



**Division for External Relations
and Resource Development**

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1

It is with great sadness the University mourns the passing of Mr. Leon H. Charney, Honorary Chairman of the Board of Governors, a true friend. Mr. Charney presided as Chairman of the Board for two terms from 2007-2013, and was subsequently awarded a lifetime Honorary Chairmanship to recognize his significant contribution to the University, as well as an Honorary Doctorate. He worked tirelessly to promote and develop the University of Haifa, for the sake of strengthening the State of Israel. His support was extensive, and included contributing to the establishment of the Leon H. Charney school of Marine Sciences named after him, before the great gas discoveries off the Israeli shore, and was ahead of his time in seeing the importance of investing in the marine sciences, given the potential of alternative energy found at sea – a prediction that proved true later on. He also supported a unique scholarship program dedicated to the 44 victims of the Carmel Fire Tragedy in 2010, which has become a central feature of the University's memorial to this disaster.

Despite humble beginnings, Mr. Charney rose to become a senior attorney and businessman in the USA. His life was the embodiment of the American Dream yet his passion for Israel never waned. He was a great resource for Israeli government officials who sought his help over the years. Prime Minister Golda Meir approached him to help in releasing "Asirei Zion" (Prisoners of Zion) from the Soviet Union and subsequently he was instrumental in the Aliyah of over 1,000 Soviet Jews over the years. At the request of President Jimmy Carter and Israeli Minister of Defense at the time Mr. Ezer Weizman, Charney served as a liaison for drafting a Memorandum of Understanding between Israel and Egypt as part of the Camp David talks.

He is remembered as a close and true friend of the University and of Israel. President Amos Shapira voiced this in his comments after hearing the news "Leon was a true friend who deeply cared about the State of Israel. We say goodbye to a dear man, a special man, and a friend. His contributions over the years have been invaluable and have laid a foundation that will be here for eternity."

Our deepest condolences go to his family and loved ones. May his memory be blessed.



2

Ms. Sharon Kaplan-Berkley of the Cape Gate Foundation of South Africa, which generously supports the Druze Community Leadership Program and the Druze Academic and Social Leadership Program, recently visited the University. During the visit she met with students in both programs, who made presentations to her about the projects they were initiating in their own communities. The visit continued with a trip to the nearby village of Isfiya, where she toured a Therapeutic Nursery School and an elementary school where the students are working with the children to help them.



3

Last week a delegation from the Faculty of Education, headed by Dean Prof. Lily Orland-Barak visited Sao Paulo, with Prof. Anit Somech and Dr. Arie Kizel. The group was invited by the President of "Hebraica", the continent's largest Jewish club, for the faculty to examine, using its knowledge and experience, ways to upgrade and enhance the Jewish education system in São Paulo. The delegation visited the four key Jewish schools in Sao Paulo, meeting with school principals, teachers and students, as well as with the Chairmen of the Boards of these schools. This is the first step in what is emerging as a real collaboration between the University of Haifa and the Jewish community in Sao Paulo.



4

Mr. Lee Kohrman, President of *the David and Inez Myers Foundation* and longtime friend of Israel and the Jewish People, has now confirmed that he will be attending this year's 44th Annual Board of Governors' Meeting to accept the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa). He will be joining an illustrious list of conferees. Mr. Kohrman has worked tirelessly on behalf of less privileged populations in Israel in the framework of the many charitable organizations in the USA. He is committed to making education accessible for all populations and the University is delighted he will be able to attend.



5

The work of a new doctoral study supervised by the Department of Communications has been published in a new book ['The Power of Information Networks: New Directions for Agenda Setting'](#). Dr. Nirit Weiss-Blatt's research on the *Role of Tech Bloggers in the flow of information*, found that while Tech Blogs increase public interest on topics they write about, the flow of information does not run the other way. Dr. Weiss-Blatt, a former tech company spokesperson, set out to explore who sets the tech agenda. Her research collected 1.5 million articles and posts from U.S. tech coverage over a year, which also found the leading topics covered and their influence on public interest.



6

A first of its kind exhibition at Ben Gurion Airport, featuring the 60 [Israeli Discoveries and Developments that Influenced the World](#), has just opened. The University of Haifa is represented in this illustrious group by two amazing finds. The first is the [discovery of vine seeds from the byzantine period](#), by Prof. Guy Bar-Oz, Dr. Lior Weissbrod and Dr. Tali Erikson-Gini which may lead to the cultivation of modern seeds which can withstand desert conditions. The research by Prof. Eviatar Nevo (soon to be 2016 Israel prize winner for Life Sciences) and Prof. Solomon Wasser of the Institute of Evolutionary Biology was also featured. Their discovery of [species of fungi discovered living in the Dead Sea](#) saltwater will have benefits for future world food security.



7

The excavation season at the Tel Kabri site to uncover a Middle Bronze Age (3,600 years old) Canaanite palace has finished. Yet, its discoveries are continuing to make waves in the media. The dig, led and managed by Prof. Assaf Yasur-Landau of the Department of Maritime Civilizations and Prof. Eric Cline of George Washington University, revealed a large storeroom filled with jars which point to an ancient premium quality winery, where wines were mixed with different flavorings, suggesting luxurious banquets. The find was covered in [Archeology.org](#), [MSN](#), [Yahoo!](#), [Science Daily](#) and the [Jewish Press](#).



8

A study by Prof. Yael Latzer, Prof. Ruth Katz and Dr. Zohar Spivack-Lavi, of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, found that the amount of time young girls spend on Facebook increases their risk of developing a variety of eating disorders relating to desire to be thinner: bulimia, negative body image, compulsive dieting, etc. The research was mentioned in an article on [the Yahoo!](#) website covering the launch of the '#WomenNotObjects' campaign in honor of International Women's Day.



9

Dr. Alon Schab, of the Department of Music has been interviewed by [The Jerusalem Post](#) on the symposium on Bach's music he chaired as part of the [First International Bach Festival in Jerusalem](#). "It's clear that Jerusalem is not just another location, and Bach's liturgical music sounds different here because the room of the Last Supper is situated within walking distance of the concert hall...It is not difficult to find connections between Bach's music and Jerusalem. Just look around", he said.



10

The research of Prof. Simone Shamay-Tsoory of the Department of Psychology, on the Oxytocin "love hormone" was recently covered in the [Jerusalem Post](#). The research found that the hormone may boost the compassion of people who suffer from symptoms of PTSD, but only towards females, which could in turn improve sufferers' social behavior.

