Weston Gift Helps Ensure Ongoing Academic Excellence at PSGS

Harris K. Weston (1918-2009) was a successful lawyer, philanthropist, and community leader in Cincinnati, Ohio. He lived his life true to his philosophy that each person has a responsibility to leave the world a better place than they found it. His wife, Alice F. Weston (1926-2019), was a patron of the arts and an acclaimed photographer.

Many years before his death, Harris met with Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, then president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and discussed the importance of non-sectarian interreligious graduate education in Judaic Studies at the College-Institute. The Graduate School (now the Pines School of Graduate Studies) was founded in 1947 as a school of higher learning for students of all faiths. The Graduate School has conferred more than 500 PhD, DHL and MAJS degrees over seven decades, and its long history of excellence in training scholars proudly continues today.

The mission and vision of the PSGS was so compelling that Harris and Alice agreed to provide a very generous gift from Harris’ estate to create a substantial legacy that would be used to provide tuition support for non-Jewish PhD students in perpetuity. During Harris and Alice’s lifetime, they made annual gifts to HUC-JIR, also directed to the PSGS, so that the critically needed tuition support for
future scholars could begin immediately. Since 1995, these graduate students have been known as the Harris and Alice Weston Fellows. As a result of the meaningful endowment gift they created, this group of students will grow each year.

Harris and Alice Weston had the vision to support greater interreligious understanding through side-by-side academic study of Judaism at the highest level at the College-Institute. Through their thoughtful planning and generosity, HUC-JIR, and the PSGS in particular, will forever feel the impact of their values. PSGS is honored to be a part of their legacies.

For information on the many ways you can help ensure academic excellence in the Pines School of Graduate Studies for students of all faiths, contact Susan G. Kulick, JD, LLM, National Director of Gift Planning, HUC-JIR at 513.487.3227, 800.488.8720, ext.3227, or skulick@huc.edu.

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News from the Director

by Richard S. Sarason, PhD, Director, Pines School of Graduate Studies

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of the Pines School of Graduate Studies,

As I write these lines, we have completed the first month of classes of the new academic year and are on break for the Jewish fall holidays. As you can imagine, it has been a year like no other, given the realities of the ongoing pandemic. Wisely (no pun intended), Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion early on decided to hold all instruction online during the fall semester and recently extended that policy to the spring semester as well. This is in line with the best healthcare recommendations. Thus, we have avoided the challenges facing educational institutions that have attempted to do in-person learning this year. The College-Institute has been providing robust faculty training and support in best practices for online teaching and learning, so we are off to a good start. Of course, instruction and learning are different online, but our new students so far have been reporting positive experiences. We will continue routinely to seek feedback from students and faculty about their learning and teaching experiences and adjust accordingly.
And speaking of new students, I am pleased to report that we have a bumper crop this year: four new PhD students and four new MAJS students, for a total of eight. One of our new doctoral students is simultaneously completing his last year of Rabbinical School (we permit rabbinical students to apply to the Pines School of Graduate Studies during their fourth year for a one-year overlap of the two programs). Orientation for new students was totally online this year in 45-minute blocs.

This included orientation to the online services of the Klau Library and of the library system at the University of Cincinnati—the latter was just reopening after a five month closure. Students also had a socially distanced outing to the Cincinnati Zoo and a downtown tour of historic Cincinnati Jewish sites. I have also met several times in person with our new students on the College-Institute’s front lawn, socially distanced and wearing masks, to ensure that we had some social contact. The campus, in fact, is open on a scaled-down, responsible basis, and there will be some small, safe social events outside on campus during Sukkot.

We are also pleased to welcome this semester our newest faculty member, Dr. Daniel Fisher, Assistant Professor of Bible. Dr. Fisher earned his PhD in Near Eastern Studies at the University of California-Berkeley and served for two years as Research Affiliate at the National Humanities Alliance in Washington, DC. This year he is teaching courses to both rabbinical and graduate students in the areas of Hebrew Bible and Biblical Hebrew language. His research interests include textual, redaction, and literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible; material culture; and cultural memory. He is also deeply involved with public engagement in the humanities. He is an important addition to our faculty.

There was no in-person graduation ceremony this past May. Graduating PSGS students elected to return to campus to be hooded in person at the next in-person graduation ceremony. John Johnson earned his PhD this past spring. Amichai Levy and Devin Olachea earned their MAJS degrees. Chelsea Simon was awarded the MPhil.

This year’s AAR-SBL annual meeting will be held online in late November and early December. The PSGS will still hold its annual alumni get-together in conjunction with the annual meeting—an evening reception instead of a luncheon. Mark your calendars for Sunday evening, November 29, at 7:00 PM EST. More details to follow. We look forward to catching up with all of you virtually this year.
A Message from the Alumni Association
by Hélène M. Dallaire, PhD, President, PSGS Alumni Association

Who would have thought that the 2020-21 academic year would begin with face shields, face masks, COVID protocols, Zoom classrooms, and an uncertain future! These past eight months have been challenging for most of us, both at home and at work. Many of you responded to the email I sent out this summer, inquiring about your welfare during this trying season. The majority of responses indicated that the Pines School of Graduate Studies alumni were surviving COVID well. However, I am aware that some also suffered the loss of family members and friends. My heart goes out to all who mourn the loss of life during these challenging times.

In emails from the PSGS alumni, I learned about wedding anniversaries, the birth of children, teaching opportunities, moves from one location to another, scholarly projects, homeschooling, plumbing issues, home projects, broken bones, publications, retirements, quarantined individuals, empty-nesters, and much more.

Here are a few quotes from our PSGS alumni:

- “Crazy times we’re living in, eh? All in all, we’re doing quite well around here.”
- “This year has been nonstop upheaval for us . . . but we are all healthy (so far).”
- “My family and I are doing well.”
- “I am doing well . . . God has been very good.”
- “I’ll look forward to that updated website. Sounds like an excellent idea.”
- “Besides a foot injury and a pandemic, it’s been a good summer at the Allen home.”
- “We have not been victims of the virus, and that’s something to be glad about.”
- “All is well, and very busy here.”
- “Our life here in BC continues almost normally.”
- “Our daughter’s family is on the recovered side of COVID-19 . . . the rest of our extended family seems to be doing well.”

Connecting with PSGS alumni via email has truly been a wonderful experience for me. Thank you for sharing a bit of your life with us.

During my communication with PSGS alumni, I discovered that an alumnus from the HUC-JIR Rabbinical School is a fabulous stand-up comedian. Recently, Rabbi Bob Alpers launched two projects. The first one is called “Quick Laugh” (https://www.bobalper.com), a daily one-minute (or less) funny video clip on life,
ministry, the rabbinate, etc. The second project, entitled “Laugh In Peace,” stars a Muslim, a Baptist minister, and a rabbi (Rabbi Alpers) doing comedy together. What a terrific idea! I encourage all of you to sign up to receive the daily “Quick Laugh” clip. It is definitely worth it! It will make you smile at least once a day.

The work of the PSGS Alumni Association continues. Here are some of the issues we will address at our October meeting (on Zoom):

(1) Solidify and expand the leadership of the PSGS Alumni Association, including adding members to the Executive Team and Working Groups. We are looking for volunteers (like you!) to join the team and participate in the discussions on the goals, projects, events, and engagement of the Alumni Association.

(2) Update and develop the structure for the implementation of the PSGS Alumni Association mentorship program. We would like to see alumni mentor new PSGS students during their journey at HUC-JIR. This may involve a monthly or bi-monthly Zoom meeting, help with publications, and encouragement throughout the degree program. Everyone in a graduate program needs a cheerleader! Would you like to volunteer to be one? If so, please contact me at Helene.dallaire@denverseminary.edu.

(3) Organize PSGS alumni engagement events for HUC-JIR alumni around the country. In some areas, PSGS alumni gather together for lunch or dinner once or twice a year. Would you like to organize such an event for the alumni in your community? If so, please contact Shelly Goldfarb (sgoldfarb@huc.edu) or Chelsea Simon (csimon@huc.edu) for a list of HUC-JIR alumni in your area.

As mentioned in my email to you, the HUC-JIR website is being redone. We look forward to the final product, especially where it concerns the Pines School of Graduate Studies.

I wish all PSGS alumni health and success in your projects, teaching, and personal lives. May you remain healthy and productive during these challenging times in which we live. Berachot!
Hélène M. Dallaire, PhD (‘02), is Professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary in Denver, CO.

Your Support is Needed

Alumni support is vital for funding student fellowships. Our spendable annual endowment income does not fully cover the aggregate cost of tuition that the Pines School of Graduate Studies pays to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion each year. Additionally, student stipends are funded entirely out of annual fundraising and contributions. Our goal is to accept more qualified PhD students to the PSGS, but without generous alumni support the number of students that we can fund remains limited. Your support for student stipends is particularly critical this year, since we will not be holding an annual tribute dinner in Cincinnati that raises much scholarship money for the PSGS. We also will not be receiving money for scholarships this year through your support of the alumni luncheon at the AAR-SBL—so your individual donations will be crucial.

Please consider a gift specifically designated to the PSGS Scholarship Fund, which supports PhD student stipends. Help us to invest in our current and future students, just as we have invested in each one of you. Every dollar that you contribute goes directly to student financial support. You can donate by mail (your check must specify that this is a gift to the PSGS Scholarship Fund) or online at https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad.

Graduate student tuition and candidacy fees are supported by endowed scholarship funds that are earmarked for this purpose. A PSGS scholarship endowment fund has been established in honor of PSGS director Richard Sarason, and we are making good progress in raising its principal. If you wish additionally to contribute to this fund, you should make out a separate check and specify the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund on the memo line. You can also contribute to this fund online at https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad, but you must specify the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund in the comment box. For questions, contact Shelly Goldfarb, PSGS Administrative Assistant, at 513.487.3230 or gradschool@huc.edu.

We need your support!
At the Start of an Utterly New Year
by Hara Jun, President, Graduate Student Association

The start of this school year looks a bit different than those of the past. The sight of students mingling on the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is now replaced with yellow caution tape draped across the tables and couches, encouraging social distance. While 3101 Clifton Avenue may be mostly empty, our Zoom “campus” is bustling with the excitement of the new—new year, new classes, new students, and new professors.

This year, we are excited to welcome eight additional graduate students into our Graduate Student Association: Connor Ham (PhD), Jonathan Jackson (PhD), Robert Ogden (PhD), Thomas Murphy (PhD), Evan Vossman (MAJS), Rebekah Wallace (MAJS), Greg Winton (MAJS), and Chana Wolfson (MAJS). Though not everyone has met yet in person, the GSA officers got a head start in connecting with the new students through an informal, virtual hangout during the summer. We are also planning an in-person, socially-distanced get-together for the whole GSA in the weeks following the high holidays to meet and see each other.

The last months of the pandemic have certainly been difficult for everyone—it is tough enough just to take classes fully online, but even more so to be away from the Cincinnati community. In order to boost the morale of students of the Pines School of Graduate Studies, the GSA (with funding from the dean’s office) assembled care packages filled with HUC-JIR swag and other goodies. They were hand-delivered to each local graduate student and mailed to those out of town. It was a great chance for the students to receive a small, symbolic representation of the graduate student body delivered to their houses!

We hope to build upon this camaraderie throughout the year with the start of monthly meetings where students can come together to share their current research. We plan to invite current PhD students working on their dissertations to give updates on their projects and to allow students in coursework to share ideas about their papers and receive feedback from colleagues. Along these same lines, the GSA will also have a meeting to discuss comprehensive exams, when senior students can share their experiences and advice regarding this process.
If there is any one thing that this pandemic has brought us, it is a reminder that community is essential—in both the academic and the social aspects of our lives. Even though this school year will not be typical, it will encourage the GSA to come together and collaborate more than ever. We look forward to a great, virtual, new year! Shanah Tovah!

Presentations, Publications & Other News

PRESENTATIONS
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting
Kristine Henriksen Garroway | Co-chair, Children in the Biblical World sessions
John Kampen | Panelist, “The Fourth Enoch Colloquium on the Gospel of Matthew and Judaism” (all day, online seminar)
—Respondent, papers on “Matthew within Judaism: Perspectives and Prospects”
—“Reading Instruction as a Sectarian Composition.” Qumran section
J. Michael Thigpen | “Repentance and the Monarchy: Divine Motive, Forgiveness, and the Mitigation of Punishment in the Book of Kings”
Kenneth C. Way | Co-chair and moderator, 2020 Institute for Biblical Research, Early Historical Books (Joshua-Kings) Research Group, included five presenters on the theme of theocracy, kingship, and monarchy

American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting
Kristine Henriksen Garroway and Christine Palmer | Co-chairs, Biblical Texts in Cultural Context (new unit)
Kristine Henriksen Garroway | “Tiny Vessels, Tiny People? Networks Embodied in Miniature Ceramic Items”
Julia R. Olson with Sarah Wenner, University of Cincinnati | “Reinstalling the Cincinnati Art Museum’s Ancient Middle East Gallery”

Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting
Hassell Bullock | “The Supremacy of Yahweh in the Psalms”
Héléne Dallaire | Chair, Messianic Jewish Studies: History, Theology and Praxis Consultation
—“‘There Was None Left That Breathe!’: Genocide or Hyperbole in Joshua?” A response to Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric? Wrestling with Troubling War Texts by W. J. Webb and G. K. Oeste
Sung Jin Park | “Hebrew Accents: Their Divisions and Exegetical Roles beyond Syntax”

Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting
Ruth Langer | “Tracing the Transformations of Rabbinic Liturgy in the Third Century”
Mark Shaffer | “The Relationship of Two-Virtue Canon and Double-Love Command”

National Association of Professors of Hebrew Annual Meeting
Hélène Dallaire | Chair, session on Judaism and Jesus by Zev Garber and Kenneth Hanson

PUBLICATIONS

http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/20_1/pdf/PanelGesamtpdf.pdf
—“Women and Religion in Ancient Israel.” In Understanding Covenants


https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/scjr/article/view/12349/9971

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110630282-014


John H. Walton | “The Lost World of Lexical Semantics: Samson’s Spectacle in Judges 16:26.” In *For Us, but Not to Us: Essays on Creation, Covenant, and Context in Honor of John H. Walton*. Edited by Adam E. Miglio, Caryn A. Reeder,

PROMOTIONS
Vadim Putzu was granted tenure by Missouri State University and promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies.

Kenneth C. Way was promoted to Professor of Old Testament at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA.

NEWS
Joel Allen has started a podcast called “Biblical Conversations.” He serves as the interim director of the McGovern Center for Leadership and Public Service at Dakota Wesleyan University, from which both U.S. Sen. George McGovern and his wife, Eleanor, had graduated. The Center is devoted to developing ethical leaders and public servants, social justice, and community-based learning.

Hélène Dallaire led two weekly Torah Clubs in a federal prison in Englewood, CO, before the COVID-19 shutdown.

Jordan Jones has accepted a full-time high school teaching position at Veritas Collegiate Academy and an Instructor position at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA.


BIRTHS
Ruth Langer and Jonathan Sarna announce the birth of their first grandchild, Cyrus Sarna Schwartz, on April 29, 2020.

Tori and Keith Vande Vrede announce the birth of their son, Garrett Russell, on August 12, 2020.

Anna and Joel Wildermuth announce the birth of their son, Elam Brett, on August 15, 2020.
Governor’s Report
by James E. Bowley, PhD, Governor, HUC-JIR

Hello HUC-JIR Friends and Fellow Travelers through the swamp that is COVID-ville!

I’m guessing you might be stressed and stretched as so many of us are. Obviously, it’s not an easy time for any school, but your HUC-JIR faculty, staff, and administration are working hard—extra even—to come through these times.

The Board of Governors is actually meeting more than usual, via Zoom. It’s not nearly as fun or rewarding as meeting in person, but important work is still getting done.

I’ll just share two news items.

In the last couple of months, I have made it a point to talk to and learn from HUC-JIR students, faculty, staff, and administration. I am very impressed on all levels with the way that the school has been working through the myriad of COVID issues by helping students, making working safe and flexible, and training faculty for online teaching. I feel good and relieved about level of safety and quality teaching.

Secondly, of course finances are tight and troubling, but the top administration took voluntary salary reductions to show their commitment to and sacrifice for our school. I hope in these tough times some of us can step forward and also show our love for, and commitment to, our beloved HUC-JIR.

I also am deeply hoping for safety and health for you all in the new year.

James E. Bowley, PhD (’92), is Professor of Religious Studies and chair of the department at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS.
PSGS Mourns the Death of Alumnus James A. Sanders

The Pines School of Graduate Studies mourns the passing on October 1, 2020, of Prof. James A. Sanders (PhD, 1955), one of our earliest, most distinguished, and most supportive alumni. Prof. Sanders retired in 1997 as Professor of Intertestamental and Biblical Studies at the Claremont School of Theology, where he had served since 1977, while concurrently serving as Professor of Religion at the Claremont Graduate School. Prior to going to Claremont, Sanders was Professor of Old Testament, first at Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, NY (1954-65), and then at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York City (1965-77).

He served as annual professor at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (now The Albright Institute) and twice was senior fellow at the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Study at Tantur, south of Jerusalem (1972-73 and 1985).

After his formal retirement he was visiting professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University in New York City for the year 1997-98 and adjunct professor of Old Testament at Yale University Divinity School in spring 1998. He also served as visiting professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City in spring 2001.

Prof. Sanders founded the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center in Claremont in 1977, the year he moved from New York to Claremont. Under his direction, the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center came to house the most complete and best preserved collection of archival quality films of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the world; museums in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the world have ordered films of the Scrolls from the Center.

He oversaw the publication of The Dead Sea Scrolls Catalogue and Index used by scholars around the world, and with West Semitic Research at the University of Southern California published a diplomatic edition of films of the Leningrad Codex (Eerdmans, 1998), the oldest complete Hebrew Bible in the world, taken by the Center’s photographers in Leningrad/St Petersburg in 1990. He became president emeritus of the Center in 2003. He was a past president of the Society of Biblical Literature.
Over the years he received fellowships and grants from the Fulbright Scholarship Program, the Rockefeller Foundation (twice), the Guggenheim Foundation (twice), and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Prof. Sanders’ scholarly interests included the Hebrew Bible, with a focus on the Prophets and the process of canonization of the Torah, the literature of early or pre-rabbinic Judaism including the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament. He authored or edited 29 books, and over 300 scholarly articles, including the first publication of the Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs) in the Oxford Discoveries in the Judean Desert series. His 1972 book Torah and Canon, still in print, launched a new subdiscipline of biblical study called Canonical Criticism.

Prof. Sanders lectured and taught at colleges and seminaries (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish) around the country and Canada. He inaugurated the PSGS Alumnus-in-Residence Program, and routinely attended our annual alumni luncheons at the SBL national meeting. He regularly and publicly expressed his gratitude to HUC-JIR for the doctoral education he had received here and for the opportunity this afforded to learn side-by-side with, and from, rabbis and rabbinical students. He lost no opportunity to support the work of the Graduate School.

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