

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

YU TODAY

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MOVING HISTORY FORWARD

With Values & Leadership



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)

ERICA BROWN

Vice Provost for Values and Leadership
Director, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein
Center for Values and Leadership

RABBI YEHUDA SARNA

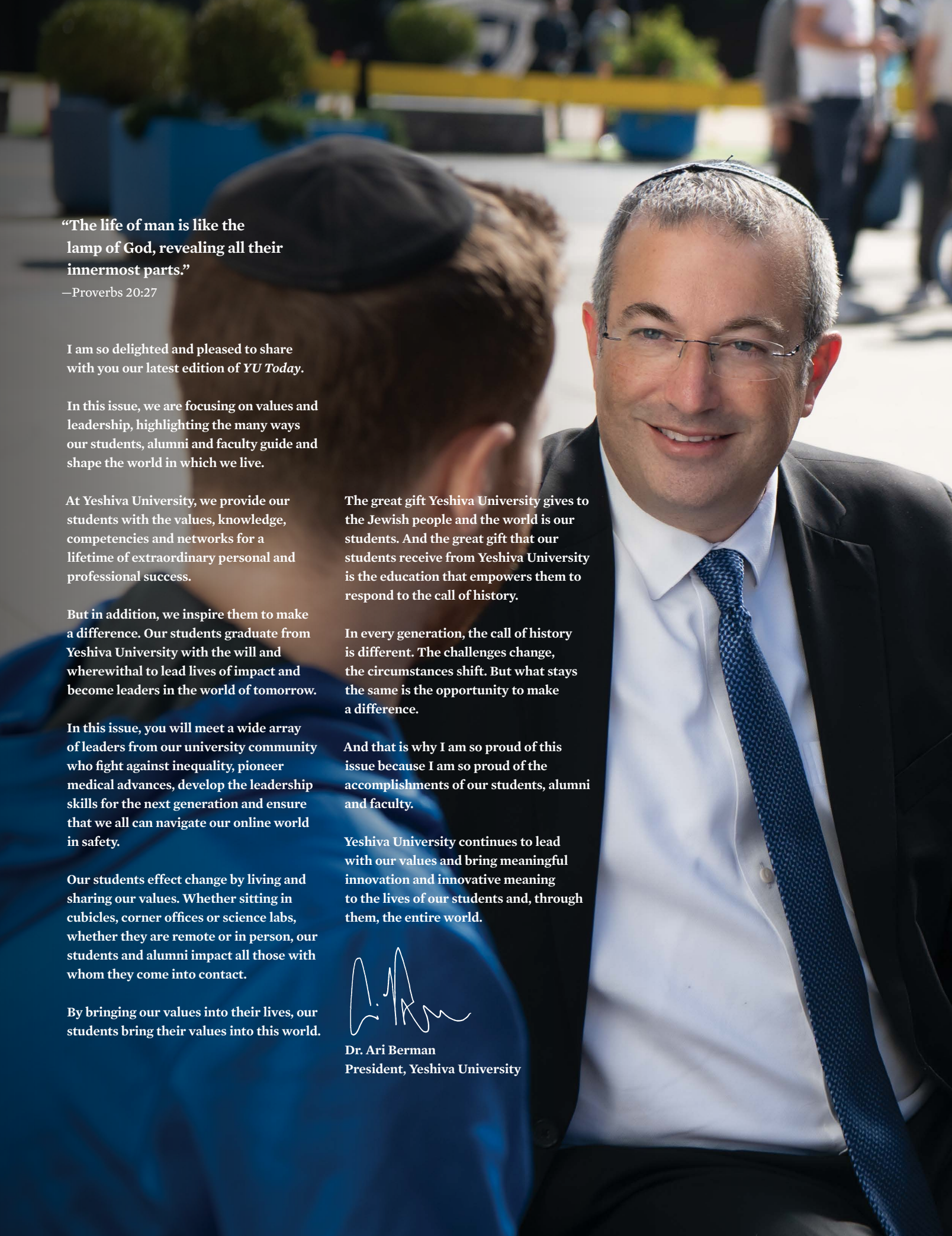
Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Council
of the Emirates

SIVAN TEHILA

Program Director
M.S. in Cybersecurity

JOSH WOLFF

Chief Operating Officer
OurCrowd



“The life of man is like the lamp of God, revealing all their innermost parts.”

—Proverbs 20:27

I am so delighted and pleased to share with you our latest edition of *YU Today*.

In this issue, we are focusing on values and leadership, highlighting the many ways our students, alumni and faculty guide and shape the world in which we live.

At Yeshiva University, we provide our students with the values, knowledge, competencies and networks for a lifetime of extraordinary personal and professional success.

But in addition, we inspire them to make a difference. Our students graduate from Yeshiva University with the will and wherewithal to lead lives of impact and become leaders in the world of tomorrow.

In this issue, you will meet a wide array of leaders from our university community who fight against inequality, pioneer medical advances, develop the leadership skills for the next generation and ensure that we all can navigate our online world in safety.

Our students effect change by living and sharing our values. Whether sitting in cubicles, corner offices or science labs, whether they are remote or in person, our students and alumni impact all those with whom they come into contact.

By bringing our values into their lives, our students bring their values into this world.

The great gift Yeshiva University gives to the Jewish people and the world is our students. And the great gift that our students receive from Yeshiva University is the education that empowers them to respond to the call of history.

In every generation, the call of history is different. The challenges change, the circumstances shift. But what stays the same is the opportunity to make a difference.

And that is why I am so proud of this issue because I am so proud of the accomplishments of our students, alumni and faculty.

Yeshiva University continues to lead with our values and bring meaningful innovation and innovative meaning to the lives of our students and, through them, the entire world.

Dr. Ari Berman
President, Yeshiva University

Rights. Camera. Action.

PROF. MICHELLE GREENBERG-KOBRIN

Director, Filmmakers Legal Clinic

Founding Director, Center for Visual Advocacy

Founding Director, Leadership Program at the Heyman Center on Corporate Governance

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

For a filmmaker committed to telling important stories about controversial topics, there is more to the act of creation than directing, shooting and editing. Legal hurdles, such as negotiations, contracts and securing intellectual property, can delay or even derail an artist’s vision, and this is where Prof. Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, director of the Filmmakers Legal Clinic (FLC) at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, comes to the rescue.

The students working under her supervision in the FLC provide pro bono legal services as well as education and training to visual advocates, filmmakers and video journalists around the world working on projects designed to move the social justice needle and diversify the stories told through media. To date, the clinic has represented over 250 films, many of which have appeared in leading U.S. and international film festivals.

The FLC is part of the Center for Visual Advocacy (CVA), of which Greenberg-Kobrin is also founding director, that serves as the law school’s hub for students, academics and practitioners interested in bringing about meaningful social change via visual advocacy, operating at the intersection of law, visual arts, media and social justice. The CVA and FLC sit at the junction of Cardozo’s intellectual property program and alternative dispute resolution programs, each ranked among the top ten programs nationally.

Greenberg-Kobrin came to this work after a career as the Dean of Students and Lecturer-in-Law at Columbia Law School and as an attorney in the corporate securities and financial institutions groups at Arnold & Porter LLP. At Cardozo, she is also the founding director of the Leadership Program at the Heyman Center on Corporate Governance and teaches about intellectual property, transactional law, negotiation, corporations and leadership.

“In spending time working with law students and lawyers,” she recalled, “I saw how we could better train them to be proactive, wise counselors who help people see each other as partners solving a problem rather than as adversaries attacking each other. In a divided world, training lawyers to do this strikes me as the most important work we can engage in.”

The issues tackled by the works on which the FLC has worked over the past year are impressive, including the school-to-prison pipeline, how the high cost of insulin affects diabetics who cannot access treatment, discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, challenges facing young Native Americans, racial justice in the United States, women in the Hasidic Jewish community, the scarcity of climate change stories in film and television, and the experience of living in the deaf community.



Equally impressive are the works that have gone on to garner acclaim, such as *Farewell Amor* (a man exiled from Angola for 17 years reunites with his family), which won the 2020 Sundance Institute Producer’s Award; *The Boxers of Brule* (about a girls’ boxing team on the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation), shown at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival; and *Marisol* (about the terrors of being accused of being undocumented), currently streaming on HBO. “The Clinic allows us to work on a wide range of social justice issues and shine a light on people and stories that would go unnoticed.”

Her ultimate vision is one that sees lawyers “partnering with others outside the legal profession to bring about a more just and equitable world by moving legal advocacy forward into a new digital age, when people are often most compelled by visual media.” She hopes that when students move on, “they will approach transactional lawyering with the eyes of one who sees a path for utilizing those skills to increase justice. I look forward to seeing how our graduates serve as a dynamic and powerful force for change.”

Taking the Lead on Values and Leadership

DR. ERICA BROWN

'88 Stern College for Women

Director, The Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks–Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership

Vice Provost for Values and Leadership

Terri and Andrew Herenstein established The Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks–Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership to honor Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who died on Nov. 7, 2020.

Dr. Erica Brown '88S, the renowned author, academic and educator, is the Center's inaugural director and vice provost of values and leadership for the University. She comes to YU from The George Washington University, where she served as an associate professor and the director of the Mayberg Center for Jewish Education and Leadership. She will continue her work in education by teaching at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration.

In addition to bringing over three decades of exceptional communal leadership experience to this position as well as a distinguished résumé of writings, presentations and awards, she also brings something perhaps even more precious: a personal history with Rabbi Sacks, who was her thesis adviser at the University of London where she earned a Master of Arts in Judaic Studies.

You have noted that “the shepherd is the perfect metaphor for leadership.” How would this apply to Rabbi Sacks? Biblically, we find the role of shepherd stamped everywhere as a precursor to leadership because shepherds constantly move among their flocks to guide, to protect and to set direction. Rabbi Sacks was always preparing his flocks for the future, tending to them until the very last weeks of his life. He never sat still. In *Studies in Spirituality*, Rabbi Sacks writes, “The righteous do not sit still. They do not have a quiet life.”

You have described him as one who preferred to act modestly. Would he be comfortable having the Center named after him? I believe he would find solace in knowing that his work and ideas have a house here at Yeshiva University. In his book on leadership, he writes, “Ideas are what keep the human spirit alive.” His ideas will continue to be relevant as we negotiate the complexity of modern life.

What would be your elevator pitch description of “leadership” and “leader”? Good leaders have honed a discrete set of skills—from exceptional public speaking to running meetings well to managing people and conflict—by integrating what they study with how they behave in the real world. I want people to regard leadership as a discipline with a body of literature and a host of aspirations, challenges, practices and outcomes informed by the highest ethical standards.

Not everyone wants to be a leader. What about being a good follower? For years, I've wanted to write a book called *Followers*, which now might have to wait until I retire! We tend to think of leadership as a “permanent label” rather than a set of activities, and the truth is that good leaders are not “out front” in every setting. Sometimes they stand before a crowd, and sometimes they work backstage following directions. There is nobility to being a follower, which means being a stakeholder who both respects authority and challenges it appropriately when necessary.

Can the work of leadership development really create transformation? The work of transformation is fascinating. I've done a lot of thinking about change management. Organizations, like people, can often limp along and justify their own mediocrity. But I have also seen firsthand the power of individuals with grit and persistence single-handedly shift the culture of an organization. When that happens, it's a beautiful thing.

If the Sacks–Herenstein Center educated everyone at YU to go forth as a leader, what would change in the United States? It's time to own our spiritual superpowers. Current research demonstrates that people of faith lead more fulfilled, more meaningful lives because of their beliefs and the support of their communities. YU graduates should be proud of our values and leverage them to create a better society as exemplary citizens who care about a better America. We can give that gift to others, and we must.



Best. YU. Team. Ever.

ELLIOT STEINMETZ

'02 Sy Syms School of Business
Head Men's Basketball Coach
Partner, Rosenberg & Steinmetz PC

United Center in Chicago. Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. TD Garden in Boston. The Max Stern Athletic Center in Washington Heights. All are homes to the most winning basketball teams in history. Sure, the last one isn't as well known as the first three, but it's getting there thanks to the astonishing play by the YU Macs men's basketball team under the guidance of their coach, Elliot Steinmetz, a graduate of the Sy Syms School of Business at Yeshiva University.

Their stats are simply ... amazing.

For five weeks during 2021, the Macs were ranked No. 1 in the country by D3hoops.com, and for two years prior to that, from 2019-2021, they owned a 50-game winning streak, the second longest in Division III men's basketball history. In addition, they won the 2019-2020 Skyline Conference Championship and earned a place in that year's Sweet 16 before the postseason was canceled due to the pandemic.

So how did a kid from Woodmere, New York, come to be head coach of a team whose spectacular success has been featured on scores of national and local news outlets such as AP, CNN, CNBC, ESPN.com, Axios, *The Wall Street Journal*, WNBC-TV and WABC-TV and, of course, in many Jewish newspapers around the world?

Steinmetz began coaching high school basketball at various Jewish day schools while studying at St. John's University School of Law, racking up the wins. He also coached two United States 18 and Under Boys Basketball teams in the Maccabiah Games in Israel and two at the Maccabi Australia International Games (all won gold), catching the eyes of some basketball-playing YU alumni who approached him for the open position of head coach.

His secret sauce to winning games? Without blinking an eye, he answered, "Winning players." The Macs have a well-deserved reputation as being fearless but "menschy," such as bending down to lift up a fallen opponent. "Just seeing our student athletes in action on and off the court are prime examples of YU's values and leadership," said Steinmetz.

His devotion to his players is matched by their devotion to him. "Coach Steinmetz is very cool and collected under pressure," said Ofek Reef, a guard on the team. "The lessons we learn on the court



by watching him lead we can take off the court and use in our day-to-day lives." Forward Gabriel Leifer added, "He's a great coach and also really cares about us, our personal lives and our future. It's really felt around the team."

Steinmetz, who was named D3hoops.com National Coach of the Year for the 2019-2020 season, knows a thing or two about other courts as well. He and Rachele Rosenberg are the founding partners at Rosenberg & Steinmetz PC, a law firm with a practice focused on commercial real estate transactions and litigation as well as pro bono work for various nonprofits. And you may have heard that the name Steinmetz is also now associated with success on the baseball field as his son Jacob was recently drafted to a major league team. Speaking of his son's achievements, the proud dad said, "I will always be more impressed by the journey and sacrifice he made to get there."

Steinmetz is planning for the day when his players will graduate and move on to the next stage in their lives. When asked what the primary takeaway is that he wants them to carry with them after playing with the Macs, his answer is clear: "Treating people around you the right way no matter what the environment or adversity being faced is the single most important character trait in life." It's a lesson well taught by his example.

How far the Macs will go this season is anyone's guess. Yet one thing is for sure: Those of us watching and cheering on this phenomenal and talented group of guys and their coach are thrilled to be along for the ride.

Investing in the Greater Good

JOSH WOLFF

'93 Yeshiva College
Chief Operating Officer, OurCrowd

They are guiding philosophies of two esteemed communities just a few blocks from each other in Washington Heights: the directive to live an honorable life infused with Jewish values, espoused by Yeshiva University, and "Torah Im Derech Eretz" of the German-Jewish community, an ethical code of conduct for how to live as an observant Jew in the modern world.

Josh Wolff, the grandson of four German-Jewish grandparents and a graduate of YU, is proud to be a product of both communities whose ideals continue to serve as a compass in his personal and professional lives.

By day, Wolff is chief operating officer of OurCrowd, a fast-growing venture capital firm and a leading online alternative investments platform based in Israel. Among his many responsibilities are overseeing the company's operating performance, developing the strategic direction of the company, and the implementation of new global initiatives across five continents and 11 countries.

By day and by night, he's a man with a tireless commitment to improving the world as a volunteer leader of, and adviser to, a variety of social, educational and charitable causes. This generosity and selflessness were "shaped, above all, by my parents, through their personal example, the values they modeled and the ethics they instilled in me and my brothers, Daniel and Binyamin," both graduates of YU and its rabbinical school.

After graduating with a major in engineering from Yeshiva College, Wolff earned an advanced degree in industrial engineering and operations research from Columbia University. In 2007, he and his wife, Tzipora Schulman Wolff, a physician and graduate of Stern College for Women, and their four children moved to Israel. They are always looking for ways to contribute and "take our own personal blessings and pay it forward." One such example is his involvement with Kav L'Noar in Jerusalem, a nonprofit that helps thousands of teenagers and their parents cope with emotional and mental health challenges.

In 2015, he joined OurCrowd, which continues to break new barriers in the world of startup investing, powered by its passion for "democratization and crowd building." As Wolff explained, "By leveraging the strength of a global community of experts from dozens of industries, we are able to identify top-notch innovative technology startups for investment across all sectors: cyber, AI, medical, digital health, mobility, agrifood and fintech, just to name a few."

He is exceptionally proud to be part of a company committed to the "double bottom line" and which strives "for social impact in every innovation we select for our portfolio." In fact, hundreds of companies on its platform, such as Beyond Meat, ReWalk and Lemonade, are helping humanity and working to save the planet.

OurCrowd also requires that its Israeli portfolio companies donate a portion of their equity to charity as part of the closing of any funding round.

For someone overseeing a company with over \$2 billion (USD) in assets, Wolff is an extremely down-to-earth guy with a great sense of humor. He's also an immensely proud husband of Tzipora, who, as he said, "has contributed to and improved the lives of thousands through her clinical work while also publishing two books to help patients around the world address pain treatment. Hers is far and away the proudest professional achievement in our household."

The three primary principles he employs in his personal and professional lives stem, once again, from his parents: never shy away from hard work, embrace each experience, and treat every person and relationship with dignity, sensitivity and care.

Josh Wolff embodies the honorable values of his upbringing, heritage and education by dedicating himself to improving the lives of others.

His grandparents would be very proud.



At the Intersection of Science, Management and Entrepreneurship

DR. RANA KHAN

Founding Director, M.S. in Biotechnology Management and Entrepreneurship
Katz School of Science and Health



According to Dr. Rana Khan, Biotechnology Management and Entrepreneurship (BME) weaves science, management and entrepreneurship into a single program focused on “commercializing biopharmaceuticals and devices, managing product and customer development, overseeing compliance and regulatory issues, and managing clinical trials in the biotech and pharma industries.” She is determined to establish BME as a major actor in New York City’s evolution into a life sciences powerhouse in the 21st century.

She grew up in a small university town southeast of New Delhi, India. After high school, her parents wanted her to become a doctor, so she did one year of medical

school “but did not like it.” She switched to chemistry and biology and then came to the United States for her master’s in biochemistry from Tulane University and her Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology from the University of Maryland at College Park.

After an early career as a bench scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, she became vice dean in the graduate school at the University of Maryland Global Campus. During her 15-year tenure, she built out many science- and information technology-related programs, including being program director for the master’s degree in biotechnology, a position that fit well “with my preference for working with the practical and applied aspects of biology.”

In 2018, she accepted the invitation of

Dr. Paul Russo, dean of the Katz School, to head up BME because “it was impossible to resist the opportunity to build a program from the ground up” where she could apply the full complement of her technical, academic and administrative skills.

Now in its fourth year, Dr. Khan feels that BME is achieving the practical and idealistic goals it had set for itself. “On the practical level,” she explained, “we have been able to thoroughly ground students in the science, management and entrepreneurship principles of the biotechnology industry.” The required capstone projects demand that students “work with a startup on a project the company wants and not only apply what they have learned but also study the technical, management and business issues important to this industry.”

On the more idealistic plane, she wants students to come away with more than just technical and managerial competence. “I want them to be open to doing things outside the job description and emerge as problem solvers, no matter what the problem.” To do that, Dr. Khan has built in leadership opportunities where students can take on different roles in the required group projects and start clubs and organize events that build community.

She is also extremely satisfied that BME is increasing the presence of women because “it is one of my deepest desires to have women thrive in this field. We are thrilled that at least half our students and faculty are female.” Katz also has a B.A./M.S. program where students at Stern College for Women (as well as Yeshiva College) can take up to nine graduate credits toward both the bachelor’s and master’s degrees. “We’re getting many more women through this pipeline,” she explained, “because after completing the bachelor’s, students can finish the graduate degree in just one more year.”

Of course, I want employers to snap up our students because they are coming out of this program, and it is immensely gratifying to see our graduates—smart, motivated, real go-getters—pursuing careers and even building companies, such as the team that created Growmics, a plant genomics company.”

But more important to her is that “our graduates go on to make a difference in the industry and promote the Katz School slogan of ‘making the world a healthier, happier and safer place.’”

A Master Teacher and Scholar for the Ages

RABBI DR. MICHAEL ROSENSWEIG

'80 Yeshiva College, '80 Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

'96 Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies

Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

Rosh Kollel, Beren Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies

Nathan and Perel Schupf Chair in Talmud, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

A towering intellect, whose scholarship is characterized by deep erudition and creativity, Rabbi Dr. Michael Rosensweig uniquely inspires his thousands of students, the lay and rabbinic leaders of tomorrow, to devote their lives to deeply engaging with and spreading Torah. His thorough hold on the breadth and depth of Torah, combined with his vast intellectual reach in all of the classic fields of western intellectual thought, inform his powerful thought leadership as a primary exemplar and expositor of Yeshiva University’s values and worldview.

Rabbi Rosensweig takes seriously the vital task of conveying the wisdom of the halachic [Jewish law] tradition to future rabbinic leaders, and he accomplishes this great responsibility through a personal style of warmth, compassion and humility as well as a strong professional commitment to fostering initiative, inquisitiveness and independent thinking in his students. As he explained, “I want my students to fully internalize the richness and depth of halachic values and recognize the relevance of this special education for a life of meaning as they interact with others and have an impact upon Jewish and general society.”

He is guided by the many revered rabbis and leaders who were expert authorities in Jewish law and practice and is inspired by their wisdom and insights, which he studied as a student at Yeshiva University. After earning a bachelor’s from Yeshiva College, he

went on to receive semicha [rabbinic ordination] from RIETS and a Ph.D. in medieval Jewish history “under the tutelage of an exceptional scholar, Dr. Haym Soloveitchik,” from the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

He feels privileged to also have been a student of two great rabbinic personalities: Rav Aharon Lichtenstein (at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel where he studied) and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, otherwise known as the Rav, at YU. They, along with pivotal family influences, were the predominant teachers on his intellectual, educational, spiritual and personal journey. “The extraordinary combination of personal integrity, colossal intellectual rigor and personal creativity exemplified distinctively by each of my great mentors remains a powerful source of inspiration and is the foundation for the proper balance of innovation and tradition that characterizes the halachic thought that we try to transmit to our students.”

His most enduring influence, however, was his late father, Rabbi Dr. Bernard Rosensweig z”l, who passed away in 2021, a YU alumnus as well as a prominent communal rabbi in Toronto and in later years, Queens, New York. “He was also a beloved professor of Jewish history at Yeshiva College,” said Rabbi Rosensweig, “and had a singular way of integrating historical scholarship with the substance and ethos of traditional Jewish learning. His approach encapsulated the unique academic-spiritual potential of Yeshiva University.” That proud legacy and deep connection to YU has continued with his own family. He and his wife, Smadar, a professor of Bible at Stern College for Women and a popular lecturer throughout the country, are exceptionally proud that each of their seven children has been educated at YU.

Many of his students will become pulpit rabbis and teachers, while others will pursue a wide range of professions. Whatever paths his students take, Rabbi Rosensweig is clearly excited about their future contributions within the Jewish community and the broader world. “I have been blessed to have students of exceptional character,” he said, and is confident they “will bring a constructive, even compelling voice to the wider marketplace of ideas.”

With his warm demeanor, wisdom and concern for the future of the rabbinate, Rabbi Rosensweig plays an integral part in teaching his students how to apply the timeless values of the Torah, and those of his beloved father and rabbinical mentors, so that they have the compassion, knowledge and insight to lead the Jewish community into the future. “It is a special honor to develop relationships with and participate in the personal, academic and spiritual growth of such an exceptional group of young scholars,” he said.





Yeshiva University

Science & Technology THAT MOVE HISTORY FORWARD

Yeshiva University has been at the forefront of life-changing scientific and technological breakthroughs for more than a century. Through innovative programs and expanded initiatives, including Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence at the Katz School of Science and Health—and the newly designed Selma T. and Jacques H. Mitrani Tech Lab at the Stern College for Women—YU continues to prepare our children and grandchildren to achieve successful careers in leading companies while adhering to their Torah values.

Over the next five years, we have set an unprecedented goal of raising \$613 million—the largest campaign for Jewish education in history—for scholarships, facilities, and faculty that will further expand YU as the flagship Jewish university for generations to come. Now is the time to honor your past and invest in your future.

**Join us today
at riseup.yu.edu**

RISE UP

The Campaign for 613

From YU to the UAE

RABBI YEHUDA SARNA

'01 Yeshiva College, '05 Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary
Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Council of the Emirates

Leading a Jewish community in an Arab country that went from being one of the most private to one of the most talked about is a labor of love for Rabbi Yehuda Sarna, Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Council of the Emirates (UAE), and a graduate of Yeshiva College and the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS).

His work in the UAE is anchored at New York University as executive director of the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life, University chaplain and adjunct associate professor at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Rabbi Sarna's journey to becoming chief rabbi of the Emirates began with his first visit in 2010 after some American Jews voiced safety concerns for Jews living there. At the time, NYU was building NYU Abu Dhabi, a satellite campus of the school, and Rabbi Sarna was eager to look into the situation and help. He was pleasantly surprised, recalling, "During my first visit, I not only felt safe but welcomed." Over the next decade, he assisted the Jewish community of Abu Dhabi with its religious needs by teaching Torah, building its infrastructure, starting and growing a virtual pre-Shabbat service, and representing the community publicly.

Because of his tireless work since 2010, the UAE Jewish community asked him in 2019 to become its chief rabbi. They were seeking a rabbinic voice deeply rooted in tradition but also open and eager to interact with the outside world. The community felt confident in taking this step because the UAE had declared 2019 the "Year of Tolerance." The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, had also recently announced the establishment of a major center for interfaith activity called the Abrahamic Family House as well as the official publication of *Celebrating Tolerance*, which explored the country's religious minorities.

That same year, Rabbi Sarna and members of the Jewish community presented a Torah scroll as a gift to the crown prince as a tribute to his late father and founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan. "This moment was truly historic, being the first time a Torah scroll was dedicated to an Arab ruler." The story was captured in a recently released documentary on PBS, *Amen-Amen-Amen*.

Since the signing of the historic Abraham Accords in 2020 between Israel, the United States, the UAE and Bahrain, there has been a tremendous influx of Israeli tourists to the UAE. "At this point, I like to call it the largest small community in the world, with fewer than 200 members but over 200,000 people visiting in just one year," Rabbi Sarna said, adding, "We are a new center of gravity on the Jewish map."

Rabbi Sarna's understanding of his role of chief rabbi is the product of his many conversations with the late Rabbi Lord Jona-

than Sacks zt"l during Rabbi Sacks' dual appointment at Yeshiva University and NYU. He is often guided by Rabbi Sacks' insightful words—"Religious leaders often are too focused on the idea of power instead of the power of ideas"—and remains forever grateful that Rabbi Sacks "had been kind enough to write a letter of endorsement to the Jewish community when I was first appointed in 2019, so I continue to feel loyal to his legacy of the Chief Rabbinate being about ideas."

The Montreal native grew up in what he calls "a truly exceptional family." His parents always maintained an open and inviting home with many guests and were deeply involved in the local Modern Orthodox schools and synagogues. This selflessness and community involvement on his parents' part helped shape who he is today.

Rabbi Sarna looks back on his years at YU, where he earned a bachelor's degree in English literature, as highly rewarding. "Every dimension of the YU experience challenged me," he said, recalling YU's intense commitment to community service and the rabbis and professors who mentored him as well as their "humility, character, and willingness to spend the time necessary to understand a situation in its fullest complexity." He has continued to consult with many of those same rabbis who "advise me in truly uncharted waters," adding, "So much of my work in the UAE is informed by my education at Yeshiva University."

He works in an environment in which history is being made every day. Rabbi Sarna helped to curate the first permanent Holocaust exhibit in an Arab country, "which is opening up all kinds of conversations." On Dec. 13, 2021, the crown prince hosted Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in the first-ever public meeting between the United Arab Emirates' ruler and an Israeli leader. Of that momentous occasion, Rabbi Sarna said, "The encounter between Prime Minister Bennett and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed is yet another milestone reached on a bold journey forward."

With his many responsibilities building a strong Jewish community in the middle of the Arab world, Rabbi Sarna plays a significant role in that bold journey forward. Yet, at heart, he is a teacher. "My simple calling has always been to be a teacher of young people, to allow them to discover and articulate their promise to the world," he said.

Rabbi Sarna is a teacher as well as a leader in this highly visible and important position, of which he is most appreciative, adding, "It has been a great privilege to help the community flourish."



Social Work, Social Action, Social Justice

DR. SHANNON LANE

Associate Professor

Associate Director of Ph.D. Dissertation Advising
Wurzweiler School of Social Work

In 1871, Horace Greeley, editor of the *New-York Tribune*, encouraged anyone looking to be part of America's future to "Go West!"

However, the flow was never only one way, as Dr. Shannon Lane can attest. Born in Deadwood, South Dakota, she attended The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., earned her MSW in 1999 at the University of Michigan and Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work in 2009 at the University of Connecticut, writing her dissertation on social workers who ran for elected office.

That focus on electoral politics and process is a key part of her work as a teacher, researcher and advocate. "I am not your typical social worker," she noted. "I worked in the U.S. Senate for nearly 10 years with Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle as well as Senators [Mark] Pryor and [Ben] Nelson."

Her motivation comes from her early experiences in life. "I can point to two things," she observed. "My family believed in collective care and community. Later, my family received that collective care as we struggled financially. Receiving social welfare shaped the way I view policy, and I know it changes the way that I teach in the classroom."

For Dr. Lane, voting is the key way those affected by policy communicate with policymakers. Social workers have an ethical obligation to advocate in a nonpartisan way for communities to exercise their power through the vote and hold their elected officials to account.

"My first book, before I came to YU, was *Political Social Work: Using Power to Create Social Change*, and that's the major theme of my research and teaching," Dr. Lane explained. "I want social workers and their communities to access political power. The political process affects work that all social workers do, so our values and priorities must be better represented within that process."

To put these values into action, she has worked since 2004 with the Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work to prepare social workers for leadership in policy and political arenas.

She also writes extensively about the topic. For instance, her second book, *Social Welfare Policy in a Changing World*, out in 2019, "is an overview of different areas of policy and how they affect social work practice and our clients."

In addition, she has testified in front of state legislative committees on suffrage, has run for office herself, and serves as the Deputy Registrar of Voters in Bethany, Connecticut.

"It is crucial to the health of our democracy that voting be acces-



sible to all who are eligible and that we address policies and institutions that create barriers to that process." Dr. Lane believes that the best campaigns to ensure voter access "are those led and informed by the people most affected and people on the ground who know their communities." She cites Georgia as a prime example, with leaders like Stacey Abrams and LaTosha Brown, and she also notes the social work profession can be crucial to these efforts. "The social workers already in those communities have the knowledge and assets to connect people with the resources and skills to speak for themselves."

In all the professional work she does, whether focused on voting, organizing conferences, or tirelessly advocating for better policies to address the social safety net, she approaches the work with both confidence and a healthy dose of patience.

"I'm a social worker, author, professor and advocate for voting rights and political justice," she noted, adding, with a hint of a smile in her voice, "that's the short version of my life's work."

Go East, YU Grad

OVI JACOB

'05 Sy Syms School of Business
Director of Business Development
Vayyar Imaging Ltd.



To say that Ovi Jacob '05SB is big on Israel—on moving there, living there, working there—is an understatement because the word "big" is not big enough: it needs capital letters, an underline and exclamation points: **BIG!!**

His enthusiasm for what the country offers those who risk making aliyah comes from the enthusiasm he has for everything that he has done and is doing with his life: his time at YU, the fantastic company he works for, the love he has for his family, the future he believes that he and his family are making happen.

Take, for instance, Vayyar Imaging Ltd., where he has worked as a director of business development since 2016. Founded in 2011, Vayyar's initial focus was a more effective screening for early-stage breast cancer using radio frequency technology. Since then, as Jacob points out, Vayyar's sensing technology has been incorporated into applications for automotive safety, health care for senior citizens, retail efficiency, homeland security, robotics and even in the pocket of a handyman, just to name a few.

"Vayyar makes technologies that improve lives and save the world," he observed, and that is what Jacob says gets him

up in the morning. As an example, he cites the partnership between Vayyar and Amazon to make Vayyar Care, Vayyar's touchless fall detection solution for senior citizens, compatible with the new Alexa Together service from Amazon. "Here we are partnering with one of the biggest companies in the world to save people's lives—and I get to do that for a living! That is cool."

But for Jacob, as cool as Vayyar is as a company to work for, it's even more cool as a place for someone immigrating to Israel. It's "an awesome company open to those who take the risk to make aliyah and start their lives in a new country and [it makes] the transition as comfortable as possible."

Can the happiness he and his family have found in Israel be something that one can prepare for? "Each person is different," he noted, "and there's no one path to making aliyah." He quoted his wife, Michal, who, in her own work with Nefesh B'Nefesh when she first arrived in Israel, would say to people, "Every person has a moment when the door opens, and you have to put yourself in a position so that when that moment comes, you're able to make that jump."

To prepare for that moment is the work of a lifetime, Jacob observed, and for him,

that lifetime included a great childhood, Sy Syms, meeting Michal at Stern College (and raising five children), studying in the YU Kollel both in Washington Heights and Boca Raton, multiple business attempts ("less than successful"), and being General Manager of Late Nite Labs (an educational technology company). And finally a conversation with Raviv Melamed, Vayyar's CEO and co-founder, who told him "not to think in millions but billions" and to come work for him.

Door open—jump.

As for the future? "Serve the Lord, raise good kids and contribute to the Jewish state—that's the primary focus always. What I want to look back on 50 years from now (hopefully, I'll still be alive!) is not four businesses with five exits but more about 'this is the life we made after taking this big chance of moving to Israel'—it's a big accomplishment for us."

It's an accomplishment he wants everyone to consider replicating. "I want to encourage as many YU grads as possible to come to Israel, and if they do that, I'll do whatever I can to make it worth their while to do so."



A Cyber Trailblazer Leads the Way for the Next Generation

SIVAN TEHILA
*Director, M.S. in Cybersecurity
Katz School of Science and Health*

In July 2021, Sivan Tehila, a cybersecurity expert and entrepreneur, became the new director of the in-person and online cybersecurity master's programs for the Katz School of Science and Health.

In many ways, Tehila is perfectly suited to take on the job of cybersecurity director and create what she calls "next generation security": She founded and is CEO of Onyxia, a stealth mode cybersecurity startup; served for 10 years in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as a cybersecurity expert (retiring in 2015); worked as an information security officer for Rafael Advanced Defense Systems (the developer of Israel's Iron Dome); consulted with Israel Railways to build a state-of-the-art operations center; and directed solution architecture for Perimeter 81, an Israeli security service startup.

As director of the cybersecurity master's program at the Katz School, she is intensely committed to carrying forward the innovative work done by the former co-directors, Dave Schwed and Lev Feldman, who "developed the curriculum from scratch, brought in our excellent faculty and selected our top-notch vendors." She also wants to expand cybersecurity education to as many new audiences as possible in as many new ways as possible in a world where cybersecurity threats have only multiplied and intensified.

One such goal is the creation of a Security Operations Center "to give students real-time experience in working on such projects as configuring a firewall, monitoring company alerts, and making decisions to handle specific alerts and scenarios." She also wants to invite more and more companies and vendors to become part of the programming so that students "can learn cybersecurity by getting hands-on connections with the industry and with real products and vendors. No amount of theory can replace real-world experience."

Another goal is improving educational opportunities for women because "women make up only 25% of the cybersecurity

workforce," she pointed out. This is not a new goal for Tehila. While working in the IDF and for Israel Railways, she often found herself the only woman in the room, and after she left those organizations, she couldn't deny that she felt a need for a community of people like herself.

She went on to found Cyber Ladies NYC, whose mission is "to create a safe and empowering environment for women in cybersecurity." She also works as a mentor at the Manhattan High School for Girls, where she developed a cybersecurity program so unique that in June 2021, a team from the high school participated in ISACA's annual Cybersecurity Challenge, a competition normally open only to teams from colleges and universities. While they didn't win, "I was very proud of them for going through this process." (A team from the Katz School did win the challenge, and ISACA has a partnership with the Katz School to provide students with additional educational, training and networking opportunities to prepare them to join the cybersecurity workforce.)

"We are so grateful to Yeshiva University for making STEM a priority, and we're grateful for the Katz family for their generosity for making all this possible."

Tehila is also excited by the outreach being done by Katz to the Sara Schenirer Institute in Brooklyn to provide Charedi men (and eventually women) a solid basic knowledge of the field that will prepare them for entry into the master's program.

In our networked world, the cybersecurity team "are the people you can rely on to help you continue. I feel grateful for being able to do something meaningful by teaching that team to enable companies and people to continue doing what they need to do without being afraid of being attacked or hacked."

School Psychology and the Quest to Promote Social Justice

DR. JENNIFER MCGRORY COOPER

Assistant Professor in the School-Clinical Child Psychology doctoral program
Director, Social Justice & Equity in Schools Lab
Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology



Dr. Jennifer Cooper's journey to the intersection of "social justice pedagogy in school psychology and culturally relevant school mental health" began in her home on the South Shore of eastern Long Island. "For as long as I can remember," she recalled, "I have been interested in issues of social justice, using my voice to challenge ideas and behaviors I did not agree with, which often landed me in trouble."

Like many young people, Dr. Cooper experienced family conflict, mental health issues, and school problems growing up. But in the 10th grade, when she thought she had become, in her words, "unreachable," her principal took her under his wing. "He believed in me, and, as a result, I started to believe in myself again. That year, I decided that I needed to help myself heal and work toward a better future." This experience serves as the foundation for two core beliefs central to her career: "the pivotal role that one caring adult can play in a child's life and the transformative power of education."

She caught up on her high school credits and pursued her dream of attending college, first at SUNY Albany for a bachelor's in politi-

cal science, and then at SUNY Stony Brook for a master's in public policy as a first-generation college student.

While "it took a few years to figure out college and what I wanted to be when I grew up," it was her work with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) that helped to solidify her direction. "At CASA, we advocated for youth in the court system due to abuse and/or neglect. I witnessed firsthand the impacts of intergenerational trauma and the amazing resiliency of young people when supported."

This work led to a Ph.D. in school psychology at Ohio State University because she wanted a career at "the intersection of education and mental health" where she could "help youth thrive instead of just survive. The majority of young people receiving mental health services receive them in schools, and I believe in the immense power of schools to be safe and affirming spaces for all youth to learn and grow and school psychologists to be agents of change."

Her own schooling experiences as well as her doctoral studies and being a school psychologist and postdoctoral researcher in the Columbus city schools "opened my eyes to new ways of critical thinking that were previously limited by my white cultural identity," she explained. "This critical consciousness continues to inform my work as a psychologist, social justice scholar and teacher."

One of her many efforts at meaningful change is the Social Justice & Equity in Schools Lab, which Dr. Cooper began in 2020 upon joining the Ferkauf faculty. As director, she has designed the Lab, which has nine current Ferkauf students working on projects, to develop the knowledge and skills that school psychologists can use to change the "structural forms of oppression that impact the day-to-day lives of the marginalized youth with whom they work" while engaging in culturally relevant practices to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse U.S. population.

In 2021, Dr. Cooper received a Presidential Citation from APA Division 16 for her leadership related to anti-racism in school psychology.

It seems that Dr. Cooper has indeed figured out what she wanted to be when she grows up. The mix of teaching, research and mentoring that is her daily professional round is exactly what she wants to be doing, and Ferkauf is exactly the place where she wants to be doing it. "I'm proud to be a Ferkauf faculty member preparing future school and clinical psychologists as social justice advocates," she noted, "and very glad to be doing it here in my home state of New York and within the diverse communities of the Bronx."



Helping Inventors Own Their Dreams

Cardozo's Patent Diversity Project, supported by Google, gives free legal assistance to underrepresented inventors, securing its very first patent in 2021 on behalf of Black inventor, Rose Coppee.

Home-Grown is Always the Best

Three Katz School alumni have started Growmics to provide plant researchers with tools to improve crop resilience and preserve the food supply.



Holocaust Remembrance Around the World

A monthly webinar from the Fish Center highlights the champions of tolerance and remembrance shaping Holocaust memory in countries from Guatemala to Japan.

Charity in Action

After a fire killed 17 people in the Bronx, YU student volunteers brought food, warm clothes, bottled water and compassion to survivors through a coordinated effort with NYC Councilmember Oswald Feliz.



Shevet Glaubach Center

The Shevet Glaubach Center for Career Strategy and Professional Development, established by a generous donation from Drs. Felix and Miriam Glaubach, helps students develop a personalized long-term, big-picture career strategy.

New Center for Jewish Values

Founded by Terri and Andrew Herenstein, The Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership will bring the teachings of Rabbi Sacks to bear on creating a discipline of leadership informed by the highest ethical standards.



New Generation of YU Rabbis

At the Chag HaSemikhah in 2021, 147 newly ordained rabbis joined the more than 3,000 distinguished alumni of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.



Uncovering the Past

Nearly every summer since 2004, Dr. Jill Katz has invited YU students to join an international team of archaeologists to excavate Tell es-Safi/Gath in Israel and literally dig into biblical history.



YU in Action

Go Macs!

The men's basketball team rewrote the record books with a historic 50-game winning streak from 2019 to 2021.





Yeshiva University

WHY I GIVE TO YU



We've seen more than ever
the need for leaders with
a broad-based education and
a foundation of solid values.
YU provides a unique
education that does just that.

—SEN. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN



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