Dr. Gary P. Zola Appointed as Distinguished Visiting Chair in Jewish Studies Program at College of Charleston for the Spring, 2014 Semester

CINCINNATI, OH:—Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA), and Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati, has been appointed as the Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold Distinguished Visiting Chair for the upcoming Spring, 2014 semester at the College of Charleston’s Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program.

During his residency in Charleston, Dr. Zola will be teaching one course, Southern Jewish History, for students in the Jewish Studies program—as well as for his HUC-JIR graduate and rabbinic students who will participate in his lectures via the Electronic Classroom in the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati International Learning Center in Cincinnati. While in Charleston, he will also deliver a public lecture entitled, He Was Like One of Us: Lincoln and American Jewry. The lecture will take place Sunday, February 9 at 10 am in Arnold hall on the College of Charleston campus.

Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold—generous supporters of the College of Charleston’s Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program which bears their name—also provide the endowment to enable the Jewish Studies Program to bring a world-class scholar, politician, journalist, or Jewish leader to the College of Charleston as the visiting chair each year.

“The contributions of Gary Zola to the writing of American Jewish History are legion—from his position as Executive Director of the American Jewish Archives to his prestigious publications on the Jews of 19th Century Charleston to his forthcoming work on Abraham Lincoln and the Jews,” noted Rabbi David Ellenson, Chancellor of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. “Professor Zola is a most worthy and appropriate recipient of Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold Distinguished Visiting Chair at the College of Charleston and he will greatly enhance the lives of his students as well as the larger Charleston community. His selection for this position is a mark of great and well-deserved distinction!”

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In April 2011, Dr. Zola was appointed by President Obama to the Commission for the Preservation of American Heritage Abroad. Dr. Zola is the first faculty member of Hebrew Union College to receive such an appointment by a U.S. president. In 2006 Dr. Zola became the first American Jewish historian and the first American rabbi to receive appointment to the Academic Advisory Council of the congressionally recognized Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

“Dr. Zola’s appointment at the College of Charleston is altogether timely,” noted Dr. Martin Perlmutter, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Yachik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program at the College of Charleston. “Dr. Zola is our first Arnold Distinguished Professor since the College of Charleston established the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture in the fall of 2013. What a wonderful beginning!”

Zola is the author of the upcoming volume, *We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American Jewry, a Documentary History*. It is the first volume of primary source documents—most little known — to focus on the history of Lincoln’s image, influence, and reputation among American Jews. He is also the author of *The Americanization of the Jewish Prayer Book, Isaac Harby of Charleston* and has edited several books, including *The Dynamics of American Jewish History: Jacob Rader Marcus’s Essays on American Jewry* and *Women Rabbis: Exploration & Celebration*.

For questions and additional information, please contact Joyce Kamen at 513.543.8109.

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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.