired in June, after 16 years at Carolina. Her contributions to the Center have been significant, from serving as associate director in the early years, to co-chairing last year's Jewish Food in the Global South symposium, to creating truly compelling courses for students, such as *Shalom Y'all: The Jewish Experience in the American South* and *Mamas and Matriarchs: A Social History of Jewish Women in America*. In 2007, Cohen Ferris received the University's Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. Her research and teaching interests include southern history and culture — particularly the foodways and material culture of the American South, the history of the Jewish South, and American Jewish identity and culture. **At our anniversary showcase in March, the Center announced a new grant opportunity for students, in honor of Cohen Ferris and her research interests** — The Marcie Cohen Ferris research and travel grants for students working in American Jewish Studies and/or Jewish Studies Gender Studies. Her publications include *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (UNC Press, 2005), which was nominated for a 2006 James Beard Foundation Award and *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American Region*, (UNC Press, 2014), which was honored by Smithsonian.com's "Best Books about Food of 2016." She is also co-editor of *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History* (University Press of New England, 2006).



Photo by Donn Young

Jewish Studies *The Carolina Way*

SHOWCASE 15 CELEBRATION

Thank you to all who joined us on March 25th to celebrate the Center's 15th anniversary. Our celebration included short talks by several faculty members and presentations by graduate students, plus dancing and the debut of our intern video.



ADVISORY BOARD

We are thrilled to welcome back Barry Schochet, '69, to the advisory board and also extend our sincere thanks to the following board members who recently rotated off the board: Barry Turner, Peter Schneider, Adele Roth and Jay Tanenbaum.