



AMERICAN
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NEWS FROM THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM AND THE CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

WINTER 2007

FROM THE DIRECTORS

A Year of Milestones

This academic year marks major milestones. The State of Israel will observe its 60th anniversary, and our Center for Israel Studies turns 10. A decade ago, thanks to a generous grant from the Cora and John H. Davis Foundation, American University became one of the first in the nation advancing Israel studies in the academy. For the past 10 years, our conferences, scholars in residence, performances, film screenings, and symposia have brought Israel's cultural richness, social diversity, and continuing challenges to a new generation of college students—our future community leaders. Many people from our community of friends and supporters have attended programs and participated in Israel-related activities. This year the Jewish Studies Program graduated its first class of AU students to minor in Israel studies. We welcomed new faculty: associate professor of history Max Paul Friedman, Schusterman Visiting Professor of Israel Studies Naomi Gale, and Polinger Scholar in Residence Calvin Goldscheider. In the pages below you will meet them and read about the major strides we are making for the development of Jewish studies and Israel studies at American University.

Our activities would not be possible without your generosity. We invite you to continue your support for the Center for Israel Studies, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Endowment. With your help, we look forward to celebrating many more milestones in the coming years. ■



Pamela Nadell,
Director, Jewish
Studies Program



Russell Stone,
Director, Center for
Israel Studies



Adina Kanefield,
Deputy Director,
Center for Israel Studies

Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation Gives Major Gift for Israeli Art Exhibit

The Center for Israel Studies received a major gift from the Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation to fund an exhibit featuring works from emerging Israeli artists. As part of the project, American University Museum curator Jack Rasmussen will travel to Israel to meet with Israeli artists and select pieces for the exhibition. Rasmussen will work with Israel's Herzliya Museum to create the exhibition, which, with a series of corresponding lectures by Israeli artists, is a unique opportunity to expose AU and the public to cutting-edge Israeli art and artists. The exhibition will open in April 2008 at the AU Museum at the Katzen as part of a year-long celebration marking Israel's 60th birthday. "The foundation is thrilled to help introduce new Israeli art and emerging artists to the Washington community by supporting this exciting project," said Stuart Brown, a trustee of the Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation. ■

Naomi Gale Joins AU as Visiting Professor

With generous funding from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family Foundation, Naomi Gale has joined American University and the Center for Israel Studies as a visiting professor for the 2007–2008 academic year. Gale holds a PhD in anthropology from the University of Sydney in Australia, a law degree from the Inter-Disciplinary Center of Herzliya in Israel, and certification as a mediator for alternate dispute resolution.



Naomi Gale

She has taught courses in a variety of disciplines, including political science, history, and gender studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and has most recently pursued research projects at Cambridge University in England. While at American University, Gale is teaching courses on

GALE continued on p. 5

Israel Studies—a New Discipline

Since assuming the duties and honor of directing AU's Center for Israel Studies in fall 2006, I have wanted an opportunity to share with you an overview of the growth of the field of academic Israel studies. Here is part of the story.

Over 20 years ago, a small group of U.S.-based researchers in the social sciences met to establish an academic association that would focus on modern-day Israel. We had experienced how difficult it was to generate attention to Israel within other academic groups in which we participated, notably the International Studies Association (ISA) and the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). In order to expand the forum for Israel-related scholarship, we created AIS, the Association for Israel Studies. The AIS Web site states: "Formed in 1985, the Association for Israel Studies is an international, interdisciplinary scholarly society devoted to the academic and professional study of modern Israel. AIS is open to all individuals who are engaged in, or share an interest in, scholarly inquiry about Israel, the Zionist movement, or the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine. The Association's membership is composed of scholars from all disciplines in the social sciences and many in the humanities." Since AIS was established, its members have made a point of including sessions on Israel in the programs of other academic associations as well, including ISA, MESA, the American Political Science Association (APSA), and on occasion the American Historical Association (AHA). We learned that having an Israel-focused academic organization afforded the study of Israel a credibility that other academic organizations recognized.

Over 20 years ago, a small group of U.S.-based researchers in the social sciences met to establish an academic association that would focus on modern-day Israel.

The administration of American University has supported the efforts of AIS in many ways. AU became the center of several AIS activities, including national conferences and an agreement by then-provost, now AU president Neil Kerwin and the president of AIS that

American University would house the administrative office of the AIS. At the same time, AU became a leader in the nascent stages of the field of Israel studies when it established in 1998 the Center for Israel Studies, one of the first such centers in the United States to focus on the study of modern Israel. I am proud to state that AU has continued to stand at the forefront of the field of Israel studies. With the establishment of the first-in-the-nation minor in Israel studies and the tradition of visiting professors in Israel studies, thanks to the support of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family Foundation, AU has become a leader in this new discipline. The scope and definition of the academic field is still forming, and AU is setting the pace.

Should the discipline be a part of Jewish studies? Should it branch off but overlap with Jewish studies? At what point in time should the history of modern Israel begin as a subject matter? These are issues that major universities are discussing as the field is forming. It's an exciting time to be a part of an emerging academic field and a privilege to participate in the Israel studies community. ■

—Russell A. Stone, Director, Center for Israel Studies, American University

LECTURES AND PROGRAMS

Sponsored by the Center for Israel Studies and the Jewish Studies Program

- **"Archaeology and the Bible: Where They Meet, Where They Don't and Why,"** David Ilan, director, Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (Jerusalem)

- **"Discussion and Film Screening: *Live and Become*,"** Calvin Goldscheider, Polinger Scholar in Residence, and Mitchell Bard, author of *From Tragedy to*



Triumph: The Politics behind the Rescue of Ethiopian Jewry

- **"Discussion and Film Screening: *Zero Degrees of Separation*,"** Calvin Goldscheider, Polinger Scholar in Residence
- **"Ethnic Diversity in Israel: Immigration, Assimilation, and Israel's Future,"** Calvin Goldscheider, Polinger Scholar in Residence
- **"Funding Hamas: Legal Paradigms in the E.U. and the U.S.,"** Russell Stone, director of the Center for Israel Studies and panel chair, along with Mara Rudman, deputy

national security advisor to President Clinton; Ilka Schroeder, former E.U. parliamentarian, Green Party, Germany; and Ruth Wedgwood, professor of international law, Johns Hopkins SAIS

- **"The Future of America's Jews,"** Calvin Goldscheider, Polinger Scholar in Residence
- **"Holocaust Memory and Commemoration on Kibbutzim in Israel: The Voice of Communal Mourning,"** Micha Balf, PhD in holocaust studies from Hebrew University
- **"Jerusalem Besieged: 4,000 Years of Conflict in the City of Peace,"** Eric Cline,

FROM THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

Awards, Awards!

Making 2007 a banner year for Jewish studies student awards, several majors walked off with university, college, and Jewish Studies Program awards.

- Michal Bilick received the 2007 Outstanding Student in a General Education Course award for her superior performance in *Dissident Media: Voices from the Underground*.
- Hillary Blank received a College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Summer Research Award to research a book on love stories from the Holocaust, which grew out of her Jewish studies internship at *Moment* magazine. Pamela S. Nadell is her academic supervisor.
- Ilana Stern received the College of Arts and Sciences Greenfield Family Scholarship, a scholarship awarded annually to an outstanding student in CAS.
- Michal Bilick, Hillary Blank, Ilana Stern, and Aimee Weiss spent 2006–07 with AU Abroad studying at Hebrew University. They are completing minors in Israel studies and have been awarded Everett and Marion Gordon Scholarships for outstanding performance and Jane and Jerrold Goodman Scholarships to assist them in writing their senior theses.

We take tremendous pride in these accomplishments of our outstanding students. ■

Pamela S. Nadell, American University Scholar/Teacher of the Year

Pamela S. Nadell, American University's inaugural Patrick Clendenen Professor of Women's History and long-time director of AU's Jewish Studies Program, has been named the university's 2007 Scholar/Teacher of the Year.

This award, sponsored by AU and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, annually honors one of AU's 500 faculty members whose demonstrated excellence in teaching and scholarship contribute substantially to the university and to higher education.

In presenting the award at the spring Faculty Recognition Dinner, AU president

NADELL *continued on p.5*



Scholar-teacher of the year Pamela Nadell, center, with Interim Provost Ivy Broder and President Cornelius Kerwin

ABOUT US

Center for Israel Studies

The mission of the center is to examine and interpret modern Israel's intellectual and creative contributions and achievements in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts. Located in Washington, D.C., at American University, a major institution of higher learning, the center is uniquely positioned to be a national and international hub for the dissemination of information about Israel and the discussion of Israeli developments, issues, and concerns. The center's challenge is to connect Israel to the next generation of leaders who are matriculating today in America's universities and colleges.

For further information, call 202-885-3780, e-mail rstone@american.edu or adina.kanefield@american.edu, or visit our Web site at www.american.edu/israelstudies.

Jewish Studies Program

American University's commitment to the Jewish Studies Program dates back to the early 1970s. Since then, AU's Jewish Studies Program has included a major and a minor and offered courses across the curriculum, including in our General Education Program, for all AU students. This year, the program takes great pride in becoming the first in the nation to offer a minor in Israel studies.

We count on your support to ensure the vibrancy of our programs. Please use the enclosed business reply envelope to direct your gift.

For more giving information, contact Adina Kanefield at 202-885-3780 or Lee Holsopple at 202-885-2515.

associate professor of classics and anthropology, George Washington University

- **"Lessons from the Israel-Lebanon War,"** Yoram Peri, head of the Chaim Herzog Institute for Media, Politics, and Society and professor of political sociology and communication at Tel Aviv University
- **"Louis D. Brandeis and American Zionism,"** Melvin Urofsky, professor emeritus of history, Virginia Commonwealth University
- **"Poetry Reading and Discussion: A Message from Sderot,"** Shimon Adaf, Israeli poet

- **"To rebuild the Land and to be rebuilt by it: Two Recent Hebrew Autobiographical Novels,"** Nicholas de Lange, professor of Hebrew and Jewish studies, Cambridge University
- **"The Vatican and the Holocaust,"** Suzanne Brown-Fleming, senior program officer, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
- **"Women, Politics, and Elected Office: Perspectives from the Middle East,"** Russell Stone, director of the Center for Israel Studies

Faculty Notes

Lynn Addington, School of Public Affairs, received the first annual Spagna SPA Faculty Research Award as well as a University Research Award to support her comparison of Israel and the United States with regard to school violence and school security.

Richard Breitman, Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), coedited *Advocate for the Doomed: The Diaries and Papers of James G. MacDonald, 1932–35*. He also wrote a background paper for the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research about Anne Frank's family's efforts to get



Richard Breitman

visas to the United States.

Erran Carmel, Kogod School of Business, gave a presentation to the AU community and AU Hillel on Israeli high-tech in March 2007.

Rabbi Kenneth Cohen, rabbi and Hillel director at AU, led a group of AU students on a mission to Cuba, visiting small Jewish communities dedicated to preserving their Jewish identity.

Calvin Goldscheider, Polinger Scholar in Residence at AU's Center for Israel Studies, taught a course on Israeli society, for the Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences, and for the School of International Service. He heads a research team on Islam, population, and family in comparative development, with case studies from Israel, Lebanon, Senegal, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Turkey. He published book chapters entitled "Ethnicity and Nation Building in Israel," and "Religion, Family, and Fertility: What Do We Know Historically and Comparatively?" "Into the Future: Jewish Communities from the End of World War II to the First Decade of the Twenty-first Century" will be published in the *Encyclopedia of Jewish History*, Cambridge University Press.

Gershon Greenberg, Department of Philosophy and Religion (CAS), published an article in Hebrew in a book on Holocaust studies edited by Dina Porat, Tel Aviv University; and book chapters entitled

"Holocaust Christianity: Wartime Orthodox Jewish Perceptions" and "Metahistory, Redemption, and the Shofar of Emil Fackenheim." He also delivered lectures at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; Bar Ilan University; the Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University; the Library of Congress; the Esalen Center for Theory and Research, Big Sur, California; the Tkuma Holocaust Conference, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine; and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Alan Kraut, Department of History (CAS), published *Covenant of Care: Newark Beth Israel and the Jewish Hospital in America* (coauthored with Deborah Kraut) in January 2007. Alan Kraut continues as chair of the Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation's History Advisory Committee.

Alan Levine, School of Public Affairs, traveled in Israel for two weeks this summer, meeting Israeli academics and members of the Knesset. He was on research leave during AY 2006–07 at Princeton University's James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, where he was working on his book *The Idea of America in European Political Thought: 1492–9/11*.

Richard Linowes, Kogod School of Business, continues his work advising entrepreneurs in Israel, building on relationships he established over the years through his teaching at ISEMI, an entrepreneurship development center in Ramat Aviv (the Israel School of Management and Innovation) and through the Israel business development initiatives of states in the mid-Atlantic region. In conjunction with the Kogod business school's new focus on the needs of family businesses and wealth management, he is studying and working with family-controlled businesses of Israel.

Pamela S. Nadell, Department of History and Jewish Studies Program (CAS), was named the inaugural Patrick Clendenen Professor of History for 2006–08. This rotating professorship, newly established by the Department of History, recognizes faculty for outstanding scholarship in women's and gender history.

Naima Prevots, professor emerita, Department of Performing Arts (CAS), created a four-hour seminar for dance

teachers last July in Israel, highlighting new goals and methodologies and utilizing the National Standards for Dance Education.

Myra Sklarew, professor emerita, Department of Literature (CAS), published poems in *Shirim*, vol. 24, no. 2, *Natural Bridge*, and *Prairie Schooner* and also reviewed *Awake in the Dark* by Shira Nayman for *Lilith Magazine*. Her biography was included in *Encyclopedia Judaica* and the *Encyclopedia of Jewish American Literature* for 2007. In March, she presented "The Impact of Trauma on the Encoding and Retrieval of Memory: Conversations with Holocaust Survivors, Witnesses, and Rescuers" at the 27th Annual Conference on the Holocaust at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. A musical setting of her poem "Instructions for Elijah" was recently done by James Hansen.

Jeffrey K. Sosland, assistant professor in the Washington Semester Program and the Kogod School of Business, published

Cooperating Rivals: The Riparian Politics of the Jordan River Basin. The first chapter and a Google search of the entire book's text are available at www.sunypress.edu. He is also working with others to develop and promote new AU course offerings, including an Israel



Jeffrey K. Sosland

Washington Semester seminar and summer course in Israel.

Russell A. Stone, Department of Sociology (CAS), has completed his first year of service as director of AU's Center for Israel Studies. He is administrative officer of the Association for Israel Studies, headquartered at American University, in cooperation with AU's Center for Israel Studies. During the past year, his review of Yoram Meital, "Peace in Tatters: Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East," was published in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*. At the Association for Israel Studies 2007 meeting at the Open University, Raanana, Israel, he delivered a research paper entitled "Gender in the Palestine Elections, 2006"

and participated in a roundtable entitled "Israel Studies—Past and Future," as well as in the AIS board meeting and annual business meeting. Stone is advising editor of the Israel Studies series published by the State University of New York Press. The series publishes four to six books on contemporary Israeli society, politics, and history each year and currently has more than 75 books in print. He serves on the editorial boards of the journals *Israel Studies* (Indiana University Press) and *Israel Studies Forum* (Berghahn Books).

Marcela Sulak, Department of Literature (CAS), will be a visiting professor in the creative writing program at Bar-Ilan University, helping to inaugurate the program's poetry concentration. She plans to deepen her knowledge of the contemporary poetry scene and modern Hebrew, with the hope of translating Israeli poetry in the near future.

Howard Wachtel, professor emeritus, Department of Economics (CAS), is a member of the Board of Directors for the Association for Israel Studies and chairs their Task Force on Endowed Chairs and Centers for Israel Studies. He is also a member of the Advisory Board, the Israel Scholar Development Fund, American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise.

Peter Weinberger, School of International Service, thoroughly enjoyed teaching his first Arab-Israeli relations course in spring 2007. His book *Co-opting the PLO: A Critical Reconstruction of the Oslo Accords, 1993–1995*, which was first released in spring 2006, came out in paperback in April 2007.

Michael Wenthe, Department of Literature (CAS) and member of the AU Hillel Board, continued research and writing on two medieval Arthurian texts by Jews. One of these, a fragmentary Hebrew prose romance of the thirteenth century, was featured in his graduate seminar on Arthurian literature. The other, an Old Yiddish verse romance of about the fifteenth century, will be the focus of further archival research at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in spring 2008.

Simon Awards 43 Scholarships

On July 23, 2007, Rita Simon—University Professor in AU's School of Public Affairs and Washington College of Law and faculty advisor of the Center for Israel Studies—awarded 43 scholarships to Israeli Jews of Sephardic descent. The scholarships help students pursue higher education in Israel. It was the eighth straight year that Simon gave these awards through the Shula Ankary Foundation, which Simon created in 2000.

The foundation has an important place in Simon's heart as it is named in the memory of Shula Ankary, who met Simon initially as her cleaning woman and became one of Simon's best friends.



Rita Simon

Although Ankary had a limited formal education herself, she understood the importance of education and sought to provide the best educational opportunities for her children. Simon recalls fondly a conversation during her year in Jerusalem in 1968. Ankary asked Simon what all the big white buildings across the street were. Simon explained that they were Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus, where Simon was teaching at the time. Ankary declared that her children would one day go to the university, and she kept her word. All five of her children not only graduated from college but attained a higher degree as well. "She was one of the smartest, kindest, most resilient people I've ever met," said Simon.

The award ceremony was held at Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus. Speakers included Simon, who spoke movingly about Ankary's life and the importance of education, and Haim Levi of Hebrew University, professor and head of the selection committee. This year the foundation received more than 800 applications and gave 43 awards of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 each.

The ceremony was attended by family members of the recipients, Ankary's children and grandchildren, and by Lynn Addington and Alan Levine, both of whom are professors in AU's School of Public Affairs and affiliated with the Center for Israel Studies. ■

NADELL *continued from p. 3*

Neil Kerwin quoted a reviewer who noted that Nadell's scholarship demonstrates that "the history of American Jewish women is finally being accorded its own 'room' within the house of women's history," and he praised Nadell as "an inspiring teacher" who traverses 5,000 years in her courses.

In addressing the more than 1,200 members of the Class of 2011 at opening convocation on August 24, Nadell quoted the first-century sage Hillel who taught: "Do not separate yourself from the community" (Pirkei Avot 2:5). Nadell urged the students to take his words to heart, to share their stories, to find their places on our campus, to enrich our community, and to leave it changed for the better. ■

GALE *continued from p. 1*

the history of Israel, Israel's legal system, and Israeli politics, along with a course on U.S. and Israeli law at the Washington College of Law.

Gale sees students as future leaders and believes that "it is crucial to educate them about the history of Israel and the political and socioeconomic systems of modern Israel as well as the interplay between political, socioeconomic, and cultural forces in the making of a consensual democracy striving to better accommodate multicultural, pluralistic ideas."

In addition to teaching and advising students, Gale will host formal and informal lectures across the campus and the community. ■

YediAU is dedicated to "our teachers and their students" down through the generations.

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Max Paul Friedman Joins AU

Max Paul Friedman joins AU as associate professor of history and affiliated faculty in the Jewish Studies Program. His *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (2003) won the Herbert Hoover Book Prize in U.S. History and the A. B. Thomas Book Prize in Latin American Studies.

Friedman is currently working on a history of anti-Americanism and foreign perceptions of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. Before entering academia he was assistant producer for



Max Paul Friedman

National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and a freelance writer for national newspapers and magazines.

Friedman graduated from Oberlin College, earned his MA and PhD at the University of California at Berkeley, was Woodrow

Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and has been a visiting professor at the University of Cologne. ■

AU Wins Prestigious Grant

The Jewish Studies Expansion Project has selected American University as one of six sites to host the inaugural round of Schusterman Teaching Fellows in Jewish Studies. This means in academic years 2008–09 and 2009–10 our campus will have eight additional Jewish Studies courses and a new colleague to enhance our program. The Jewish Studies Expansion Project is a program of the Foundation for Jewish Culture, supported by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

Pamela Nadell, director of the Jewish Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), noted that we competed against more than 50 institutions submitting proposals. Nadell, in announcing the award, expressed her appreciation to Dean Kay Mussell (CAS), Interim Provost Ivy Broder, and President Neil Kerwin for providing the matching funds required for this grant and to all those who so persuasively made AU's case for this award last spring. ■

A Mind of Her Own

This fall American University's Jewish Studies Program, with the Jewish cultural organization Nextbook, the American Library Association (ALA), and AU's University Library, cosponsored a free five-part reading and discussion series in modern Jewish literature for participants ranging from undergraduates to retirees. Under the direction of Diana Vogel song, associate university librarian,



Lauren B. Strauss

AU won one of the 250 grants awarded by Nextbook and the ALA to host the series. Dr. Pamela S. Nadell, an enthusiastic supporter of AU's serving as a font of Jewish learning both inside and outside the university, made funds

available from the Jewish Studies Program to augment the grant.

Dr. Lauren B. Strauss, affiliated Jewish studies faculty, who has taught the undergraduate course *Voices of Modern Jewish Literature* for several years, facilitated discussions on the theme "A Mind of Her Own: Fathers and Daughters in a Changing World." This fall, participants met every other week to discuss five masterworks of "a modern literary tradition of Jewish fathers and daughters who get carried away with politics, money, sex, religion, and, above all, one another": *Tevye the Dairyman*, by Sholem Aleichem; *Bread Givers*, by Anzia Yezierska; *O My America!*, by Johanna Kaplan; *American Pastoral*, by Philip Roth; and *Bee Season*, by Myla Goldberg.

The Jewish Studies Program is grateful to Nextbook, the ALA, AU's University Library, and our own faculty for offering this opportunity for higher learning to the community, and we look forward to hosting more such programs in the future.

For more information, see http://veracity.univpubs.american.edu/today/vol/11/8/101607_jewishlit.html. ■

Washington Semester in Israel Studies

American University's Washington Semester Program is expanding its offerings for visiting students to include a Washington Semester Program in Israel Studies. The Center for Israel Studies is collaborating in the new program, slated to begin in 2008. The program gives students from across the country an opportunity to spend a semester at American University learning about Israel in the context of U.S. politics and policy. Students take classes in a variety of curricular areas related to Israel studies, participate in seminars about issues facing Israel, and complete a research project on a topic of their choice.

Along with their course work, students can take advantage of the university's location in the nation's capital by participating in meetings with policy makers and advocacy groups that help shape U.S.-Israeli relations. The Washington Semester Program also incorporates an internship element that allows students to gain valuable experience while they work at a Washington think tank, advocacy group, or international organization.

The program culminates in a three-week trip to Israel, where students meet with government officials and learn from experts and community activists. Students will also have the opportunity to explore Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv; visit kibbutzim; and tour sites of historical and geographic significance.

"Our work with the Washington Semester Program represents our efforts to broaden the reach of Israel studies across the campus and into all areas of the university's academic programs," said Russell Stone, CIS director. ■

Further information about the Washington Semester Program in Israel Studies is available at www.washingtonsemester.com.

AU Honors Wachtel and Schwartz

The Center for Israel Studies honored its retiring director and deputy director, Howard Wachtel and Rhea Schwartz, at a community event in the Abramson Family Recital Hall of the Katzen Arts Center, attended by center friends, as well as AU students, faculty, and administrators. Wachtel and Schwartz were recognized by AU president Cornelius Kerwin for their work in building the center. Kerwin praised



Howard Wachtel



Rhea Schwartz

the outstanding “vision and energy” of the center’s early leaders and he lauded the newly launched minor in Israel studies.

Center supporters Lillian Abensohn and Lorre Polinger presented awards to Wachtel and Schwartz for their dedicated service to the center. As part of the event, Polinger Scholar in Residence Calvin Goldscheider delivered a lecture

on ethnic diversity in Israel and its role in shaping national identity.

Goldscheider, whose AU spring ’07 class on Israel society was filled to capacity, concluded that ethnic groups still maintained



Pamela Nadell, left, and Russell Stone, right, with scholar in residence Calvin Goldscheider, event keynote speaker.



Awardees and participants in the program honoring retiring center leadership, left to right, Calvin Goldscheider, Russell Stone, Neil Kerwin, Lillian Abensohn, Howard Wachtel, Lorre Polinger, Rhea Schwartz

strong ties through networks of families and neighborhoods. In spring ’08, Goldscheider will continue examining the issue of ethnicity at AU when he teaches Comparative Ethnicity: Israel, Europe, and the Third World. ■

ISRAELI BUSINESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MARCH 3–4, 2008

The Center for Israel Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, and the Kogod School of Business will host an international conference, “Israeli Biz at 60: Lessons and Directions in Israel’s Business and Economy,” on March 3-4, 2008. The conference will provide a forum for scholars, business leaders, and community members to discuss developments and trends regarding Israel and the business world. Panel topics will include Technology, Innovation, and Startups; The Israeli Economy; The Emergence of Business Social Responsibility in Israel; Family Business; and Financial Markets. In addition to the panels, the conference will feature two keynote speakers: Avishay Braverman, economist and Knesset member, and Raya Strauss Bendror, president of Strauss Investment Company and co-owner of the billion-dollar food conglomerate Strauss-Elite Groups. Center for Israel Studies faculty advisors Erran Carmel and Richard Linowes will co-chair the conference.

AU First to Offer Israel Studies Minor

In fall 2006, American University became the first university in the United States to offer a minor in Israel studies.

In May 2007, the university celebrated as Ariel Boxman, SIS, Elizabeth Detwiler, SIS, Esther Brilliant, SPA, and Micah Winograd, SIS, became the first four students in the country to graduate with this minor.

All four students spent a semester or more studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Two will return to Israel. Boxman will spend a year as part of a five-year program to become a rabbi. Brilliant, who plans to move to Israel, said, “It feels like my true home. I just love the people there.”

Detwiler will remain at American as a master’s student and will study international peace and conflict resolution. Micah Winograd also plans to pursue a career related to the Middle East.

The Israel studies minor “focuses on contemporary Israel as a society, looking at all aspects of modern-day Israel,” said Russell Stone, director of the Center for Israel Studies. “It is a newly emerging academic field, and we’re on the leading edge.” ■



Micah Winograd, SIS; Elizabeth Detwiler, SIS; Ariel Boxman, SIS; and Esther Brilliant, SPA, became the first four students in the country to graduate with a minor in Israel studies.

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