

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • SEPTEMBER 19, 2015 • CONTACT: Joyce Kamen, 513.543.8109

The American Jewish Archives will Dedicate the Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum Digital Collection to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II

Keynote address: Rabbi Michael J. Cook, Ph.D. — Reflections: Dr. James Buchanan

CINCINNATI, OH:—The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) — located on the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)—along with Xavier University will host the dedication ceremony for the Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum digital collection on Sunday, October 11, 2015 beginning at 2:00 p.m. The program will be held in the Scheuer Chapel on the HUC-JIR campus.



Rabbi Michael Cook & Dr. James Buchanan

The event will feature a keynote address by Rabbi Michael J. Cook, Ph.D., who will speak on “Living & Making History: The Marc Tanenbaum Collection & Vatican II's 50th Anniversary.” Dr. James Buchanan, Director of the Brueggeman Center at Xavier University, will offer reflections on the theme “Beyond Nostra Aetate: The Challenges of Re-visioning Interfaith Relations for the 21st Century”. Dr. Georgette F. Bennett, Founder and President of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, and Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of the AJA, will also offer brief remarks.



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum (1925-1992) was a major architect of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue. Both nationally and internationally, he was one of the most widely respected representatives of the Jewish community on interreligious affairs in the late 20th century. Throughout his career, he forged close friendships with Christian leaders from a wide range of denominations including Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II, Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He worked to change nearly 2,000 years of mutual animosity, ignorance and suspicion by helping Jews and Christians understand each other better. Over the years, Tanenbaum found himself at the center of most major Jewish-Christian controversies and agreements.

In the early 1960s, Tanenbaum's focus on interfaith work turned sharply to Jewish-Catholic relations when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council. Tanenbaum saw this as an opportunity for overcoming centuries of religious antagonism —based on the widespread belief that the Jewish people bear a collective guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus— and went to Rome as an official observer to the Council. He enlisted his teacher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), as the chief Jewish spokesman in an effort to secure adoption of a Council statement on Judaism and other non-Christian religions. Among the many changes to ultimately come out of Vatican II was the landmark document *Nostra Aetate*, which repudiated antisemitism and declared that the death of Jesus cannot be charged against all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.



*Rabbi Tanenbaum with
Pope John Paul II*

Dr. Bennett conceptualized and proposed the digital projects to the U.K.-based Polonsky Foundation—which works to create open access to rare manuscripts by digitizing the contents of some of the most important libraries in the world. Following their review of Dr. Bennett’s proposal, the Foundation provided a grant to the AJA to mount the digitization of Rabbi Tanenbaum’s records. “We are most grateful to the Polonsky Foundation for their generous grant that enabled us to digitize Rabbi Tanenbaum’s important collection.” said Dr. Zola. “Though the main focus of Rabbi Tanenbaum’s activity was interfaith relations, he also worked in other areas such as race relations, human rights and international peace and justice. So access to the documents in Rabbi Tanenbaum’s expansive collection is absolutely crucial for researchers, scholars, teachers and students worldwide. Now, the digitization of Rabbi Tanenbaum’s collection at the AJA—which includes extensive correspondence, writings, addresses, news clippings, reports, meeting minutes, audio-visual materials and photographs—has made these documents accessible to all. The Tanenbaum collection is the first major collection to be digitized and mounted online. Other collections, such as the Herbert A. Friedman papers and the Jack, Joseph & Morton Mandel Foundation Records (1984–2011) and the Mandel Foundation Israel Records are also being digitized, with even more such digitization projects planned for the future.

The event is free and open to the public, but space is limited. RSVPs are requested to ndowlin@huc.edu.

MEDIA: For more information, please contact Joyce Kamen at 513-543-8109; or Manda Hurdelbrink at 513-324-8610.

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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



**Images from the
Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
Collection at the
American Jewish Archives**

