



NEWS

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**MERKIN FAMILY CHAIR IN JEWISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE
ESTABLISHED AT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
Dr. Haym Soloveitchik Appointed**

New York, NY, May 21, 2001 – Dr. Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University, today announced the endowment by Lauren and Ezra Merkin of The Merkin Family Chair in Jewish History and Literature at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. The Chair is to be occupied by a member of the faculty who is a leading figure in Jewish academic scholarship. The first occupant of the Chair is such a figure: Dr. Haym Soloveitchik, a University Professor and distinguished Talmudist and historian.

“Establishing an endowed chair is essential to the enhancement of the academic environment of a program or school,” said Dr. Lamm. “We are forever thankful to Ezra and Lauren Merkin for their enlightened support.”

Dr. Soloveitchik received a B.A. from Harvard University, was ordained at Yeshiva University’s affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and earned a doctorate in Jewish History from Hebrew University. He is an expert in Jewish medieval history and is the author of several books and numerous scholarly articles.

Dr. Soloveitchik’s late father, the revered Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, was the initial occupant of the Leib Merkin Distinguished Professorial Chair in Talmud and Jewish Philosophy at RIETS. The Leib Merkin chair was endowed by Ezra Merkin’s late father, Hermann Merkin, who served as Vice Chairman of the University for many years. In addition, in recognition of a gift by Hermann and Ursula Merkin, the Isaac Breuer College for Hebraic Studies was named in memory of Dr. Isaac Breuer, the father of Ursula Merkin.

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Ezra Merkin said: “It is appropriate to remember my father at an institution that he loved, and served, so well. In establishing a memorial for my father, Lauren and I are delighted to continue a shared tradition of the Merkin and Soloveitchik families. We cannot imagine a more fitting occupant of the Merkin Family Chair than Dr. Haym Soloveitchik.”

J. Ezra Merkin and Lauren Merkin have been at the forefront of leadership and support of the Jewish community for many years. Mr. Merkin has been a member of the board of RIETS since 1984. He serves as Chairman of the Investment Committees of both Yeshiva University and UJA/Federation of New York. In addition, he serves as President of Fifth Avenue Synagogue and as Vice Chairman of the Ramaz School. He studied at Yeshivot Kerem B’Yavneh and Har Etzion and was graduated from Columbia College and Harvard Law School. Mr. Merkin manages a family of investment funds in New York. His wife, the former Lauren Korngold, is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and received her M.B.A. from the Wharton School. Mrs. Merkin serves as a Trustee of the Avi Chai Foundation. Their four children currently study at Ramaz.