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Dr. Gary P. Zola to receive BRIDGES' Distinguished Service Citation

Award honors commitment to values of community and justice

CINCINNATI, OH:---Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, has been selected as a 2012 honoree to receive the BRIDGES for a Just Community's Distinguished Service Citation. The awards will be presented during the organization's 62nd Annual Awards Dinner on May 31, 2012 at Paul Brown Stadium.

Distinguished Service Citation recipients are honored for their ongoing passion for BRIDGES' work. BRIDGES for a Just Community is a human relations organization working to equip people with awareness, skills, and opportunities to develop relationships that will engage and transform the Greater Cincinnati/Tri-State region into a more equitable and just community.



Rabbi Gary Zola was selected as an honoree because of his commitment and lifelong dedication to the values of community, justice, respect, inclusion, responsibility, collaboration and integrity. Dr. Zola is a past president of the Cincinnati Chapter of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition and has been a frequent speaker on issues of faith and freedom at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Rabbi David Ellenson, President of Hebrew Union College, said that he is proud that Bridges selected his friend and colleague for its Distinguished Citizen Award. "No one could be more deserving," he said. "Gary has been indefatigable in promoting inter-religious dialogue and tolerance among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the greater Cincinnati community, and no one has been more devoted than he to the cause of racial justice and inclusion."

"I want to congratulate Rabbi Gary Zola for this well deserved honor," said Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory. "His commitment to serving our community and commemorating history embodies the values that BRIDGES represents."

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Zola has been affiliated with the Hebrew Union College for three decades and, over the years, he has been active in a myriad of local communal organizations including the Jewish Community Relations Council, the American Jewish Committee, the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission, the Greater Cincinnati Board of Rabbis, and BRIDGES for a Just Community.

An educator and historian of the American Jewish experience, Zola has frequently been asked to participate in a number of national initiatives relating to American history. From 2002 to 2005, Zola served as the Chair of a coalition of American research centers – the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History – which was recognized by the U.S. Congress to mark the 350th anniversary of Jewish communal life in North America. In 2006, Zola became a member of the Academic Advisory Council of the U.S. Congress' Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

Doug McDonald, CEO of the Cincinnati Museum Center, noted that, "Gary is a passionate advocate of preserving the stories of history which teach imperative lessons for life today."

Last Spring, President Obama appointed Dr. Zola to the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad. The Commission—an independent agency of the Government of the United States of America—is directed by law to fulfill two primary functions:

- To identify and report on cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings in Eastern and Central Europe that are associated with the heritage of U.S. citizens, particularly endangered properties, and
- To obtain, in cooperation with the Department of State, assurances from the governments of the region that the properties will be protected and preserved.

"Rabbi Zola's recognition with BRIDGES for a Just Community is a fitting tribute to a man who has worked tirelessly to strengthen community relations in Greater Cincinnati and beyond," said U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH). "He has played a vital role in encouraging a greater understanding of the Jewish experience and has generously shared his insights to help alleviate and resolve tensions in our community. I congratulate my friend for receiving this prestigious award."

The May 31 event will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Club West Lounge of Paul Brown Stadium. The evening's honorees will also include Maria Molina, Procter & Gamble-Manager/Latin America Consumer Relations; Mona Morrow, WCPO-TV Community Affairs Director; Dr. Nemat Moussavian; and Dr. Gregory Williams, University of Cincinnati, President. Tickets are \$195 each.

For event information, visit www.bridgesfjc.org.

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 by its namesake on the historic campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. The Marcus Center contains over 15,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, nearprint materials, photographs, audio and videotapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials.

www.americanjewisharchives.org