



News

H. Glenn Rosenkrantz, United Jewish Communities Media Relations
212.284.6572 glennc.rosenkrantz@ujc.org

Erica Barton, United Jewish Communities Media Relations
212.284.6593 erica.barton@ujc.org

Mandell L. Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank Moves to University of Connecticut

New Website Enhances Availability of Data on North American Jewish Community

New York – February 3, 2005 - Data on the social and demographic characteristics of the American Jewish community are now available at a fully interactive website administered by the University of Connecticut's Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, in collaboration with the Institute for Social Inquiry (Roper Center) and supported by United Jewish Communities (UJC).

The website of the Mandell L. Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB) is the result of a new partnership between the UConn center and UJC, a New York-based philanthropic organization representing 155 Jewish community federations and 400 independent Jewish communities across North America.

"The website contains the most advanced database of social scientific studies of North American Jewry and allows researchers to better understand the size and composition of different Jewish populations in the United States," said Arnold Dashefsky, director of the UConn Judaic Studies center. "Individuals can now download data from the archive over the web and conduct their own analysis of it."

In nearly two decades of supporting the Data Bank, UJC has helped amass the largest archive of social scientific and demographic studies of North American Jewry in an effort to understand changes within the Jewish community.

The Data Bank is now the principal repository of quantitative studies of the North American Jewish community. Included among its holdings are national surveys of the U.S. Jewish population in 1971 and 1990, over 90 local Jewish community studies from the 1960s to the present, and the recent National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000-01 sponsored by UJC and the Jewish federation system.

The archive, established in 1986 by one of UJC's predecessor organizations, the Council of Jewish Federations, originally was based at the City University of New York's Center for Jewish Studies. This past summer, the Data Bank was moved from Brandeis University, its second home, to UConn under the auspices of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life. UJC is also providing a three-year grant of \$240,000 to support promotion of the Data Bank archive.

"We are so pleased to form this new partnership with the University of Connecticut," said Mandell Berman, NAJDB founder. "University scholars, such as Dr. Arnold Dashefsky, will be able to effectively analyze the information housed in the data bank, including studies from North American Jewish communities and data from NJPS, and publish findings based upon the material that will help shape the Jewish community."

UJC's decision to move the Data Bank to UConn was motivated in part by its mission to disseminate and encourage utilization of the archive by academicians, students and other researchers interested in Jewish life in North America. NAJDB will continue to acquire, archive and disseminate both contemporary and historical data and reports.

"Our goal is to aid understanding of the Jewish community," said Lorraine Blass, UJC vice president. "With our new partnership with the University of Connecticut and the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, we hope

to improve the quality of research about North American Jewry and bring a new and exciting perspective to furthering that goal."

A critical link in achieving that goal is the involvement of UConn's Institute for Social Inquiry, or Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The Roper Center – the largest and oldest archive of public opinion data in the world – is collaborating with UConn's Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life on administering the website to make NAJDB available as an electronic archive.

"This collection represents a valuable set of topical data for the broader social science community," said Lois Timms-Ferrara, associate director at the Roper Center. "The attentiveness of UJC to these data is evident in their decision to archive these studies at the Roper Center, where the application of contemporary archiving standards assure these data will be preserved in perpetuity."

"Understanding the characteristics of the American Jewish community is important, both for communal leaders and for scholars of religion and society," Dashefsky added. "With the combined resources of the Judaic Studies and Roper Center, a major thrust of our UConn contribution will be toward expanding the dissemination and utilization of the Data Bank archives."

The website, www.jewishdatabank.org, is available to all for non-commercial use.

United Jewish Communities (UJC) represents 155 Jewish Federations and 400 independent communities across North America. Through the UJA Federation Campaign, UJC provides life-saving and life-enhancing humanitarian assistance to those in need, and translates Jewish values into social action on behalf of millions of Jews in hundreds of communities in North America, in towns and villages throughout Israel, in the former Soviet Union, and 60 countries around the world.