From the Director

Dear valued friends, I hope that this newsletter finds you and yours enjoying good health and cheer in the New Year. As you will read in this edition of our newsletter, this year marks seventy years of Judaic Studies courses being offered on our campus. What you know today as The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies began in the fall of 1949 when Rabbi Albert Bilgray of Temple Emanu-El and Rabbi Marcus Breger of Congregation Anshei Israel collaborated to teach a couple Hebrew and Judaica courses to a handful of students. After many decades of serving thousands of students, Judaic Studies at the University of Arizona now proudly enjoys an outstanding regional, national, and international reputation for the quality of its teaching, research, and community outreach. We now offer dozens of courses each year, provide many public lectures and services to our community, and regularly host national and international scholarly conferences.

Last year the Center underwent its Academic Program Review as mandated for all academic units by the Arizona Board of Regents. Each unit is reviewed every six years by a committee appointed by the provost consisting of three external scholars, three UofA faculty, one community representative, and one alumni representative. These reviews are conducted over two full days and assess the work of the unit in terms of its financial affairs, teaching and curriculum, research, and community engagement. I am pleased to report that the Center received a very positive review. The committee’s review highlighted our strengths and made some very helpful suggestions on where and how we might do even more. I love these reviews since they serve as an unbiased assessment of what we’ve done over the past six years and of where we’re intending to go in the next six years.

This kind of success was achieved through the hard work and dedication of our faculty and staff, and it was all made possible by the support of both our university administrators and our community. You and people like you have been critically important to our success and growth. Without you and your support in word and deed, none of this would have possible. So, I hope you enjoy this newsletter and the update it provides. I also hope that after reviewing this update that you will be inspired to make a gift to Judaic Studies that will enable us to continue serving our students and community.

With my sincere appreciation as always,

Ed Wright, Director
Seventy years ago Tucson was a much smaller town, the University of Arizona was just beginning to grow, and there were no Judaic Studies courses being taught on our campus. In the fall of 1949 Rabbi Albert Bilgray of Temple Emanu-El was invited to teach Hebrew to a handful of students. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 piqued their interest. Rabbi Marcus Breger of Congregation Anshei Israel joined Bilgray in teaching Hebrew and other Judaic Studies courses. The enrollments were small, but the students were appreciative and enthusiastic.

Through the years the program Judaic Studies experienced ups and downs. It moved from the Classics Department to the Oriental Studies Department in 1975 and hired its first full-time professor, the renowned Syro-Palestinian archaeologist Dr. William G. Dever. Other faculty were added and had their appointments split between Oriental Studies (later Near Eastern Studies) and other departments on campus. The faculty cohort in Judaic Studies included only three people for many years. In 1990 the university reorganized Judaic Studies as an independent program, but the authority to make decisions on hiring faculty remained with other units. In other words, Judaic Studies did not control decisions on who would be hired to teach Judaic Studies courses. The financial crunch the University experienced in the mid-1990s led to serious cutbacks on campus. At one point it was proposed that Judaic Studies be eliminated entirely, but opposition from faculty and the community prevented that proposal from being enacted.

Judaic Studies’ status changed dramatically in 2000 when the Arizona Board of Regents formally approved the proposal to create The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies. This change enabled Judaic Studies to control its bachelor’s degree program, expand its outreach services, and to control all its faculty lines. We now have seven core faculty, fourteen affiliated faculty and two emeritus faculty. The Center now teaches hundreds of students each semester, provides dozens of community lectures each year, and maintains a high standard of scholarly excellence that is recognized worldwide.

Our Hebrew program for over twenty years has been one of the largest in the country among public universities. Judaic Studies faculty have served as executives and board members of several national and international scholarly societies, journals, and academic organizations. Our faculty now offer courses in the traditional classroom as well as in online and hybrid formats. In fact, starting this year students can now complete a Judaic Studies major fully online. We now also offer a summer program in Israel, “Arizona in Israel,” and those students report that it has a transformative impact on their understanding of Israel and the region. A review of our alumni reveals that our graduates have gone on to careers as professors, rabbis, business leaders, communal leaders, entrepreneurs, and teachers. A few moved to Israel and launched careers there. Our international reputation has been enhanced over the past twenty years by the several successful international scholarly conferences we have held on campus.

You are probably asking yourself right now, “so what are they going to do now?” Well, we are going to take it to the next level, and that in a big way. Stayed tuned for more on that in our spring newsletter! But what is most important is the students, and we can honestly say that we could not do what we do for our students were it not for your support. Your support has enabled the Center to offer tuition and travel scholarships, awards for excellence, and support for student research and training opportunities. You are having a tremendous impact in the lives of a very diverse cross section of students at The University of Arizona. We are all looking forward to building on the successes of the past seventy years. ✨

The Value of a Judaic Studies Major

Last year the Center underwent its sixth-year Academic Program Review as mandated by the Arizona Board of Regents. This is a grueling review by an external committee that focuses on every aspect of the Center’s work. The committee’s final assessment was positive overall and included some valuable ideas. One thing that stood out was the employment rate of the 43 people who graduated over the past six years. Apart from those people for whom we had no data, all of our other graduates are either in graduate school of some kind (MA, MBA, J.D., Ph.D., MD.) or employed and doing well in a wide variety of fields: education, medicine, Jewish communal service, U.S. government, hi-tech, law, and others. So, a Judaic Studies degree opens doors due to the skills in analysis, interpersonal relations, writing, history, and culture that we require of all our majors. ✨
“Arizona in Israel,” JUS’s annual summer program in the Middle East, took place successfully in May and June of 2019. Five students participated in this expanded program, which took them to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the Jezreel Valley. A special, multi-disciplinary seminar on contemporary Israeli societies capped the academic offerings in the north of the country, and was accompanied by field trips to Haifa and Nazareth.

The aim of “Arizona in Israel” is to give participants an in-depth experience of Israeli society and its various cultures. Two UofA courses “Human Rights in Israel” and “Jewish Civilization” form the academic basis of that experience, yet most of the time, students are immersed in Israel itself, which is their most important “classroom.”

Special kudos to our supporters in Tucson’s Jewish community and beyond, without whose generosity the five students could not have participated. The scholarships that these donors provided are the students’ badge of pride and achievement, and for that we are deeply thankful.

Clockwise from Left: Sam Sherer, Claire Naiman, Andrew Rosenberg, and Ana Serratos Gonzales, at the Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem; Liv Schneider, Claire Naiman, Reverend Nael Abu Rahmoun, Sam Sherer, Professor David Graizbord, and Andrew Rosenberg at Christ Church (Anglican), Nazareth; Sam Sherer in the Armenian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem; entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; Claire Naiman, Professor Leonard Hammer, staff attorney, and Zaki Sahlia, in the office of Zaki Sahlia, a human rights attorney and expert on holy sites and church lands in Jerusalem.
Student Experience: The Freedom to Experience Israel in a New Way
Liv Schneider, JUS Major, graduating Spring 2020

My experience this summer with Arizona in Israel allowed me to deepen my connection to my culture while introducing me to diverse narratives of Israel. What is so different about Arizona in Israel, as distinct from other organized trips to Israel, is the balance that Judaic Studies’ program strikes between giving students independence and providing them with a sturdy structure. That balance allowed all the student-participants and me a great deal of choice in regards to how we wanted to spend their free time - for example, exploring hidden cultural gems throughout Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, engaging in conversation with locals, or going to concerts and performances. This freedom allowed me to experience Israel in a way that gave me a sense of belonging, rather than feeling like a tourist. A major part of Professors David Graizbord’s and Leonard Hammer’s curriculum is learning through experience. Thus, we visited various organizations, museums and historical sites, which allowed us to understand the history of Israel in an interactive way within a complex social and cultural environment. Some of these experiences allowed us to have difficult conversations to expand upon our own views and opinions, and to hear other perspectives regarding issues that are relevant to our studies of social and religious rights in Israel. I am grateful for this experience, and I encourage anyone who is interested in studying abroad in Israel to take advantage of this educational and wonderful opportunity to learn by doing and not just reading.

Student Experience: Personal Growth in the Land of the Bible
Ana Serratos Gonzalez, Applied Science, Junior

It has long been a dream of mine to visit Israel, a country that I’ve read about where my personal beliefs and faith originate. Before last summer, I wanted to be able to study and learn in-depth about Jewish culture in the land of the Bible. Thanks to Judaic Studies’ summer program, this dream became a reality.

What caught my attention about the “Arizona in Israel” summer program was the passion of its Director, Prof. David Graizbord, for Jewish culture, and his enthusiasm for having students observe, learn, and experience Israel firsthand. Dr. Graizbord was very caring and informative. This is what stuck out to me as I made the decision to go to Israel: The support of a professor who was adamantly in favor of students’ desires to study culture and see other parts of the world.

The most significant aspect of my summer experience in Israel was experiencing the rich history of Jerusalem, and in particular visiting the Israel Museum. Seeing ancient artifacts from thousands of years ago made me feel like I was actually witnessing the stories of the ancient land of the Bible that I have read. To see elements of these stories first-hand, and to walk in historic places in which these narratives were shaped, was something that touched me personally. Not only did I learn about Jewish Civilization, and Human rights in Israel, but I grew as a person. Being able to share this experience with other students and learn from them gave me a different perspective on the world, and on myself, than I previously had. There were times that I was humbled by learning new things that I had never known about. The students with whom I shared this experience taught me what it was to take a look at myself as a person and at my own character, and to have the strength to change parts of myself that needed to be changed. They cared about how I felt and helped me to look at another culture through a new lens and heart. Everyone who was a part of putting everything together for this trip was wonderful. I have never met such a caring department as the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies. They made me feel welcomed, and answered every question I had before I left, and afterward. The professors were also two of my favorite parts of this trip.

The way they cared about us and went out of their way to make us feel comfortable and valued was the most touching aspect of this experience. Watching them speak Hebrew and engage in the culture was the best “classroom time.” Not only did we get to study, but we got to engage with everyone we came across in Israel. A big “thank you” to the community donors for supporting me and other students’ travel and study in Israel.
Hello! Please let me introduce myself, my name is Jackie Schmidt and I am joining the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies as the new Outreach Coordinator. I am very excited to be joining this department and team. A little about myself – I have lived in Tucson most of my life and pursued my undergraduate degree here at the University of Arizona, receiving my Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Most recently I received my Master's degree from Arizona State University in Family Studies and Human Development.

I have over 10 years experience working, volunteering and outreaching in the Tucson community. My coordinating experience comes from working 3 years in the local hospitality industry, engaging with clients from all over the world and working at the University of Arizona for the past 8 years coordinating events and logistics for top employers, recruiting our students for full time employment.

I’m excited to be joining this department and fully involving myself to help bring attention to Judaic Studies. I am eager to learn as much as I can and I look forward to getting to know students, alumni and those in the community who are interested in the study of Jewish Civilization.

Meet Our New Outreach Coordinator

Many students and their parents love the idea of studying Jewish civilization, but may wonder how “practical” pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Judaic Studies might be. My answer, as JUS’s departmental Director of Undergraduate Studies, is two-fold:

First, what matters to a student’s post-college success and personal fulfillment is not what he or she studies, but rather how he or she studies. Learning about Judaic culture is not more or less likely to get one admitted to professional and graduate schools, than it is to study, say, Business, Political Science, or Communications.

Our graduates typically secure good jobs and pursue graduate and professional degrees because of how well they think, create, and communicate. It is not because they have checked all the supposedly necessary or “typical” “boxes” when preparing their resumes.

Second, at JUS we offer extensive skills-development in areas such as cultural analysis, research, writing, and other skills that graduates apply in a wide variety of fields. JUS is a multi-disciplinary field; it is not about doing one thing all the time.

More importantly, the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is extraordinary in that we pay very close attention to all our B.A. students. They do not “get lost” in a huge university when the enter Judaic Studies. They are anchored and nurtured individually.

Our classes tend to be small by UofA standards, and are typically taught by professors with doctorates rather than by overworked, underpaid graduate students.

Our faculty really love to teach and have won teaching awards from the College and University.

Equally significant is the fact that by and large, JUS does not graduate rabbis, ministers, archivists, and academics – though a number of our graduates have successfully pursued these important careers.

Instead, our more typical graduates go on to engage in fields that prize cultural competence, diversity, and transferable skills. They become successful educators, human resources specialists, law students, medical students, business students, administrators and staffers of non-profit organizations and NGOs, urban planners, social workers, psychologists, historians, archaeologists, travel writers, finance specialists, political advisors and activists, legislative aides, think-tank members, dancers, real estate agents and developers, accountants, and so on.

We especially value, encourage, and arrange internships-for-credit and independent studies courses, as these deepen students’ engagement with Judaica and with the world around them.

My job as Undergrad Director is to help our current B.A. students take advantage and develop all of the above-mentioned competitive strengths. I also help our B.A. students, as well as prospective JUS students, to complete their B.A. programs on time, and to navigate all the exciting academic challenges that JUS has to offer.

Professor David Graizbord Answers: What Does an “Undergraduate Advisor” Do?
Professor Beth Alpert Nakhai: Mentoring Women in Archaeology

I am, as many in our Judaic Studies community know, an archaeologist and biblical scholar whose work focuses on ancient Canaan and Israel, and on the Hebrew Bible. My parents were both healers – my mother a therapist and my father a surgeon – but I was content (or so I thought) to deal with the distant past. The longer I worked, though, the more concerned I became about gender discrimination as an obstacle to success for so many talented, highly educated women. The American Schools of Oriental Research is the professional society for the study of the ancient Near East. Prof. Ed Wright serves as a trustee, as have I. In the mid-1990s, I noted that at ASOR’s annual meeting, women in antiquity were hardly discussed, although there were lots of papers about pigs. (Scholars study pork consumption to see whether the presence or absence of pig bones at archaeological sites can reliably identify Israelites and their Philistine neighbors. Biblical [Lev 11:4-8; Deut 14:7-8] and later Jewish law prohibit pork consumption.) I introduced a new session at ASOR, The World of Women: Gender and Archaeology – and it is now entering its third decade.

But what about modern women? Shockingly few held leadership positions in ASOR, and my study of women on ASOR’s Board of Trustees revealed that this gender imbalance was a century in the making. My position on ASOR’s Board Nominations Committee enabled me to rectify that problem. In 2011, ASOR’s then-president Timothy Harrison (University of Toronto) created the Initiative on the Status of Women, and asked me to head it. As chair, I have worked to support and empower women in our field. Our Steering Committee meets annually, providing a forum for women to identify and discuss the critical issues that we all face. The annual Mentoring Lunch that I organized gives emerging scholars the opportunity to engage with senior women, to share experiences and make connections. I developed a series of “Talking About” workshops, which focus on those problems faced by women, in particular, regarding fieldwork, academia, jobs and family life, and more.

I involved two Judaic Studies majors, Valerie Schlegel (2015) and Amanda Bauer (2017), in my projects advancing women working in Near Eastern Studies. They did research and writing, and made stellar presentations at ASOR meetings. Valerie studied female excavation directors, while Amanda studied women who are honored with – or contribute to – commemorative volumes. They were, I believe, the only undergraduates ever to present papers at the meetings. Finally, in 2014, 2015, and 2019, I circulated a survey about fieldwork conditions, the Survey on Field Safety: Middle East, North Africa, and Mediterranean Basin. This enabled me to open a discussion within ASOR about ways that excavation directors can make their projects safe and equitable for all participants. None of this is what grad school trained me to do, but it is work that I find important, compelling, and engaging. I am now writing a book about women working in Near Eastern archaeology, to be published by Routledge Press. I consider myself fortunate to work in the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, with colleagues who are so supportive of all that I do.

2016 Grad Edden Dembsky Earns Master’s Degree in Jewish Leadership

2016 graduate Edden Dembsky recently earned her Master’s Degree in Organizational Leadership and Innovation from the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. Dembsky is the Director of Student Life at Hillel - San Diego State University.

When asked how her BA with a double major in Judaic Studies and Communication prepared her for her current position, Dembsky replied, “In my work as a Jewish professional at SDSU Hillel, I constantly find myself using what I learned throughout my time as a student in Judaic Studies at U of A. The variety of classes available taught me so much about the Jewish story through language, culture, history, triumphs and tragedies, and so much more. I am thankful to the amazing teachers and mentors that helped me along the way to now educate college students about Judaism and how it can be relevant to their life.”

We wish Edden continued success in her future endeavors.
**Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series**

**Drink Your Wine with a Merry Heart:**
Wine in the Hebrew Bible & Archaeology  
Mon., Nov. 18 • 7pm  
Tucson JCC • Free

![Prof. Jennie Ebeling](image1.jpg)

Prof. Jennie Ebeling  
University of Evansville

Wine, the beverage described most frequently by the biblical writers, played important roles in the ancient Israelite diet, economy, and religious life. The recent discovery of a large, well-preserved winery complex at Jezreel, in the fertile Jezreel Valley in Israel’s Galilee, offers insights into the technology of wine production in the Iron Age (ca. 1200-586 BCE) and provides context for the dramatic story of Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21. In this lecture, Prof. Ebeling will discuss wine’s significance in Israelite culture, present the results of the excavation of the Jezreel winery, and suggest how this discovery informs our understanding of the bloody events surrounding Ahab and Jezebel at Jezreel.

**Aliyah of the Mind: Zionism as Jewish Emancipation**  
Mon., Dec. 16 • 7pm  
Tucson JCC • Free

![Dr. David Hazony](image2.jpg)

Dr. David Hazony  
Executive Director, The Israel Education Fund

Most people think Zionism is about supporting Israel. But really it means something much deeper: It’s about building and doing and Jewish pride. It was launched a century ago as a revolution against the stagnation of Jewish life and in the face of increasingly dangerous antisemitism. Dr. Hazony will focus on both public and educational aspects of this new approach to promoting Zionism and Jewish values in the 21st Century. Hazony finds that the way to attract today’s young people to Zionism is to connect them with the vibrancy and creativity of contemporary Israeli culture. He will explain how he thinks this can work and why it is important for the future of Zionism.

**Historicity of David and Solomon According to the Texts and Archaeology**  
Tues., Nov. 19 • 4pm  
UA Hillel • Free

![Prof. William G. Dever](image3.jpg)

Prof. William G. Dever  
Professor Emeritus, The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies and Near Eastern Studies

One of the most pressing issues in biblical studies is the historicity of the biblical narratives of kings David and Solomon. These kings are reported to have lived in the tenth century BCE, and the biblical stories about them present them as kings reigning over a significant and expanding kingdom. Recent studies, however, have attacked this image as mere romance. That assault on the historicity of David and Solomon is based on both archaeological data and biblical interpretation. In his lecture Prof. Dever will explain how the skillful use of both archaeology and the biblical text can together produce a reliable reconstruction of the Kingdom of Israel’s earliest years.

**Sally & Ralph Duchin Campus Lecture Series**

**Aliyah of the Mind: Zionism as Jewish Emancipation**  
Mon., Dec. 16 • 7pm  
Tucson JCC • Free

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**Historicity of David and Solomon According to the Texts and Archaeology**  
Tues., Nov. 19 • 4pm  
UA Hillel • Free
In this lecture, Prof. Zvi Zohar, a leading expert in Sephardic culture and rabbinic jurisprudence, will discuss the views of three important Sephardic rabbis of the twentieth century on the moral commitments of Jews towards all humans, and on the obligation of a Jewish State to accord equal rights to its all citizens. The presentation will be based upon reading key texts authored by Rabbi Khalfon Moshe HaCohen (1874-1949), Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uzziel (1880-1953), and Rabbi Hayyim David HaLevi (1924-1998).

Zvi Zohar is Chauncey Stillman Professor of Sephardic Law and Ethics at Bar Ilan University. He teaches in the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Jewish Studies, and from 2001 to 2011 he headed Bar Ilan University’s Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and the Strengthening of Jewish Vitality. Zohar is a Senior Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies in Jerusalem, where he heads the Alan A. and Loraine Fischer Family Center for Contemporary Halakha. He was also a founding faculty member of Paideia – The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden.

We are pleased to announce that you can now complete the requirements for a major in Judaic Studies fully online. This is made possible in part by opening our foreign language requirement to Jewish community languages other than Hebrew. Moreover, the Center now offers a wide array of courses online.

Online is where the action is in education these days. Recent studies and surveys have made it abundantly clear that today’s students genuinely like and in many cases actually prefer online courses. It gives them more control over when, where, and how they learn. While previous generations knew only the traditional “brick and mortar” or “face-to-face” classroom, this generation is accustomed to the virtual or online classroom. Our professors have been learning the necessary skills for this new kind of teaching, and we are now beginning to see good results from this in terms of enrollments and student reviews.

The Center continues to adjust its curriculum to fit student needs and interests. This past year we instituted a major change in the foreign language requirement for the Bachelor’s Degree in Judaic Studies. Prior to this year the Judaic Studies major required two full years of Modern Hebrew. Based on a survey of Judaic/Jewish Studies programs around the country and of our own students, the faculty identified this requirement as one possible factor restricting the adoption of Judaic Studies as a major. With that in mind, we changed the foreign language requirement to reflect broader interests of multiple sub-disciplines or subfields within Judaic Studies. The new foreign language requirement allows more flexibility in the selection of a foreign language. Students may still take two years of Hebrew to fulfill the university’s foreign language requirement and the major requirement, but they may now also select other languages that are or have historically been used by significant segments of Jewish communities worldwide. Those languages include Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. We expect this change to have a positive impact on the number of students electing Judaic Studies as a first or second major and to increase the exposure of UoA students to Judaic Studies.

Online Bachelor of Arts in Judaic Studies

Courses Available Online
JUS 160D: Jewish Thought and Culture (Gen Ed, Tier 1: Traditions/Cultures)
JUS 301: Jewish Civilization
JUS 321: Women and Judaism
JUS 322: Modern Jewish Thought
JUS 332: The Holocaust:
Witnesses & Representations
JUS 348: Israeli Fiction and Poetry
JUS 370A: Modern Jewish History (General Education Course)
JUS 370B: Medieval Jewish History (General Education Course)
JUS 372a: History and Religion of Ancient Israel: Biblical Period (General Education Course)
JUS 372b: History and Religion of Ancient Israel: Second Temple Period (General Education Course)
JUS 377: Modern Israel
JUS 384: Human Rights in Israel
JUS 387: History of Antisemitism
JUS 452: Israeli Women

Online-Only B.A. and Language Requirements

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Donald Diamond (1928-2019): The Legacy of a Leader

This past March we lost a legend; Donald Diamond passed away at 91. He lived an amazing life, and together with Joan (z”l), his wife of 64 years, he had a tremendous impact on the lives of millions of people. As anyone deeply involved with The University of Arizona will know, the university would not be where it is today in terms of its local, regional, national, and international reputation and impact were it not for all that Don and Joan Diamond did through the decades. Just walk across campus and you will see that they, their family, and their foundation have shaped the appearance of our campus. Beyond that, however, their support and encouragement allowed dozens of university enterprises to get off the ground, grow, and thrive. Millions of people benefit in one way or another from the work of those research, teaching, medical, and service units. Their efforts have touched hearts, inspired lives, met needs, advanced science, and in a very real way have made the world a better place.

Tucson and Southern Arizona have benefited from Don and Joan's generous support and sage leadership. Everywhere you turn in Tucson you can see the fingerprints of their work and the benefits that those projects (homes, businesses, social services, fine arts, community organizations, etc.) bring to the lives of Tucsonans on a daily basis. In the history of the people who have provided visionary leadership that has propelled Tucson, Don Diamond’s reputation shines brightest. For example, every time I drive past the Diamond Children’s Medical Center, I look up at the logo and just smile and think warmly of Don and Joan. I once walked into the building and immediately found that it exuded Don and Joan’s sincere personal interest and deep compassion for others, and I am sure that it provides comfort at precisely the time when kids and their families need it most.

When it comes to the Center for Judaic Studies at the UofA, all I can say is that were it not for Don and Joan, the Center would not be where it is today. I will definitely miss Don’s presence at the meetings of the Center’s Advisory Board. Apart from his business savvy and political acumen, I will miss his humor and love of life. He was a master at moving discussions forward and introducing a light-hearted touch at just the right time. In one of our last conversations, Don told me that he was concerned about the continuation of the Jewish community’s involvement with the University. I laughed and told him that of course it would, thanks to his work as a model and mentor. There are many people in our community who are stepping up to continue that important, mutually beneficial relationship. I also assured him that we in the Center will not drop the ball. We have hired and supported people in Judaic Studies and elsewhere in the university who share Don’s deep commitment to our disciplines, our community and its relation to the university, and our engagement with Israel. I reassured him that his values and goals will continue to impact the UofA in the years to come. I promised him that his time and investments in all these areas will pay rich dividends for generations. I and everyone in the Center are committed to keeping that promise.

The ancient Jewish texts speak of giants once living in the land of Israel. Don Diamond was a giant in our land, and we are all fortunate to have lived in the time of this energetic, forward-looking giant. He cannot be replaced, but we can have an impact for good in the 21st century by following his vision, his values, and his commitment to the community and university. His mantle now falls on our shoulders. The memory of Donald Diamond will always inspire us and will always be a blessing.

– Ed Wright
Antisemitism continues to plague our world. It appears in a wide range of forms from ill-informed statements to murderous rampages. That it never goes away is obvious to all. But how is today’s antisemitism different from earlier forms, and how can individuals and societies combat it?

The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies will host an international conference focused on the tropes and vocabulary of political Antisemitism. Antisemitism has been on the rise since the turn of 21st century in Europe and, more recently also in the United States, not only in terms of the number of daily attacks against Jews and Jewish communities, but also in political discourse, both on the far right and the far left.

In this conference leading scholars and community leaders will examine the vocabulary and tropes of 21st century antisemitism, will explain why these tropes remain popular in political discourse, and will offer suggestions on how present-day Antisemitism can be combated. The conference will take place on February 23-24, 2020, at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. Details about registration, the lectures and speakers, and the plenary dinner with a special guest speaker will be announced in November 2019.
Save the Date:
Two-Day Conference February 23-24, 2020