

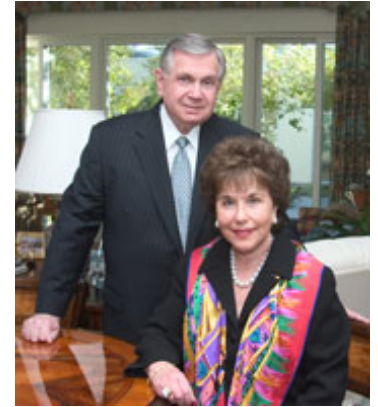
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Jewish studies to recruit rising faculty star with \$1 million gift

September 25, 2007

A \$1 million gift to the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies will allow the center to recruit a rising faculty star in modern Hebrew literature and Israeli culture in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Leon and Sandra Levine

The gift is from two Charlotte families: Lori and Eric Sklut, and Lori's parents, Leon and Sandra Levine.

With the \$1 million gift, the center will be able to apply for a \$500,000 matching grant from the N.C. Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund, bringing the total endowment to \$1.5 million.



Lori and Eric Sklut

The center expects to begin recruiting for the Levine-Sklut Fellow in Jewish Studies this fall, said director Jonathan Hess. The endowment will support an assistant professor position. Making such awards to early and mid-career faculty is an important recruitment and retention strategy as the market becomes increasingly competitive for assistant and associate professors, he said.

"We have a number of distinguished senior scholars, and it's also crucial that we bring in new people who can build their careers at UNC, and while doing so, help to build our program in Jewish studies," said Hess, the Moses M. and Hannah L. Malkin Distinguished Professor in Jewish History and Culture. "With the generous gift from the Sklut and Levine families, we will be able to recruit a rising star in modern Hebrew."

Courses in modern Hebrew, first introduced four years ago, are popular at Carolina, with 71 students enrolled. Hess called the study of the language a "major linchpin of any Jewish studies program" and is eager for Carolina to develop

courses in Hebrew literature and Israeli culture for the general undergraduate population.

"It is especially unique for the university and the Center for Jewish Studies to receive such a pivotal gift from two generations of a family who are major philanthropists in so many outstanding causes in North Carolina," said Eli N. Evans, chair of the Jewish studies advisory board. "These families have done their homework, and the credibility conferred by this gift will surely inspire others to join the mission of making a first rate Jewish studies program available to every student at the university and every community across the state."

Eric Sklut, a 1980 Carolina alumnus and member of the center's advisory board, said he and his wife are impressed by the outreach of the center, which was founded in 2003, across the breadth of the College of Arts and Sciences. More than 1,000 students a year take Jewish studies courses.

"It has been enlightening to absorb all the center has done to bring together the culture, history, lifestyle and other aspects of Jewish life and to attract such a diverse student audience," said Sklut, whose father and sister also attended UNC - and his daughter is a freshman this year. "We're thrilled at how well the center has fully entwined itself into university life and how it has drawn from so many parts of the university in doing so."

Sklut said his time on the center's advisory board helped him to realize how critical it is to bring top-notch young faculty - in addition to distinguished senior faculty - to Carolina.

"Being able to recruit and retain these rising young stars will give the center an added dimension and creative freedom, and we believe it will help attract additional faculty to the university," Sklut said.

"As a university of and for the people of North Carolina, this institution has made great strides to broaden its student and faculty community and to reach out to so many," added Leon and Sandra Levine. "It is a wonderful asset to the state of North Carolina and its people. The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has accomplished so much in just a few short years, and with its leadership and strong faculty base, we are hopeful this growth will continue."

Eric Sklut, who formerly ran his own executive search business, is the founder of Perfection Automotive Inc., which develops and markets products for Porsche and other vehicles. Leon Levine is the founder and chairman emeritus of Family Dollar Stores.

To learn more about the Center's endowment gifts. please

visit <http://www.unc.edu/ccjs/endowment.html>

