

# IMPACT

WINTER 2017



AMERICAN ASSOCIATES  
Ben-Gurion University  
of the Negev

## ALON BEN-GURION REMEMBERS HIS GRANDFATHER

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THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP

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EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS

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GERIATRIC MEDICINE

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TRAINING STUDENTS TO  
BE COMMUNITY-CARE LEADERS

VISION  
IMAGINE. INVENT. INSPIRE.

*Celebrating BGU's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

# LIVING THE VISION

BY TONI YOUNG AABGU PRESIDENT



Michael Priest Photography

As AABGU's new president, I am particularly excited to serve during the 2020 Vision Campaign, celebrating what will be Ben-Gurion University's 50th anniversary. On page three you can read about our worldwide effort to ensure BGU's future.

I know you'll be fascinated, as I am, by the personal memories that David Ben-Gurion's grandson, Alon, shares in this issue. His stories remind us of how intensely Ben-Gurion's vision for Israel centered on a desert region that nobody wanted. And, how he lived that conviction, spending the last years of his life in his desert home in Kibbutz Sede Boqer.

What would he think if he saw today's Negev? "If" was a word that didn't exist for his grandfather, Alon says, but it is hard not to speculate. (See page 18.)

I like to think he would enjoy seeing how his own endless passion for learning and community is embodied in the University that bears his name. For example, this issue introduces us to Prof. Clarfield, head of the Medical School for International Health, an influential voice in the field of geriatric care. Discover, also, promising new directions in research on one of the most mysterious part of our lives: sleep.

Did you know that Israel stands on a significant geological fault? A major earthquake affects Israel approximately every hundred years—and we are already inside that window. Scientists and emergency personnel are investigating and preparing for earthquakes in BGU's characteristic way: through collaboration.

Also, don't miss the story about the Keren Moshe program that trains tomorrow's leaders to be active, thoughtful, caring contributors to the community, which would undoubtedly please David Ben-Gurion. Enjoy the issue and let us know what you think at [Impact@aabgu.org](mailto:Impact@aabgu.org)

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**ON THE COVER:** This one-of-a-kind photo was taken by an American 12-year-old boy who was among a group of children meeting with David Ben-Gurion in Sede Boqer. It was given to Alon Ben-Gurion in 1986. Israel's founding father enjoyed meeting children from all over the world, believing they taught him about different cultures and the limitless possibilities of the future.

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# AABGU LAUNCHES 2020 VISION CAMPAIGN

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATES**, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev launched the 2020 Vision 50th Anniversary Campaign at its Annual Meeting at the Mandarin Oriental New York Hotel on September 26, 2016. The evening was generously sponsored by Victoria and Lloyd Goldman.

The worldwide \$500 million campaign on behalf of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev will significantly expand the University's campuses, facilitate groundbreaking leaps in research and help transform the Negev. AABGU is leading this major fundraising initiative, with a goal of raising 80 percent of the total, or \$400 million by 2020. All donations contributed through September 30, 2021 will be part of this campaign.

During the celebratory evening, major donors and board members were recognized for their leadership gifts, and attendees were treated

to a surprise performance from the Broadway cast of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Actor Danny Burstein ("Tevye") regaled the dinner audience with "If I Were a Rich Man." Other cast members performed "Matchmaker" and "Miracle of Miracles."



Above: Toni Young, Lloyd Goldman, Doron Krakow  
Below: Danny Burstein performs "If I Were a Rich Man."

AABGU's new president, Toni Young, and Executive Vice President Doron Krakow paid tribute to outgoing president and philanthropist Lloyd Goldman with a reproduction of rare letters about a vision to create a "Yavne in the Negev" signed by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion.

As Ben-Gurion University of the Negev looks ahead to turning 50 in 2020, AABGU *imagines* a future that goes beyond the walls of academia. It is a future where BGU *invents* a new world and *inspires* Israel's next generation of leaders. Read more about this visionary campaign at <http://vision.aabgu.org>

"It is with tremendous pride that I announce that to date AABGU has secured commitments toward this historic campaign of more than \$184 million!" said Goldman. He explained that the half billion dollar campaign will help build an inspiring future, and invited the audience to watch a video that imagined what this future would look like in the year 2045.

See the video on AABGU's website: [www.aabgu.org/future](http://www.aabgu.org/future)

"The 50th Anniversary Campaign is all about celebrating BGU—the miracle in the desert—and the wondrous and miraculous things that are being accomplished every day by our brilliant faculty, researchers, students, and staff," said Toni Young as she introduced Adam Kantor ("Motel") who sang "Miracle of Miracles."

A significant portion of the funds raised will be dedicated to building the University's new 57-acre North Campus, which will double the size of its footprint in Beer-Sheva. This will allow for an unprecedented growth in students expected over the next 10 years as Beer-Sheva becomes a thriving metropolis of talent and technology, with BGU at the epicenter of this transformation.

Doron Krakow added, "AABGU and its extraordinary donor family are committed to providing the support needed to continue the transformation of the Negev. We are now implementing our shared vision for a new phase of development for BGU and for the region: the next great pioneering era in Israel. We are grateful for the existing commitments that have helped jumpstart this significant initiative and for every amount contributed to secure BGU's future." ■





# AMERICAN DEDICATION SHINES BRIGHT AT THE 2016 OASIS OF INNOVATION

**A LARGE DELEGATION** of American supporters of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev arrived in Beer-Sheva in June for the annual Oasis of Innovation at BGU's 46th Board of Governors. Along with friends of the University from around the world, they were warmly welcomed to campus by BGU students, administration and faculty.

Highlights of this four-day open house included dedications recognizing members of the AABGU community for their generosity and commitment to the University; launch of the worldwide 2020 Vision Campaign celebrating BGU's 50th anniversary, which will take place in the year 2020; and the opportunity to experience BGU's vibrant campus life, and the Negev, where David Ben-Gurion's dream is being actualized today.

▲ "David Ben-Gurion" made a surprise appearance at the Opening Plenary kicking off the worldwide 2020 Vision Campaign at Ben-Gurion University in June. "The Renaissance of the Jewish people has become a reality. My dream has been realized," he said, while thanking BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi for her contributions to the University that bears his name.



▲ BGU's student improv group, Shlofta, performed at the festive Student Evening with Prof. Zvi HaCohen, BGU rector (right), who volunteered from the audience. The evening was sponsored by AABGU supporters Eric Benhamou; Andrea and Robert Colton; Dvora Ezralow; Brooke Kroegeer and Alex Goren; Edward and Marilyn Kaplan; Maribeth and Steve Lerner; Shelly and Marge London; Al Newman; Joel Reinstein; and Aileen Whitman z"l.





▲ Gary Sutnick, Dr. Alton Sutnick and Amy Sutnick-Plotch at the dedication of Mona's Garden. Located at the entrance of the BGU Faculty of Health Sciences, the garden was established in memory of Dr. Mona Sutnick.



▲ The dedication of the Stephen and David Breslauer Archaeological Laboratory Building: Dr. David Breslauer; Prof. Rivka Carmi; and Stephen Breslauer, vice chair on BGU's board of governors



▲ Ben Marandy and Ruth Flinkman-Marandy at the dedication of the Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and Ben Marandy Multidisciplinary Research Laboratory Building. The generous couple also inaugurated a chair in quantum physics and nanotechnology in their name.



▲ The Jim Breslauer Pavilion was dedicated at the Center for Digital Innovation located in Beer-Sheva's Advanced Technologies Park, adjacent to BGU's Marcus Family Campus. Frank Parlato; Liz Breslauer; Jim Breslauer, AABGU board member and member of BGU's board of governors; Prof. Rivka Carmi



▲ The Woodman-Scheller Israel Studies International Program was dedicated at BGU's Sede Boqer Campus. Left to Right: Dr. Paula Kabalo, director of the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism and the Woodman-Scheller Program; Wayne Woodman; Lisa Scheller; Roberta Scheller; Ernest Scheller, Jr.; Prof. Rivka Carmi



▲ BGU conferred an honorary doctoral degree on Ernest Scheller, Jr. (center), a prominent Delaware Valley philanthropist, businessman and community leader.

A Dixieland Jazz band provided a festive accompaniment to the ceremony that recognized the University's most generous supporters. The group followed the music, dancing and singing along to the unveiling of the various recognition walls. ►

*More photos on next page*





# MEET AABGU'S NEW PRESIDENT



Toni Young (right) was recognized for her generous gift by BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi at BGU in June.

**TONI YOUNG**, formerly of Wilmington, Delaware and now a New York City resident, became AABGU's new president on September 27, 2016. Prior to this role, she served as first vice president on the AABGU board of directors.

"I'm particularly thrilled to serve during the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev 2020 Vision 50th Anniversary Campaign. I plan to increase connections between the American community and BGU, and bring in new friends and supporters who understand the miracle we are creating in the Negev desert and how important BGU is to the success of Israel," says Young.

In 2014, she and her late husband, Stuart B. Young z"l, made a significant gift to the University to establish the Amos Oz Initiative for Literature and Culture. Named in honor of Amos Oz—BGU professor emeritus, renowned author and longtime Arad resident—the multi-year initiative enriches the Negev community of Arad with literary and cultural activities.

Young replaces New York real estate magnate Lloyd Goldman, who commented, "It has been a great honor to serve as AABGU's president these past four years. I know that the organization is in great hands. We are fortunate to have the leadership skills, enthusiasm and passion for the Negev and Ben-Gurion University that is embodied in Toni Young."

Before moving to New York this year, Young was the first woman president of the Jewish Federation of Delaware. There she spearheaded Delaware's Partnership 2000 relationship with the town of Arad and its surrounding Tamar region. Young has served on the national boards of the Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

"I'm excited about this new challenge and look forward to building upon and expanding the initiatives that Lloyd Goldman and other former AABGU presidents and board members have developed so successfully," she says.

Toni Young is the author of *Becoming American, Remaining Jewish: The Story of Wilmington, Delaware's First Jewish Community, 1879-1924* and *The Grand Experience: A History of the Grand Opera House*, and was a contributing author to *Delaware and the Jews* and *Seventy-Five Years at the JCC*. She earned a master's degree in Spanish at Harvard University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Goucher College. ■



▲ Margie Offer, Margit Meissner and John Garms enjoyed Israel's great outdoors during a stop on a jeep tour in the Ramon Crater.



▲ At the 2020 gala dinner, BGU alumnus and perception artist Nimrod Harel (right) played mind games with volunteers from the audience.



The final event was a glorious evening with stargazing in the Negev desert.

Save the Date

## OASIS of INNOVATION

at BGU's 47th Board of Governors  
May 14 to 18, 2017

Hope to see you next year  
in the Negev!

# מבט לעתיד

## A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

BY DORON KRAKOW EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



**THE RECENTLY** concluded High Holiday season found us once again reflecting on the year gone by (5776) and wondering about what may be in store for us in the coming year (5777). What will the future bring? Much of our time in synagogue during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is devoted to questions about fate and the hand of God. Family. Friends. Career. Community. For most of us it is the personal that preoccupies our thoughts about the future.

A great deal, however, of what the future holds is the product of dreamers and visionaries whose notions about what's possible have charted a wider course for the future. The future of nations. The future of industry. The future of humankind.

The pages of this issue of *Impact* are filled with insights about just these kinds of visions. The visions of those who came before us helped propel us to the reality of today. Coupled with the evolving vision and insight of a new generation, they fire our imaginations about what is yet to come.

While our people's history in the land of Israel goes back thousands of years, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that any trace of Jewish settlement in the Negev had long since disappeared when the first kibbutzim in the region were established in the 1940s. The absence of any material infrastructure and the hardship borne of the inhospitable environment put off all but the most intrepid pioneers. Bolstered by an influx of immigrants who were settled in the small outposts and villages that sprang up in the ensuing years, a rough and rugged start along the path of regional development had gotten underway.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev was established in 1969. It was created by government action. Expected to become an "Oxford in the desert" it was given a special mandate to serve as an engine for regional development and an anchor for its citizens. Like an echo of the region's settlement a quarter of a century before, those who came—to teach, to study, to research—were a tiny, self-selected collection of pioneers and dreamers, able to glimpse a future most would consider to be folly.

Forty-seven years have elapsed and what is happening in and around the University today and the pace at which change is coming to Beer-Sheva and the region defy every reasonable expectation. The University's physical

development is dizzying.

The new North Campus will double its footprint in the coming years. Dozens of high-tech companies have been drawn to the rapidly evolving Advanced Technologies Park, already home to research and development centers for Oracle, EMC, Lockheed Martin, Deutsche Telekom, and PayPal.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared Beer-Sheva the national capital of cyber security research, in consequence of the University's leading position in the field, not only in Israel, but on the world stage. As part of a major strategic redeployment of military bases and assets from the center and north of the country into the Negev—a redeployment that will bring more than 30,000 soldiers and their support infrastructure to the region—Israel's equivalent to our NSA will join the burgeoning technology corridor around Ben-Gurion University, raising its importance to the future of the country to undreamed of heights.

And that's not all. The unfolding development of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal, international focus on desert science and research through the forthcoming UN Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification on our Sede Boqer Campus, rapidly evolving collaborations across borders, and the science of desalination raised to an art form, will make it possible for water scarcity to become a thing of the past. This kind of progress seems almost unimaginable.

Alon Ben-Gurion, the grandson of our namesake, was asked recently what he thought his grandfather would think of the Negev today. After pausing to reflect on the question, he smiled. Then he said it would exceed even his grandfather's wildest dreams. One thing's for sure; without the vision of David Ben-Gurion we would never have gotten to where we are. Today, we turn our sights to the future once more with the University's half-billion dollar 2020 Vision Campaign, helping to shape the next 50 years.

David Ben-Gurion said that "In Israel, anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist." May we continue to make miracles in the Negev, together. ■



# EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP

While many questions remain about sleep—this essential part of our lives—more and more connections are being made between sufficient sleep and our health, well-being and ability to function well.



**INSUFFICIENT SLEEP**—defined for most adult people as less than seven or eight hours per day—takes a toll on our physical and emotional health. It is linked to chronic diseases that range from diabetes to hypertension, depression to cancer. It causes auto accidents, industrial disasters and medical errors. It makes it hard for us to perform everyday tasks and make good decisions. It increases the likelihood we'll be divorced or obese.

Fifty to 70 million American adults are estimated to suffer from insufficient sleep, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify it as a major public health problem.

At BGU, researchers are investigating sleep problems to find better ways to identify and treat them.

## THE DIAGNOSIS CHALLENGE

One major obstacle to helping more people is that diagnosis of sleep disorders has depended on an expensive, inconvenient technology that few

can access. To answer the need for a better system, a BGU team has developed a novel way to evaluate sleep and its disorders by analyzing a sleeping person's breath sounds.

"Over 800 million people worldwide have a sleep disorder, but at least 80 percent are unaware of this and are

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**"Over 800 million people worldwide have a sleep disorder, but at least 80 percent are unaware of this and are not diagnosed."**

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— DR. YANIV ZIGEL

not diagnosed," says Dr. Yaniv Zigel, head of the Biomedical Signal Processing Research Lab in BGU's Department of Biomedical Engineering. At least 40 percent of the population suffers from insomnia, difficulty in falling or staying asleep; 10 percent have obstructive sleep apnea

(OSA), obstructive breathing when asleep; and between 20 percent and 40 percent snore—"which can be a symptom of OSA but not necessarily—and is also a social problem! There are many cases of divorce."

Nearly 100 sleep disorders are recognized. Most can be treated, but only 10 percent to 15 percent of sufferers seek medical help, Zigel estimates. "The doctor may decide to send the patient to a sleep clinic. But they often have a long waiting list—three months in Israel, a year in Hong Kong."

More daunting yet: The standard sleep study technology, called polysomnography (PSG), requires overnight stay in the sleep center, where the patient is monitored and attached to a myriad of electrodes and sensors at various points of the body.

The data is processed and visually examined, or mathematically transformed to reveal insights into sleep/wake states and sleep disorders. Beyond the expense and inconvenience, Zigel says, results are not optimal. "The sleep is not natural. The patient is sleeping in a totally different



environment with all those sensors and cables attached. I thought about whether we can make tests with a much simpler device that can be used in people's homes, with no direct body contact. So... a microphone!"

Shortly after joining BGU in 2007, Zigel began collaborating with Prof. Ariel Tarasiuk of the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology, who also heads the Sleep-Wake Disorders Unit at Soroka University Medical Center.

"We decided that the best solution is a non-contact microphone that is non-intrusive, cheap, can be used at home, and can stand alone or be integrated with other solutions," Zigel says. Investigation showed that an off-the-shelf microphone and digital audio recording device work well. This simple system—Breath Sound Analysis (BSA)—is simply placed near the sleeper's bed.

"The algorithms are what's special.

We developed a set that removes other noises, analyzes the breathing sounds and produces a report regarding breathing, snoring, obstructive sleep apnea, sleep/wake activity, and sleep quality parameters."

The team, composed of the principal investigators and research students mainly from the biomedical engineering department, has tested the BSA microphone approach against the standard PSG technology with more than 150 patients. "The results showed that sleep/wake activity and sleep quality parameters can be reliably estimated solely using breathing sound analysis," says Prof. Tarasiuk.

"Moreover, as a potential screening tool, we can identify OSA just from speech signals when people are awake. We are among the first in the world to do that."

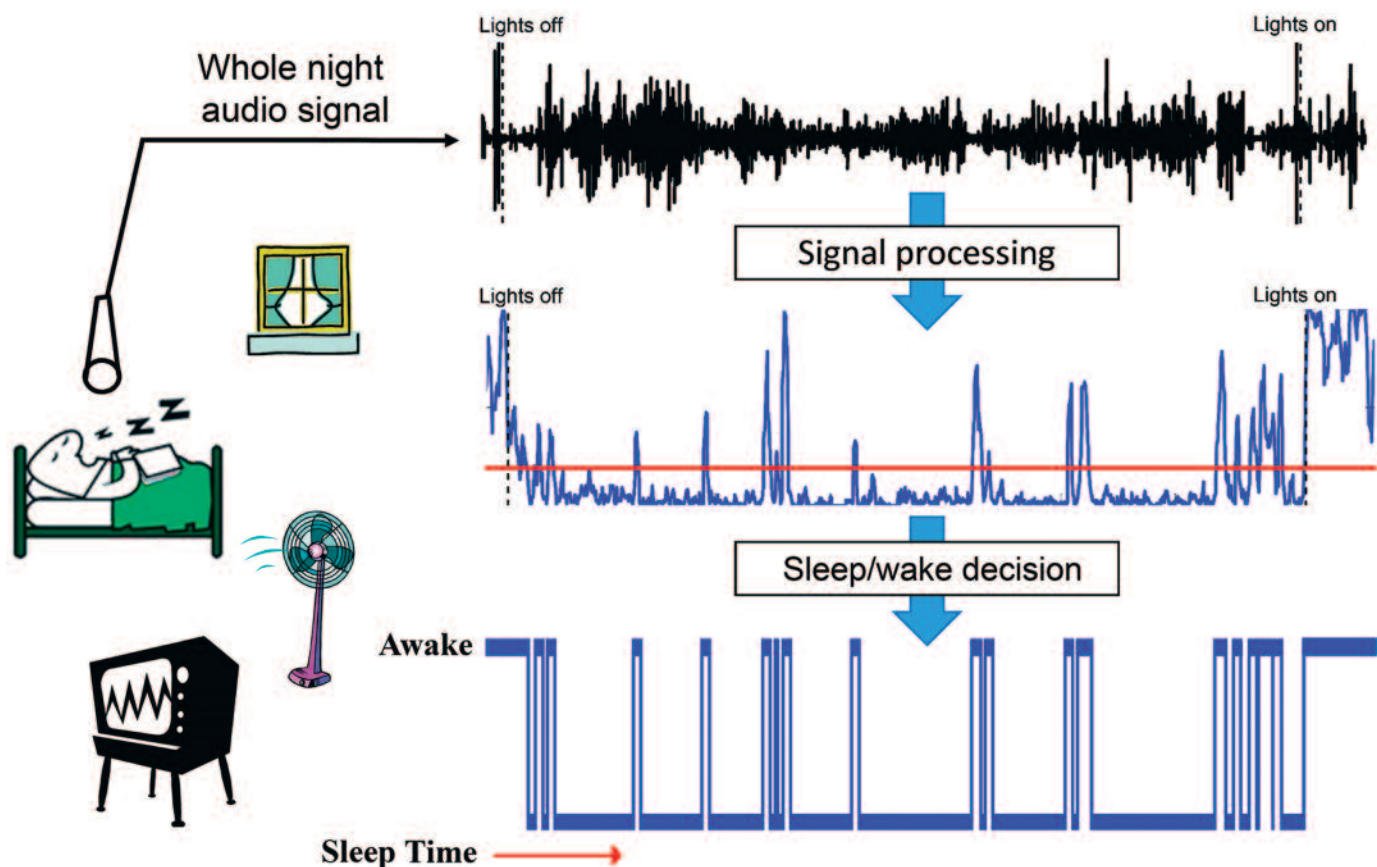
Zigel adds, "We keep developing our algorithms to be more accurate and to deal with difficult situations

like noisy environments. Every room is different—partner in bed, a television, an open window with birds singing outside at 4:30 a.m.—it's very challenging."

The system has been hailed by professional publications as a badly needed, groundbreaking tool. Beyond its inexpensiveness, ease of use and patient comfort features, it is unlike the older PSG approach in that analysis does not require sophisticated expertise.

The team envisions a range of near-future possibilities. In addition to medical professionals, ordinary people will be able to use BSA themselves. A standalone device, smart watch or smart phone app may be developed to track sleep patterns and produce a report. The technology could be incorporated into sensor-based smart homes to monitor elderly people who live alone, reducing their risk.

Zigel and Tarasiuk's team holds several patents that may well have a



The Breath Sound Analysis system, developed by Dr. Zigel and Prof. Tarasiuk, uses an off-the-shelf microphone to track sleep, simplifying the process and making it less expensive.

commercial future. “What drives us is to make people’s lives better and find ways to help all of us,” says Zigel.

### SLEEP DISORDERS AND HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN

Prof. Tarasiuk is also engaged in studying the connection between children’s sleep disorders and abnormal growth and obesity. Children with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) have impaired upper airways and often sleep restlessly, snore loudly and wake up gasping for breath. They fall asleep during the day frequently and are accident-prone. In addition to poor school achievement, many exhibit social and behavioral problems. This syndrome not only makes it hard to lead a normal childhood, but often sets the stage for lifelong health problems.

“About 25 percent of children with sleep disorders don’t grow normally and the same percentage will also develop energy-metabolism

abnormalities, and often obesity,” Tarasiuk says. “The association between these problems is poorly understood. So we want to know, how can we explain it?”

With support from the Israeli Science Foundation, Tarasiuk collaborates with Prof. Yael Segev, an endocrinologist from BGU’s Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Their pioneering research uses animals to mimic children’s experience with OSA.

The team found that when sleep disorder is introduced into rats by narrowing their tracheas, they have trouble maintaining ventilation, sleep poorly and fail to grow properly. Their research showed that this effect is connected to orexin, a hormone that regulates wakefulness. When orexin was decreased, sleep and respiration improved, as well as growth.

The team discovered that high orexin levels activate energy intake pathways in the hypothalamus, the body’s control center for the endocrine system. This generates a huge energy concentration that promotes overeating. “However, if you remove the orexin,” Tarasiuk explains, “respiration is better and growth improves. But it doesn’t



Prof. Yael Segev

change the animals’ feeding activity.”

When the rats were examined two weeks after the tracheal surgery, the researchers found that their feeding behavior remained high. “We found that five weeks later, this was still the case. This was a very big surprise!”

The discovery suggests

that there is an irreversible or partly irreversible increase in neuroendocrine pathways related to feeding. This may explain why after surgery to ease breathing by removing the tonsils and adenoids, a popular treatment, children begin to eat more and resume higher energy intakes.

“Overeating has always been thought a behavioral phenomenon so research and treatment has focused on psychology,” Tarasiuk says. “We showed that it’s related to endocrinology. When you improve respiratory activity, you don’t change feeding activity. These children’s endocrine behavior stays unregulated for life. So correcting sleep apnea will not lead to sustaining a good body weight, or stem the trend toward obesity.”

The Breath Sound Analysis team: Dr. Yaniv Zigel, Ph.D. student Eliran Dafna and Prof. Ariel Tarasiuk





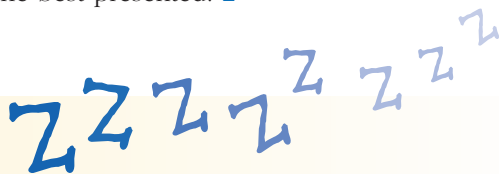
Shifting the focus from behavior to the body's hormonal system is an important step toward better treatment of sleep apnea. The breakthrough is attracting wide interest from pediatricians, endocrinologists and also the many specialists who deal with obesity.

The “obesity plague,” as it has been called, is a global phenomenon. The rising incidence of obesity-related diseases that limit many people's lives and challenge health care systems include diabetes, cancer, hypertension, and heart problems. Moreover, sleepy adults cause numerous accidents.

Tarasiuk estimates that as many as 20 percent of men and 10 percent of women currently suffer from sleep apnea, and that it causes 15 percent of obesity cases. Other than surgery, the principal treatment is use of a sleeping mask, which can be problematic with children.

The team hopes to discover better ways to intervene. “How can we improve respiration, but without the cost of increased energy intake? We're working on mechanisms to improve respiration and control the energy index so correcting sleep apnea will not lead to lifelong obesity.”

The findings were presented at the Sleep Research Society 30th Anniversary Annual Meeting this past June in Denver, and the paper was formally recognized as among the best presented. ■



## SOME FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

It is well established that sleep has four important roles.

1. It is evolution's adaptation to habitat. Many animals have different adaptive sleep patterns.
2. Sleep is associated with energy intake and expenditure. Abnormal sleep, including obstructive sleep apnea, is associated with obesity epidemiology.
3. Sleep is associated with hormonal function and growth.
4. Sleep is associated with neurocognitive and autonomic nerve function: blood pressure, temperature, cardio-vascular regulation, and more.

## PROSTATE PROBLEM OR SLEEP APNEA?

Dr. Howard Tandeter was diagnosed as suffering from sleep apnea at age 40 but he can track his symptoms to the age of 18. “It took many years for the medical system to understand what the associated symptoms of this syndrome are,” he says. These include loud snoring, waking up with a gasping sensation and repeated night awakenings, which lead to severe daytime sleepiness, problems with concentration and accidents. “I was aware of symptoms that were only described in the literature many years later.”

Tandeter's research on sleep apnea led to an interesting finding. “Many men who wake up often during the night believe it's because of a prostatic problem,” he says. “However, the need to pass urine can wake you once, but not three times in a night. Obstructive sleep apnea does that. The sleep disorder may be the underlying cause that wakes you up.”

The study undertaken by Tandeter's team—which included Sammy Gendler, Dr. Jacob Dreier and Prof. Ariel Tarasiuk—found that more than 57 percent of patients with enlarged prostates may also have sleep apnea. Physicians should seriously consider the possibility with their patients, Tandeter recommends, especially because the condition is treatable. Many people benefit from a simple machine called CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure), which forces air through the collapsed airways to support regular breathing. This enabled Tandeter to overcome his symptoms and lead a healthy, normal, energetic life.

Tandeter, a family physician, teaches students and residents at BGU's Faculty of Health Sciences. He is also director of its School of Continuing Medical Education. His viewpoint on improving the doctor-patient relationship reflects his own frustrating experience. “It's about paying attention to what the patient says. That's an incredibly good way to learn about associated symptoms and descriptions of what isn't obvious. But normally this isn't done!”


As a medical educator and faculty developer, Tandeter seeks to help educators fill their “teaching toolbox.”

“With less faculty, money and space to train doctors, we need to create alternate ways of learning, like medical simulation, which lets students practice on mannequins.” BGU is currently building an expanded facility for this training. He feels that “flipped classrooms” should be considered, as well. In this approach, students can learn by themselves and come in to discuss how to use the knowledge.

“And teachers need to adapt to their students with their laptops and smartphones; maybe that's the way they learn best. We are often too stuck in the old ways of learning and we should adapt to new technologies and to our students' learning styles.”



Dr. Howard Tandeter



# EARTHQUAKE!

## HOW BGU IS ADDRESSING ISRAEL'S 100-YEAR THREAT

**AMONG THE DANGERS** with which Israelis live, earthquakes may not be the first that come to mind. Yet the region sits on a significant fault-line. Minor to moderate earthquakes happen somewhere in Israel every day, typically unfelt. According to historical records, a major earthquake has hit the region every hundred years.

The last “big one”—6.2 in magnitude—killed or injured 1,200 people, nearly destroyed Jericho and damaged Jerusalem badly. That was in 1927. Today, many more people inhabit the region and a number of towns and cities, including Eilat and Tiberias are built directly over the fault. Seismologists apprehensively await the next event.

“It’s in the back of their minds—people talk about earthquakes and everybody knows the guidelines for what to do should one happen,” says Prof. Limor Aharonson-Daniel, BGU’s vice rector for international academic affairs and founding director of the PREPARED Center for Emergency Response Research. Until recently, she also headed the Department of Emergency Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

“But people have more concrete concerns about security, like tunnel-

ing at the Gaza border right now. They know an earthquake can happen but it does not seem to be an immediate threat. If they’re not in the emergency response field, people usually aren’t aware of the possible scope and anticipated destruction, which is beyond imagination.”

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**“We can go back 4,000 years through historical and archeological records and track earthquakes because we’ve had settlements all those years.”**

— DR. RONI KAMAI

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### GEOLOGY AND ENGINEERING

Dr. Roni Kamai is among BGU’s specialists in earthquake study, bringing to this work a dual background in engineering and geology. She is a member of both the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences and the Department of Structural Engineering.

“We can go back 4,000 years through historical and archeological records and track earthquakes because we’ve had settlements all those years,” she says. The Dead Sea Transform, better known as the Syrian-African Rift, runs from Turkey to Africa, going across Israel’s eastern border with Jordan. This rift has accumulated relative displacements of more than 62 miles between its two sides over the past 5 million years, creating the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, all the way down to the Gulf of Aqaba, she explains.

Israel’s government is well aware of the threat, and issues emergency guidelines and building codes that take account of earthquake impact. In 1999 the government assigned a National Steering Committee for Earthquake Preparedness, which is in charge of updating codes, running earthquake drills and fostering collaboration between government agencies, the army and civic organizations. The committee also funds research to fill gaps in scientific understanding of Israel’s specific vulnerabilities. This is helping BGU build up its related capabilities.

The University is drawing new young faculty members with an



interest in the field. Just this year, a long-held vision of Prof. Yossef H. Hatzor, chair of the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, came to life. BGU established a joint program for undergraduates in structural engineering and geology. Nine semesters will give these students a double bachelor's degree in the two fields.

"This shows the amount of collaboration that already exists between the two departments, and having joint students is ideal," Kamai says. The combined degree is unique in Israel and rare, at best, elsewhere. Reflecting the government's interest, the Ministry of Transportation and Israel Railways are providing scholarships.

account for all the different faults that could produce an earthquake in every part of the country and then compute how the waves will propagate away from the earthquake source.

When tectonic plates move against each other and there is a crack in the earth's crust, energy is released at the surface and moves outward, much like when a pebble hits the water. Kamai says, "We calculate how much we expect the ground surface to move in different circumstances. If there's an earthquake in Eilat, what will you feel in Tel Aviv? In Beer-Sheva?"



Dr. Roni Kamai

modern technology cannot do a better job predicting earthquakes. Moreover, old theories that big earthquakes are presaged by animal behavior, gas releases or numerous small earthquakes do not hold up, Kamai says.

"I think most scientists today would agree that we can know for certain where an event will occur, and approximately when an event will happen—but never at the same time! Almost every minute there's an earthquake somewhere in the world. But we can't tell in advance where and when it will happen next."

Israel is working toward an early warning system, which will give a 10 to 15 second alert before the strong destructive shaking reaches the main civil centers. This warning can help in certain circumstances, such as stopping fast trains and elevators, or prompting people to take immediate measures. "But it's a very short warning," Kamai admits, and it cannot replace the long-term readiness of the entire civil infrastructure to respond.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Stav Shapira is among the new BGU scientists engaged in significant research toward her Ph.D. from the Department of Emergency Medicine, supervised by Prof. Yaron Bar-Dayana and Prof. Aharonson-Daniel. She came to this work from a clinical field, physical therapy, and soon after arriving at BGU became involved in grant-supported research to build a scientific model that can estimate casualty rates in an earthquake's wake.

"For the last 30 years, the traditional version of casualty estimation has been very restricted to the engineering field," she explains. "This needs to be addressed because the approach to preparing for disaster and reducing risk is now more people-centered and comprehensive. We need to integrate human-related research fields, such



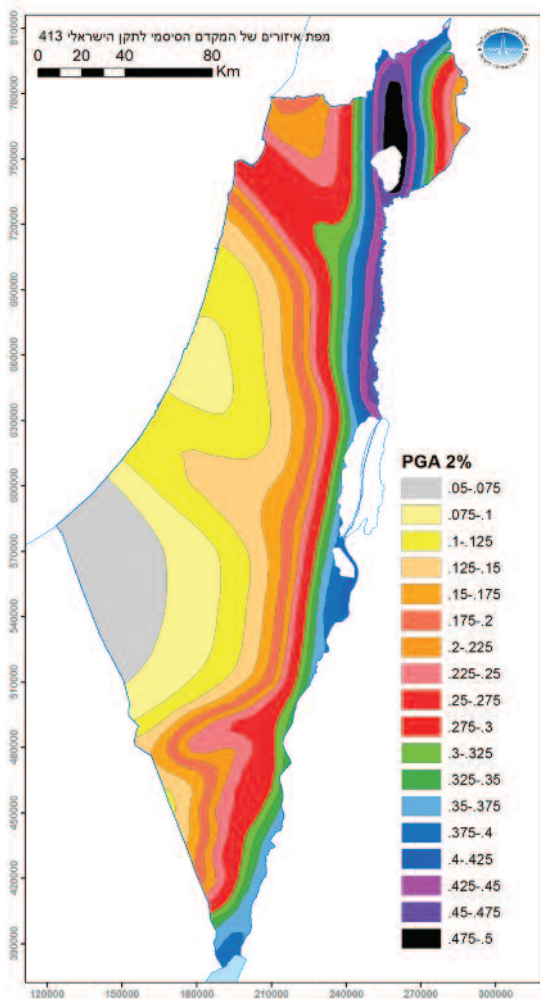
Left and Above: BGU's Department of Emergency Medicine organized a regional earthquake preparedness drill that included members of Israel's Magen David Adom and Jordan's Red Crescent.

Kamai herself just received word that the Israeli Science Foundation is funding the creation of a brand new soil mechanics lab at BGU, and simultaneously she was awarded further funding to support her research. New lab equipment will complement computer-based research with the means to perform actual soil testing.

One major project is predicting the ground motion generated by potential earthquakes. To produce a national seismic hazard map, scientists need to

This determines what will happen to buildings. "The hazard map tells structural engineers how to plan and construct buildings. But right now a big chunk of the Israeli building code is based on California-based equations, models and values, because no local work has been done," Kamai's own prior research showed that there is a good chance the two regions require different predictive models.

For a non-scientist, it may seem hard to understand why so much



A seismic hazard map that is part of Israel's building code for earthquakes. PGA (peak ground acceleration) is a measure that predicts ground-shaking levels. Intensity increases from the top to the bottom of the color scale.

as epidemiology and social science into planning tools that are traditionally based on mathematics and engineering methods. I took this broad approach into the field of casualty modeling.”

Her premise is that population makeup must be taken into account during emergencies, which especially affect vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and young. “We need to empower, prepare and protect them in future disasters,” Shapira says.

Data-based projections of earthquake impact can help community and national leaders decide how to better allocate resources. This would make a difference even in a resource-rich country like the United States, but is especially important

for poor and undeveloped countries, as the world saw in the case of the recent Haiti and Nepal disasters.

Starting with an American methodology, Shapira created a holistic framework to flexibly integrate more environmental and human factors into the model than had been the norm. Her new model can be used in any locale as a planning tool. After comparing her projections with that of the traditional models, Shapira was surprised.

“I knew there would be a gap between the two sets of projections, but didn’t expect to see such a big difference! I think that once you take into account human-related factors and community characteristics—like more elderly, disabled or poor—the projections change very much.

“As with all natural disasters, not just earthquakes,” she adds, “it’s always the poor, the minorities, the elderly, the women, and refugees who are hurt most.”

One unanswered question is why women show up as especially

vulnerable. Perhaps, Shapira speculates, because in traditional societies women suffer more from poverty and illiteracy. Access to information is critical during a disaster, and the hardest-hit groups are difficult to reach.

Shapira encounters one significant limitation in proving her work’s applicability: “We haven’t had a big earthquake here in more than 90 years, so I don’t have good documentation of damage and casualty numbers. That means I can’t test my model’s accuracy for Israel.

“I hope the methodology is generic and can be applied in other regions.

For Israel, I hope we’ll continue to have this limitation.”

## STUDENT RESEARCH

Influential studies are also undertaken at BGU’s PREPARED Center, which promotes interdisciplinary research on disaster and emergency response. The work ranges from the medical and epidemiological to the social and psychological, including policy-making and systems integration. Since PREPARED’S opening seven years ago, BGU has become recognized as a knowledge hub in this field, and research students in the Department of Emergency Medicine have conducted a number of practically oriented projects.

“We often collect research questions in the field and bring them back to our students, and usually one of them wants to work on it,” says Aharonson-Daniel. “So everybody’s happy! When we have important findings, we report back to the relevant authorities and decision makers and formulate results as recommendations for action.”

As examples of research done by Ph.D. students, Aharonson-Daniel mentions several studies that she supervises jointly with Prof. Mooli Lahad, a psychologist specializing in traumatic exposure.

One project seeks to profile

individual coping mechanisms using social media, to help tailor messaging should disaster strike.

A second study is exploring the relationship between imagination and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder); and a third attempts to determine whether prolonged exposure to security stress produces different reactions and

symptoms than shorter-term stress, thus calling for different care.

This research brought about a collaboration with another BGU research center: CARES (Center for the Advancement of Research on Stress), led by Prof. Golan Shahrar. The PREPARED-CARES center will



Stav Shapira



soon offer prizes to students studying facets of traumatic stress.

Does preparing for an earthquake catastrophe differ from other potential threats? “It’s different from armed conflict,” Aharonson-Daniel says, “and preparedness depends on who you are. It’s different for someone who works at a medical facility, for example, or for a parent of young children. But generally there are some common traits, as suggested by what is called an ‘all-hazard approach.’ This assumes if you’re prepared for one disaster, you’re prepared for all.”

Aharonson-Daniel observes that the overall preparedness field has changed over time. “Most notably, the government approach nowadays is less paternalistic than it used to be. Today more responsibility is transferred to local leadership and the population. Municipalities are more independent now, and the people have more confidence in them.

“Just like in many areas, people are taking responsibility for their lives, so it’s natural for it to happen in this field too.” ■

Worldwide, a lot more earthquake activity goes on than most people realize. Somewhere in the world, at any given minute, an earthquake is happening. Most are small.

To monitor Israel’s activity check out: <http://seis.gii.co.il/heb/earthquake/lastEarthquakes.php>

In the U.S.: <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/>

# PASSIONATE ABOUT GERIATRICS

**PROF. A. MARK CLARFIELD, M.D.**, director of BGU’s Medical School for International Health (MSIH), is a physician focused on geriatrics. He has built government health care systems, run hospital departments, taught medicine on three continents, and is widely published as a researcher and commentator on the medical world.

Prof. Clarfield’s perspective also encompasses interests in psychology, medical history and anthropology. “I moved from English-speaking Ontario to French Quebec and then to Israel voluntarily, so I like new languages and to struggle with cultures I didn’t grow up in. People are not aware of their own culture until they leave it,” he observes. “You may find out your assumptions are not valid.” When he travels, he typically visits health care facilities for firsthand insight into how each

community works with the elderly and their problems.

Clarfield was recruited jointly by BGU and the Soroka University Medical Center in 2001 after running the Division of Geriatrics, which is basically the Israeli version of the American Medicare and Medicaid systems, for seven years. In 2009, while still heading Soroka’s geriatric ward, he accepted the additional role of leading MSIH. But handling two demanding jobs at once proved to be prohibitive. “So I came over to the school full-time. I’m still a geriatrician involved with care of the elderly with a special love of research. But now I can take a phone call!”

He explains that wide-angle thinking is not unusual for doctors who care for the elderly. “The problems are medical but many aspects go beyond blood pressure. You also have to

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**“All over the world the number of doctors is growing rapidly—but not the number of geriatricians.”**

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— PROF. A. MARK CLARFIELD

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worry about cognition, and whether the person can manage at home, whether there’s an elevator. Many doctors don’t need to spend time on that. They assume a patient can read and write, climb the stairs. But the people who come to us may have great difficulty with these things.”

His interest in health systems also stems from this generalist viewpoint.

“Those of us in geriatrics are always looking to other systems to compare and contrast. There aren’t a million ways to do an appendectomy, but there are many ways to organize medical systems and they differ both from country to country and over time. A cardiologist doesn’t need to look at systems. But for geriatric patients, some work better than others.”

sick we have. So are the hospital and community services enough?”

### TOO FEW GERIATRICIANS

One reason not enough physicians choose the specialty is the nature of the work. “For a family doctor, it’s typical to see three to six patients per hour. A kid with eczema, you’d

most people don’t know what kind of doctor they’ll be,” Clarfield says. “Some may have wanted to be surgeons, but find they don’t like the operating theater and change their minds. Medical students need to be exposed to a wide range of specializations to make a choice. If they never see a geriatrician in action they will not know that such a field exists.”

However, there is too little time in medical training programs for aspiring doctors to become familiar with every field. Even at MSIH, Clarfield says, the curriculum is so full—especially with the addition of international health subjects—that he encounters the same time constraints in aiming to introduce more geriatrics experience. There is also a shortage of teachers. “Many geriatricians don’t want to give up their time to teaching because of the field’s growth and the high demand for their services.”

Furthermore, Clarfield says, geriatrics often carries a certain stigma in the medical profession. “Even friends ask me, ‘why did you go into that boring, depressing field?’ That kind of stigma about the old is felt by people in general, too. There’s nothing deeper than a parent’s love for a child but it’s largely one-way. Parents love their kids more than



Clarfield (center) and his band, The Unstrung Heroes, perform traditional Celtic and French Canadian music.

Coordination between hospital and community is critical everywhere when it comes to the elderly, Clarfield observes. “There are no high walls for geriatric patients. When I’m in another country I want to see how the hospital-community divide is handled and how well it’s working.”

Overall, Clarfield finds, while quality of care for the elderly is improving, “it depends on where you are.” One major challenge that applies globally: a shortage of geriatricians. “All over the world the number of doctors is growing rapidly—but not the number of geriatricians. At the same time, most sick people are old, so the more old people we have, the more

give him a cream—seven minutes. A 50-year-old person with high blood pressure—five minutes. But an old lady who’s incontinent and losing memory, that takes an hour and a half to assess comprehensively. So our systems of care are not designed for elderly frail people.”

Complex disease challenges like Alzheimer’s amplify the problem. “That’s a terrible stress, not so much for the patient, but for the family, for society. And it causes a great deal of pressure on the medical system, both the acute side and nursing homes.”

Another reason for the field’s lack of popularity is that doctors have little or no exposure to the discipline in medical school. “When they come in,

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**Considering the family’s values offers geriatricians “a useful approach to treating patients in an increasingly multicultural society.”**

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vice-versa. It probably has to do with evolution; we wouldn’t exist without that devotion to our children, but the other way around?

“Also, of course, old people are close to death; that’s frightening and



many people don't want to go there. Why do oncologists have trouble telling people they will die? Because they're afraid too!"

Paradoxically, Clarfield finds, geriatricians are less concerned about aging than most people.

## COMPARING MEDICAL SYSTEMS

As an authority who writes and advises on improving health care systems, Clarfield believes that "every system has its ups and downs. And medical care lives within the political and social system."

He advocates for publicly funded health care systems, which in places like England and Canada, as well as Israel, "provide a reasonably equitable system of healthcare that takes care of citizens pretty well without breaking the bank. True, you may have to wait a few months for some things.

"The down side: The U.S., which resists a sole-payer system, has some world class places and services—better than anywhere in the world. But not everybody can access them. It's a values question. Do you want a system that's pretty good for every-

one, or one that's excellent for some? I try to change things in the direction I think best."

Clarfield's voice is heard internationally, thanks to his research, consultant work, presentations, and penchant for writing. He is also an associate editor of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Many of his own journal articles compare health care practices, attitudes, outcomes, and issues among different cultures. Recently, he studied the health of Israelis and was surprised to find that "older Israelis are not as healthy as I thought they'd be. In the U.S., Europe, Canada, older people are healthier today on average than they were 20, 30, 40 years ago. But that seems not to be the case so much in Israel.

"I don't know why you find more pockets of ill health here than elsewhere. Maybe it's Holocaust survivors, or growing up in places like Russia without good healthcare and not aging as well. It's an interesting issue and one I'd like to research further."

What else would he do with more



spare time? "Play more guitar. And spend more time with my band." ■

**Prof. A. Mark Clarfield, M.D.**  
*Since he began practicing as a new doctor, Clarfield has fielded*

*the question "why geriatrics?" One colleague early on, impressed with Clarfield's qualifications, asked whether his choice involved a drinking problem. "I've given a lot of stock answers," he says. "I had loving, very old grandparents...I enjoy history... I've always been a bit of a rebel. But the work is almost always challenging, and sometimes very satisfying. I hear the question less lately. Maybe because we've made strides within the medical profession. Or maybe it's because we have begun to understand that some of us may need the services of a well-trained geriatrician when we enter our own golden years."*

## END OF LIFE CARE AND RELIGION

Among his many research projects, Prof. A. Mark Clarfield collaborates with other specialists to illuminate how religious and cultural issues affect care of elderly patients. When families deal with a loved one's impending death, they face agonizing decisions and approach them with varying beliefs of "right" and "wrong." In one study, the team investigated differences in ideas about end of life care in Judaism, Catholicism and Islam.

In Judaism, whatever the degree of religious observance, the paramount principle is sanctity of life, and entails the physician's obligation to heal. One consequence is that a Jewish family is likely to request active intervention for a terminally ill loved one, such as the use of a feeding tube, even when this act is futile.

Catholicism also holds all life to be sacred, but believes that bodily life is not to be maintained at all costs if it merely

prolongs dying. End of life is considered a time for reconciliation and forgiveness. A feeding tube is permissible but not obligatory.

Islam, too, holds sanctity of life as a paramount principle, and while Muslims believe healing ultimately comes from God, they also believe that individuals must be responsible stewards of their own bodies and receive medical care when needed. Death is more prominently viewed as an inevitable part of life, and treatment that prolongs the final stages of terminal illness is not necessary. In the case of elderly patients, if life can be extended, Islam would support use of a feeding tube, viewing nutritional support as part of basic care.

Considering the family's values offers geriatricians "a useful approach to treating patients in an increasingly multicultural society," the study notes.





Photo by Ronni Strongin

# ALON BEN-GURION

## REMEMBERS HIS GRANDFATHER

David Ben-Gurion's grandson, Alon, currently lives in Westchester, a suburb of New York City. After a high-profile career in the hospitality industry, he is now an international consultant on hotel management. We talked with him at length in the gracious home he shares with his wife, Anastasia, surrounded by inter-generational family memorabilia and an eclectic array of artwork. Alon was 21 when his grandfather died.

**IMPACT:** If your grandfather could see today's Israel, what do you think he would say?

**ALON BEN-GURION:** It's a good question. But you'd be asking the wrong man. Because Ben-Gurion does not have in his vocabulary the word "if." So since "if" does not exist, the question does not exist. It's irrelevant. The better question is, what would we say

based on what he said when he put together his vision for the State of Israel. What can we learn from that about what he believed?

**IMPACT:** What do you think that vision tells us?

**ABG:** My interpretation can be like anyone else's; I have no special license. But I can read between the lines and I know what he said. I think his biggest day was when he landed in Israel, Jaffa, in 1906. Ben-Gurion never used the word Palestine;

he always used Israel. He visited one of the 13 villages there that were sponsored by Baron Rothschild—and left very fast. He saw that the Jews were the landlords. They weren't doing the work; the Arabs were. He said, "That is the wrong picture. If we don't work the land, we don't own the land."

**IMPACT:** Where did his connection to the Negev originate?

**ABG:** He was obsessed with the Negev and it did not start after he became the prime minister or moved to Sede Boqer. He always said the "Negev is the cradle of Israel." He understood there'd be less fuss about the Jews working the land there because nobody lived there. Still, nobody wanted to give it to him; the proposed partition plan didn't even include the land of the Negev in the State of Israel! During the War of Independence, Israel took it over. The Negev encompasses 60 percent of the land of Israel. That's why it was so important.

**Photo:** Alon and Anastasia with their dog at their home in Westchester County, New York



**IMPACT:** Speaking of the partition plan, one ongoing controversy stems from a letter your grandfather wrote concerning the 1936 Peel Commission recommendation to create a very small state in the north of Israel [along the coast just south of Tel Aviv to Mount Carmel, and including the Jezreel Valley and the Galilee]. The Arabs rejected the plan and the Zionists were divided. Ben-Gurion accepted the plan. The Palestinians today say the letter proves that Ben-Gurion had other intentions. Did your grandfather ever talk about this letter?

**ABG:** In 1936, the British had assigned the commission to see what was happening in pre-state Israel because there was a lot of violence and unrest. The commission's report advised dividing Palestine into two parts, one for the Arabs under King Abdullah and one for the Jews.

The letter he wrote to my father, Amos, in 1937, was translated from Hebrew to English by the Palestinian Institute in Beirut. It became famous because the Palestinians took some sentences from it to prove he had

higher aspirations to the land. But you can see that Ben-Gurion is already addressing the issue as a challenge—how are we going to live side by side.

**IMPACT:** Why did he write the letter to your father?

**ABG:** My father at the time was at agriculture school and working for the *Haganah*, Israel's underground organization. He was very patriotic about protecting his country. And suddenly his father is giving large parts of that country away! Ben-Gurion wrote him that the land the commission recommended for Israel is not in its actual possession; it is in the possession of the Arabs and the British. "But in this proposed partition we will get more than what we already have, though, of course, much less than we merit and desire."

**IMPACT:** There are also recent claims that he took the Negev away from the Bedouins.

**ABG:** Ohhhhhh! First of all, the Bedouins were not citizens of any nation prior to 1948, when the State of Israel was

created. They traveled between Sinai, the Negev and Jordan. Once the State was established, the Bedouin tribes were advised that this movement had to stop. They had to decide whether to settle down in Israel and become Israeli citizens or go to Jordan. Some became very loyal Israeli citizens and many of them served and still serve very well in the army. But at the time there were very few of them.

**IMPACT:** What was it like to grow up as David Ben-Gurion's grandson?

**ABG:** He was a grandfather! It's not like America; we never had a legacy like the Kennedys. No secret service. Nobody treated us differently and we had a normal life. My two sisters and I went to the normal school, joined the youth movement. He was the prime minister but for us he was just a grandfather. When he came with Paula, my grandmother, there'd be a convoy of two cars and bodyguards, but they were part of the family; I grew up with them.

Photos courtesy of Alon Ben-Gurion

1. Alon with his baby sister in his grandfather's library
2. Alon as a paratrooper in the Israeli army
3. Ben-Gurion's bodyguards, "part of the family," teach Alon about guns.







**Left:** Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion meeting with Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in New York's Waldorf Astoria in 1960. During Alon's illustrious hotel career, he managed this hotel from 1997 to 2004. **Middle:** A visit to what is today called Eilat in 1936 with David and Paula Ben-Gurion on the far left and Amos Ben-Gurion, their son and Alon's father, at far right. **Right:** David Ben-Gurion while a student at the law school of the University of Istanbul in 1914

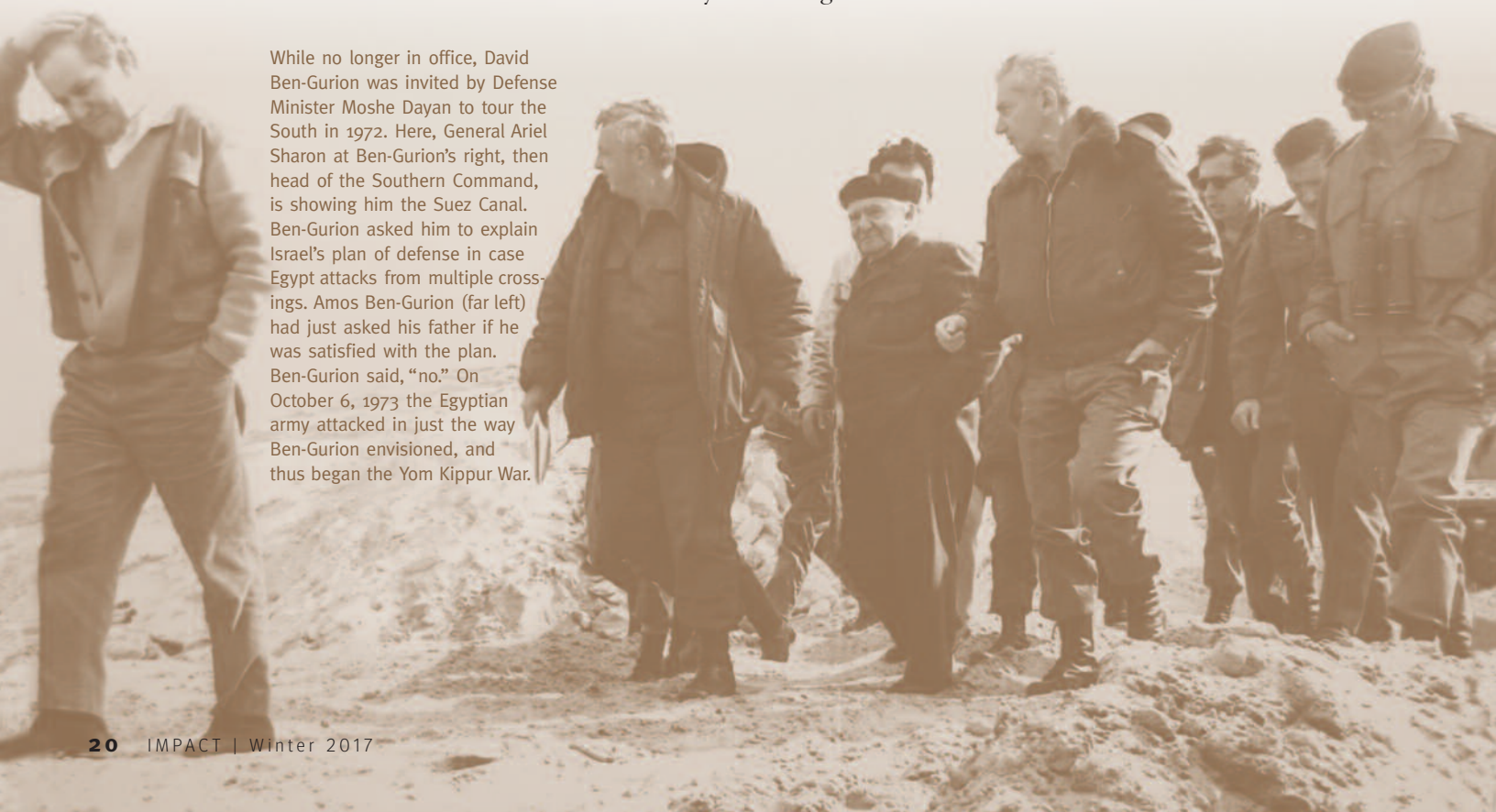
**IMPACT:** Does any memory stand out that reflects your relationship with him?

**ABG:** He had a little black book. He entered the names and birthdays of all the children and spouses. A few days before your birthday he would call: "Alon, your birthday is coming up. What can I get you as a present?" It had to be books, always books—he was the man of the books; we are a nation of books.

When I was 12, I was studying the Roman Empire, so he sent me a box of books about Rome. Next time I saw him: "Alon, did you get enough books? Did you enjoy them? What period of Rome did you like the best?" I mentioned Hannibal. We were in Sede Boquer standing eye to eye—I was already his height—and he says, "Let me tell you why Hannibal was the greatest military leader in history!" and he goes

into a half-hour lecture. The tone, the passion, the look, the *eyes*—my kids would say, "are you for real?" You just looked at him. Later I saw him give speeches often and it was just the same. Whether you're the president of a country or a child of 12, he'd finish the lecture and you'd say, "Wow! What was that all about?" Always, silence followed. You're overwhelmed with the passion, the information.

While no longer in office, David Ben-Gurion was invited by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan to tour the South in 1972. Here, General Ariel Sharon at Ben-Gurion's right, then head of the Southern Command, is showing him the Suez Canal. Ben-Gurion asked him to explain Israel's plan of defense in case Egypt attacks from multiple crossings. Amos Ben-Gurion (far left) had just asked his father if he was satisfied with the plan. Ben-Gurion said, "no." On October 6, 1973 the Egyptian army attacked in just the way Ben-Gurion envisioned, and thus began the Yom Kippur War.





**IMPACT:** He was famously a man of many interests. Which among them do you especially recall?

**ABG:** He was fascinated with the human brain. He talked to experts. They all told him that we'll never figure out how it works. He said, "We'll figure it out; you don't know what you're talking about. Experts—they're all experts on the past but there are no experts on the future."

His vision of the Negev was about water, to turn it green. When he became prime minister he brought in experts from all over the world to do surveys. They all told him, "This is desert; there's nothing here!" He said, "Replace the experts. Give me new ones. Don't tell me you *can't* do it—just tell me *how* you're going to do it."

**IMPACT:** You were a young adult when he died so you knew him for a number of years. How would you describe him as a person?

**ABG:** He was a very, very interesting human being. As you grow up you see things, and what's fascinating to remember today is the modesty, the simplicity—in part maybe it was the generation. If you go to Sede Boquer you see the hut he lived in. And the bed—there's no way any one of us could sleep on it; the mattress is unbelievable.

When he retired the first time [in January 1954] and went to Sede Boquer, he wanted to work with sheep. Cabinet members, the prime minister, came to see him, and there he was, a kibbutznik working with sheep. You see people standing around him, in the barren desert, all in suits. As a child you think this is strange—and funny.

The things that were important to him and not important...the beautiful homes, going out to dinner, traveling to fabulous islands, the materialistic society that we all became part of...to him it meant absolutely nothing. For him it was all about the State of Israel. He wanted Israel to be a beacon, a light for the world—a special country with great education, agriculture, tech-

nology—that would spread the knowledge so that other people could be successful too. He believed we survived 3200 years in exile because we have a belief. And that now we are here to build a nation but also to help other countries, and lead by example.

**IMPACT:** What kind of people did he like being with?

**ABG:** He loved the army. He'd rather spend time with a soldier than anyone else. I remember that when we came home from the army—me, my older sister and her husband, my younger

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**"He was obsessed with the Negev and it did not start after he became the prime minister or moved to Sede Boquer. He always said the 'Negev is the cradle of Israel.'"**

— ALON BEN-GURION

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sister—the first thing we'd do is take off the uniform and put on jeans and sneakers. When we went to Sede Boquer that way he'd be angry. "Aren't you in the army? Are you ashamed of it? So, you're not wearing the uniform?"

We worked it out this way. We'd wear the uniforms and give him a hug and kiss. Then he'd say, "Go change." That solved the problem. Once he saw us in uniform he was happy."

**IMPACT:** What did you do in the army?

**ABG:** I was a paratrooper. We were all paratroopers. Why? Because we're crazy.

**IMPACT:** He was known as a great reader. Can you talk about that?

**ABG:** During the War of Independence he wanted to go to America to raise money, but the government said no—he was needed for the

war. So they sent Golda Meir. He told her, when you're in New York, go to a bookstore and get me these two books. Only Ben-Gurion would think of that in the middle of a war!

You can see the number of books in Sede Boquer—I used to go to him and borrow. He knew every book in the library: "Let's get this one for you, and that..." And they were in all the languages!

Three years after he died, I was in the U.S. and invited to a home in Philadelphia for a big event. A Greek priest was there and when he found out who I was, he came over to me and said, "I have a story for you!" He was in Israel with a group of 50 priests and they visited Ben-Gurion. "I was the only Greek, and when he identified that, he said 'come with me.' He took me to his library, pulled out a book and opened it. The next thing I knew, your grandfather was reciting a poem in Greek. The problem was that it was ancient Greek—and I don't speak that!"

**IMPACT:** Could he read many languages?

**ABG:** He said he needed to read them in the original. He learned Spanish to read *Don Quixote*. He learned Aramaic and wrote in it, a lot. He insisted on learning ancient Greek so he could read the Greek philosophers the way they wrote it. When I went to the Archives [at BGU] this year, they showed me his homework and



Photo by Natalie Canavor

copy books he did while studying Greek. He took it seriously.

**IMPACT:** How old was he at the time?

**ABG:** I don't know...but he was always an adult! Since he was born! How many people wake up in the morning and say, "I want to build a State?"

**IMPACT:** Some of his early agreements in creating the State are criticized now. Did Ben-Gurion talk about his reasons for the arrangement with Orthodox Jews, which is so controversial now?

**ABG:** I asked him about that once. He told me that the rabbi said to him, "If you insist on our being drafted into the army, we'll have to leave the country." Ben-Gurion didn't sleep all night. He said, "The fact that we built the country for the Jews all over the world and a Jew tells me he'll have to leave—that's unacceptable." The thought that a Jew cannot live in Israel is what bothered him. But the agreement was for 400 men. It escalated.

**IMPACT:** Ben-Gurion has also been charged with doing too little to help the Jews during the Holocaust because he was so focused on building a State.

**ABG:** Historians are always experts on the past and they challenge things—I say challenge whatever you want! You have to remember that we see through the eyes of today, when Israel is successful and much stronger. But imagine if he got what he wanted in 1936, the State. Would it have changed the outcome of the Holocaust? We'll never know. There was a reason he wanted it. He had read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Did he see the clouds of the Second World War and the Holocaust? We don't know...

**IMPACT:** What is your overall perspective now on Ben-Gurion?

**ABG:** At the end of the day, you've got to take the whole package. If there was no Ben-Gurion, would there be a State of Israel? There's no doubt he was the dominant force. It's the

mindset. Back when there was the Ottoman Empire, he found out it had a rule that from every colony the empire owned, two people would be voted into parliament. So he decided to become a lawyer, learn Turkish, be elected to the Turkish Parliament, and from there would be able to create Israel. Always it was: What do I have to do to get the State of Israel created? He always had that vision.

**IMPACT:** And your grandmother? How do you remember her?

**ABG:** Paula was a tough woman, very tough. She devoted all her life to taking care of Ben-Gurion; she was very protective of him. But it was like a military regime. He eats at 12 o'clock. So he would get up and go eat lunch. Whoever is there sits and waits because she told them to. She took care of everybody—the family, the guards—she was a *balabusta* [Yiddish for take-charge homemaker]. When I was born it was a big year for polio, 1951. I got sick as a baby. The doctor came in and diagnosed me with something else. Paula called: "What did the doctor say? He doesn't know what he's talking about. Take him right to the hospital." I did have polio, and was one of the people who got over it.

**IMPACT:** Was there religion in your grandfather's home?

**ABG:** He was not a religious person but he was a believer. He knew the Bible inside out and believed it was the essence of Judaism. While he was the prime minister he met every Saturday with the top rabbis of Israel. They had a roundtable and each week they'd analyze a chapter, from the historical and religious perspective.

We went to his home for Passover seders. The only part of the *Hagadah* he read was about the release of the slaves. He read it every Passover. That's the only thing in it he cared about—from slavery to freedom!

That's what it's all about to him. Every seder since, I read the same part.

**IMPACT:** Did you ever wish you had a different kind of grandparent?

**ABG:** No! I can't say that. I grew up with him the way he was, and Paula. The most important thing for me is the devotion to something he believed in. You read about it and see that it was his dream as a kid. But at the end of his life he had the same emotion. I once went to Sede Boqer—I was a senior in high school—and saw him by himself, with his bodyguards, and he's writing.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm writing."

"You're always writing!"

"I write 17 hours a day—the story of the State of Israel for the younger generations."

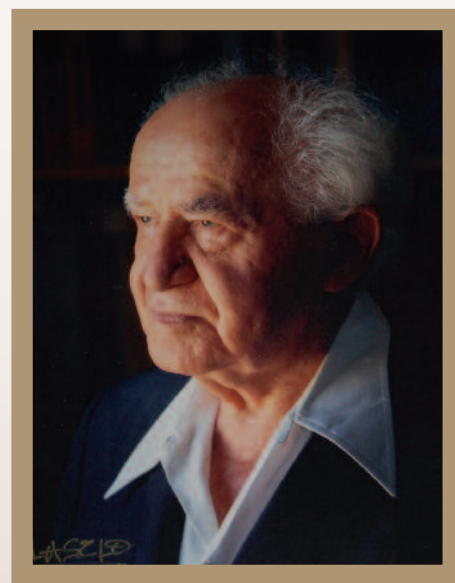
"Why are you in such a rush?"

"Because I'm going to die at the age of 87."

"Why do you think that?"

"Because my father died at the age of 87."

He did. And my father, Amos, did. ■



*David Ben-Gurion passed away at 87 as he predicted, and even writing as fast as he could, did not complete the history he planned to leave for the next generations.*





# KEREN MOSHE

## A WIN-WIN LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM FOR 20 YEARS

**ANAT SHOHAM** wanted to give an end-of-year party for the hearing impaired teenagers at the Shema Center, where she volunteers as part of her Keren Moshe Leadership Training Program.

“But the center didn’t have money for it. So we had to search for volunteers, free food, a place to hold it, everything. I wrote a note on just one Facebook student group page. In an hour I got a hundred calls from students wanting to volunteer! A woman in Beer-Sheva found out about it and told me she wanted to bake cakes for everyone. Two hundred people wanted to help and I had to turn many of them away.

“It was a great party and the kids were so happy. But the big thing

was that I saw so much spirit, a way to make change happen. Big things are possible.”

Anat is one of 120 BGU students who are part of the Keren Moshe Leadership Program every year. The program, which works closely with the Beer-Sheva municipality’s welfare office, celebrated its 20th anniversary in June. Thousands of students and dozens of local community organizations have benefited from the program thus far.

“We invest in the students to develop their social responsibility, awareness and sensitivity, especially to populations that are behind the rest of Israeli society,” says Vered Sarousi Katz, director of BGU’s Department of Community Action. Each student receives a scholarship and commits four hours per week to volunteer activity. The organizations

“We want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with the Keren Moshe students, who provided constant support to the club members and served as great role models. They did a wonderful job cultivating and strengthening the social skills of the teens, young adults and senior citizens who come to the club and really need help.”

— PNINA GOLAN, TZAVTA ASSOCIATION,  
A SOCIAL CLUB FOR PEOPLE WITH  
SPECIAL NEEDS

Photo: The Keren Moshe cohort, June 2016



Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Keren Moshe Leadership Program in June 2016, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi presents a beautiful piece of art to Esther Halperin. She and her late husband, Michel, made the program possible.

they work for help at-risk youth, refugees, the mentally impaired, abused women, Holocaust survivors, and many more people in need of services.

In addition, students are given a rich roster of learning opportunities. Weekly meetings include workshops, lectures and field trips. “We expose them to problems in society,” Katz says, “especially relating to economics and welfare. We want them to understand that many things can be different, and to become people who ask questions, develop critical attitudes and act. So we bring to them leaders who will inspire them and tell them how they accomplished what they did.”

The students mix with the speakers—members of the Knesset, mayors, leaders of businesses and non-governmental organizations, social workers, a newspaper founder—“people who are striving to create change, to make a difference,” Katz says.

This year a bonus opportunity is being introduced: an academic course in government and politics open only to Keren Moshe students. It will cover weekly lectures on subjects such as the economy, and religion and the State. Taking the course earns two credits, but it is a voluntary option for students.

Each year new incoming students are chosen to fill Keren Moshe’s ranks as others graduate. A meticulous application process of interviews, on-site workshops and activities is conducted and the final selection is done by the foundation that funds the program. High academic achievement, motivation to contribute and a desire to work with people are major criteria. Preference goes to those with financial need. Unsurprisingly, entry is very competitive. This year some 250 candidates were screened to fill about 40 openings.

There is also a strong demand for Keren Moshe volunteers. “We invest thousands of hours in the Negev community and many of the organizations tell us how much this helps them,” Katz says. “Sometimes it’s crucial—they might not be able to run many of the activities, or might not even exist without our students.

“It’s win-win for everyone,” she says. “The scholarships enable students to focus on their studies; they develop many more skills, and they become better citizens and people.”

**“We just have no words to describe your kindness and patience, so we will just thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”**

— FROM A PUPIL IN KIDMA, A BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM WHERE ADULTS LEARN HEBREW, MATH, ENGLISH, AND COMPUTER SKILLS

**“During the year, I took members on fun trips. Each person went somewhere else, based on his preferences and limitations. They got to practice social skills and do things that to us seem ordinary, but to them are a whole new world.”**

— SAAH FAAN, KEREN MOSHE STUDENT WORKING IN ALUT, THE ISRAELI SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Educating BGU students to be involved in their community is no less important than their academic training, Katz points out. “They will be the leaders of near tomorrow. And we need leaders with social sensitivity who understand they are responsible for all the people—especially those not in their own future circles. They will be very successful and it’s easy to forget about those who are struggling. If we give our students tools to be better leaders, we are doing something good.”

Anat Shoham aims to be such a leader. She is in her second year studying psychology and economics, considering a medical career but not yet certain of her future path. This year she is a student coordinator for Keren Moshe, responsible for helping 20 other volunteers do their best for the community. Volunteer work and “working with people” has interested her at all stages of her life so far, and she expects to continue doing so.

“If it’s not my work, it will be my way,” she says. “I’m only 25 and they give me so much responsibility. It’s really good for me. I feel like I’m doing something beautiful, not just studying.” ■



# DR. FIRAS MAWASE

## STUDENT OF THE BRAIN

**DR. FIRAS MAWASE** is a postdoctoral research fellow at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, based in the Human Brain Physiology and Simulations Lab. He grew up on a farm in a small village north of Haifa, speaking Arabic both at home and in school. By the time he graduated from high school, he was already interested in biomedical engineering. “I didn’t understand the topic well but liked the idea,” he recalls.

For college, he considered a few options for pursuing his interest. BGU was one. “I heard it was very interesting from a friend who had studied there. He told me about the city, the people, the social life—which sounded very attractive. I made the decision to go there though I was very young and did not know too much about the life,” he says.

In fact, he found the first year difficult. “It was hard to adapt. I had to learn to communicate in Hebrew. But then I began to know more people and make friends. By the second year I knew the University, the city, the system—it gets easier with time.”

BGU worked so well for Mawase that he earned his B.Sc. *summa cum laude*, then his M.Sc. *magna cum laude*, and ultimately his Ph.D.—all in biomedical engineering. His thesis was on the “Predictive Capabilities of the Motor System in Individuals With Cerebral Palsy.” He worked closely with two mentors: Dr. Simona Bar-Haim, now chair of the Department of Physical Therapy—I’m always asking

for her advice still”—and Prof. Amir Karniel, who passed away last year. “I worked in his lab for eight years and grew up there. Losing him was very hard.”

Together, Karniel and Bar-Haim introduced Dr. Mawase to the clinical side of biomedical research. “Simona was working with cerebral palsy children and I liked the idea of more translational research rather than basic science. I started that work in the last year of my first degree, and continued with a deeper understanding for the master’s. Then I built my Ph.D. on how CP children can learn diverse motor tasks like locomotion, reaching and grasping.”

When it was time to pursue postdoctoral work in 2014, Mawase chose Johns Hopkins because he had become particularly interested in how the brain works. He continues his practical orientation, working in both the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the Department of Neuroscience. “My advisor is a leading person in the research of motor learning and the brain, and has good access to patients. So for me it was the perfect lab to join where I can learn new tools and techniques I didn’t yet know about.”

The research involves non-invasive brain stimulation using transcranial magnetic and electric current. “We introduce very small electric currents to the brain,” Mawase explains, “to make it more excitable and allow some motor improvement.” The investigators work with both healthy subjects and patients who have suffered strokes. Presently, the goal is to establish how the approach can be used for clinical trials.

“At the end of the day, the hope is to better understand how we can help

patients with motor disability and impairment. Integrating basic science with evidence and physical therapy, we get closer to knowing how to improve their quality of life.” Mawase currently works with CP and stroke patients, and may participate in a project applying the approach to those with Parkinson’s disease.



Dr. Firas Mawase with his wife, Ayat, and baby Jude

“The brain is fascinating. We’ll see new findings with time, but now we’re far from fully understanding how the healthy brain works,” he says. “It’s still a mystery. So retraining it to improve impairment is a big challenge.”

Dr. Mawase plans to invest his career in “trying to push things in the right direction.” He intends to bring his experience with brain stimulation techniques back to Israel where the approach has been little used. “I’d like to build a lab to integrate all these new methodologies and findings and translate them to the clinical aspect. This is how I see my future.”

For one more year, Baltimore will remain home for the Mawase family. And then?

“Back to BGU if that’s an option! BGU was a very special and unique experience for me.” ■

# GREAT LAKES

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Steven Franklin, *Director*  
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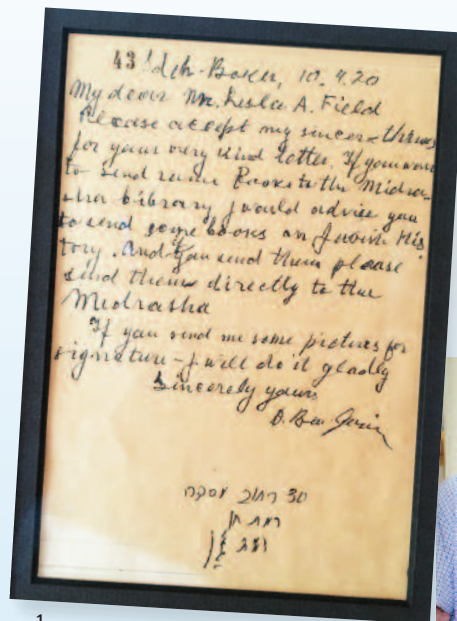
## BGU FACULTY VISITS

Dr. Ramon Birnbaum, co-director of BGU's Center for Evolutionary Genomics and Medicine (CEGM), spoke at the Shaker Heights, Ohio home of Joyce and Dr. Fred Tavill to friends interested in the Center's work. Shortly after, Cleveland attorney Lee Kohrman, president of the David and Inez Myers Foundation, traveled to BGU with his daughter, Katherine, and met with Dr. Birnbaum and co-director Prof. Dan Mishmar, as well as with BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi, M.D.

Prof. Noam Weisbrod, director of BGU's Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research, delivered a talk, "Aiding Thirsty Neighbors: Israel's Water Technology and the World's Vulnerable Populations" at the suburban Chicago home of Gillian and Ellis Goodman. The following day he was a featured speaker at a Northwestern University symposium, "Water in Israel and the Middle East: Geopolitical Conflicts, Technological Challenges and Sustainable Solutions."

## FROM THE BEN-GURION ARCHIVES

Joyce Field, a member of BGU's Living Legacy Society, has long treasured a letter written by David Ben-Gurion to her late husband, Purdue University Prof. Leslie Field z"l, following a meeting the couple had with Ben-Gurion in 1970. In the letter, Ben-Gurion suggested that Prof. Field assist the brand new Negev university by sending books of Jewish history. The Field family took this suggestion to heart and greatly enjoyed helping build the University's library. Later recounting



this story to Great Lakes Director Steve Franklin, Joyce was awestruck when the Ben-Gurion Archives located a letter she had written back to David Ben-Gurion some 46 years ago.

## A SPECIAL VISIT TO ITALY

Judith and Ernie Simon and Linda and Michael Simon happily represented the Great Lakes Region on AABGU's trip to Italy, Piemonte Ebraica: A Journey Through the Jewish Piedmont. They enjoyed the fabulous adventure immensely.

## REMEMBERING HILLEL GAUCHMAN

The AABGU and BGU community mourn the passing of Prof. Hillel Gauchman z"l of Chicago. Born in the former Soviet Union, Prof. Gauchman made *aliyah* in the early 1970s and became a treasured member of BGU's young Department of Mathematics. Years later with his wife, Julia, and children Orit, Ruth and Eitan, Prof. Gauchman emigrated to the U.S. and joined the faculty of the University of

Illinois. In Prof. Gauchman's memory, Julia is sponsoring the Hillel Gauchman Prize for Excellence in Mathematics Exploration at BGU. May his memory be a blessing.



1. David Ben-Gurion's letter to Prof. Leslie Field z"l  
2. Lee Kohrman; Katherine Kohrman; BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi 3. Ernie Simon; Prof. Noam Weisbrod; Ellis Goodman 4. Dr. Ramon Birnbaum; Joyce and Dr. Fred Tavill; Great Lakes Regional Director Steven Franklin



# GREATER FLORIDA

## GREATER FLORIDA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Edward Kaplan, Jan Liff,  
Alan Newman, Joel Reinstein,  
Martin Weinberg  
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## FROM FLORIDA TO BEER-SHEVA

Special appreciation goes to members of the AABGU Greater Florida community who recently visited BGU: Corky Paston and George Kittredge, and Marlene and Lou Solomon.

Congratulations to AABGU National Board Member Alan Newman and his wife, Phylis, first-time attendees at the Oasis of Innovation at BGU's 46th Board of Governors that took place in June.



## REMEMBERING HANNAH LITVIN COHEN

Robert M. Cohen of Tampa recently endowed the Hannah Litvin Cohen Undergraduate Scholarship Endowment Fund, which provides 16 scholarships to BGU students per year in his wife's memory. Hannah's sister, Ruth Litvin, and her niece, Sharon, who live in Israel, represented Robert at the recognition ceremony during the Board of Governors as he became a member of the BGU Founders and Negev Societies.

## DEAN VISITS SOUTH FLORIDA

Prof. Amos Katz, M.D., dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, visited South Florida to share his vision for BGU's medical schools: the Joyce and

1. Dr. Ernest Baden with Prof. Amos Katz, M.D.  
2. Prof. Amos Katz, M.D., with Sherri and Len Epstein  
3. Corky Paston and George Kittredge point out their friends' names displayed on the Ben-Gurion Society Wall on BGU's Marcus Family Campus.  
4. Don Robinson; Regional Director Reva Feldman; Prof. Amos Katz, M.D.; Sylvia Robinson  
5. Lou and Marlene Solomon on campus with Prof. Steve Rosen, BGU's vice president for external affairs

Irving Goldman Medical School for Israeli students and the Medical School for International Health (MSIH), taught in English for international students. Prof. Katz met with Sherri and Len Epstein. Len is president of the Sam and Beatrice Epstein Foundation, which made a generous gift toward MSIH student scholarships.

A meeting was held with Founders Sylvia and Donald Robinson, where Prof. Katz presented them with



the Founders certificate for the Donald and Sylvia Robinson Family Foundation.

Prof. Katz also met with Dr. Ernest Baden, presenting him with a Living Legacy Society certificate and ceramic pomegranate for his \$1 million legacy gift to establish the Dr. Ernest Baden Head and Neck Pathology Chair.

## GREATER NEW YORK

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 Kevin M. Leopold  
*Executive Director—Northeast*  
 Diane Romirowsky, *Associate Director*  
 Dana Ben-Benjamin, *Program Manager*  
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Prof. Rivka Carmi with Lolita Goldstein z"l

### IN MEMORY OF LOLITA E. GOLDSTEIN (MARCH 28, 1917-JUNE 21, 2016)

Members of AABGU's board and staff recently mourned the loss of a dear friend. Beloved AABGU partner and supporter Lolita E. Goldstein z"l passed away at the age of 99 surrounded by her loved ones.

Lolita will be remembered as a devoted Zionist and kind-hearted woman of valor who was instantly loved by everyone who met her. She possessed contagious enthusiasm, compassion and abundant joy for the students, faculty and projects of Ben-Gurion University. Her friendships with the staff and leadership of both AABGU and BGU filled their hearts with love.

When Lolita was only 16 years old, she played a pivotal role in her family's decision to leave Germany just after Hitler came to power. They fled to Lisbon, Portugal, where in

1941 she was hired by Dr. Joseph Schwartz, the legendary head of Europe's office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Proficient in German, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and English, she assisted refugees and facilitated highly sensitive, often secretive correspondence.

While working in Lisbon at the JDC office, Lolita met her husband, Melvin z"l, a young American from New York. Together they helped many Jews find safe haven. It was the couple's work with Dr. Joseph



Lolita Goldstein z"l with BGU students

Schwartz that led Lolita to spearhead AABGU's initiative to produce a scholarly biography on his life and work. The book is currently being written by BGU Prof. Tuvia Friling, an eminent 20th century historian.

Lolita was also a major supporter of the University's Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research, where she dedicated the Melvin S. Goldstein Analytical Laboratory for Environmental Hydrology in memory of her late husband. As a member of the Ben-Gurion and Living Legacy Societies, she also left a generous bequest for water research.

Another program close to Lolita's heart was the Woodman-Scheller Israel Studies International Program. She was enamored by the fact that so many non-Jewish students from around

the world are coming to BGU to study Israel, who become "ambassadors" for the country when they return home.

The Greater New York Region extends profound condolences to Lolita's sister-in-law, Eileen Putterman, and her husband, Mickey; to Lolita's eight nieces and nephews; to her large extended family in the U.S., Portugal and Israel; and to the hundreds of friends, students and countless others who had come to cherish her and whom she had inspired.

Lolita touched the lives of the many people who were fortunate to know her and she will be deeply missed. **May her memory be a blessing.**

### UPCOMING CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Join the Greater New York Region on Tuesday, December 20, 2016 for its annual festive holiday lunch honoring members of the Asarot and Living Legacy Societies.

*Asarot* means "tens" in Hebrew and members are part of a select group of loyal donors who have contributed 10 gifts or more to AABGU through the years. The region is honored to recognize their longtime friendship and show appreciation for their dedication to BGU, along with Living Legacy Society members who have included AABGU in their estate plans.

The event's guest speaker will be Dr. David Arnow who will discuss his book, *Leadership in the Bible: A Practical Guide for Today*. The presentation will provide examples from the business world and contemporary society that illustrate the relevance of biblical stories to the trials faced by 21st century decision-makers.



# GREATER TEXAS

Elizabeth Grzebinski  
Regional/Houston Chair  
Ellen Marcus, Austin Chair  
Dr. Michael Ozer, San Antonio Chair  
Deborah Bergeron, Regional Director  
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BGU Director General David Bareket; President Prof. Rivka Carmi; David and Stephen Breslauer at the dedication of the Stephen and David Breslauer Archaeological Laboratory Building

## STEPHEN AND DAVID BRESLAUER PUT ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE MAP

The newly dedicated Stephen and David Breslauer Archaeological Laboratory Building on BGU's Marcus Family Campus represents an "ingathering of the exiles" for BGU's Department of Bible, Archaeology and Ancient Near East.

"Prior to this lab building, archaeological research at BGU was scattered over two campuses, three different buildings and five floors," says Prof. Steve Rosen, vice president for external affairs and a 28-year member of the department.

"All of the archaeological researchers will now be working together under one roof with the ability to interact naturally."

Stephen Breslauer's son, David, spoke eloquently about his family's commitment to the University at the June dedication of the building.

"Today marks another transition that began with my great uncle and aunt, Sam and Helene Soref ז"ל, and continued with my parents and my uncles. Now I become the third generation in my family with a whole-hearted commitment to BGU. I intend to walk in their footsteps for many years to come."



At the Zin Fellows gathering. **Bottom row:** Robin Stein, Sara and Jerrad Bloome, Arline Guefen  
**Second row:** Barbara Baliff, Regional and Houston Chair Elizabeth Grzebinski; Ben Guefen  
**Third row:** David Grzebinski; Jonathan Baliff; Regional Director Deborah Bergeron  
**Top row:** Michael and Lisa Sachs; Nir Grossman

## THE GUEFENS AND THE ZIN FELLOWS

The Arline and Ben Guefen Greater Texas Region Zin Fellows and their spouses gathered for an enjoyable and engaging afternoon cocktail reception at the home of Arline and Ben Guefen.

Arline and Ben told the compelling story of their AABGU and BGU involvement. This encouraged everyone to share their stories, as well as their hope, leadership and passion for the future.

"The Texas Zin Fellows have such great strength, personality and desire to be involved," says Arline.

## PROF. ILAN TROEN ON THE ISRAEL BOYCOTT

Prof. Emeritus Ilan Troen has served as dean of BGU's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and as director of the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism and the Ben-Gurion Archives. Currently he is the Stoll Family Chair in Israel Studies at Brandeis University and founding director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies.



Deborah Bar-Yadin; Reuben Bar-Yadin; Prof. Ilan Troen; Michael Sachs; Regional and Houston Chair Elizabeth Grzebinski; Stephen Breslauer; Steven Finkelman

He also serves as BGU's main academic spokesperson and expert on the anti-Israel BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement that is prevalent on college campuses today.

On a recent visit to Houston and San Antonio, Prof. Troen focused on the ongoing challenges to academia presented by this movement. He spoke to several groups in Houston, including Zin Fellows and donors, where he was hosted in their homes. He also gave a Shabbat sermon at Congregation Beth Yeshurun. In San Antonio, he attended a dinner with supporters and presented at the Jewish Federation Maimonides Society's annual breakfast.

## MID-ATLANTIC

Jack R Bershad  
*Regional Chair*  
 Dr. Barry Kayne  
*Delaware Chapter Chair*  
 Marla and Dr. Robert Zipkin  
*Philadelphia Chapter Chairs*  
 Jeffrey Letwin  
*Pittsburgh Chapter Chair*  
 Claire Winick, *Director*  
 Seth Bloom  
*Associate Director*  
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### WEINBERG MEMORIAL GIFT

In memory of Dr. Carroll Weinberg *z"l*, a psychiatrist, humanitarian and devoted AABGU leader for 30 years, his beloved wife, Charlotte, has established the Carroll Weinberg Endowment Fund for the Advancement of Health Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

BGU's Faculty of Health Sciences was founded in 1974 in response to an urgent need for addressing the specific healthcare problems among residents of the Negev. Its mission "to train humane, holistic, ethical, and skilled physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals with an orientation toward primary care and community service" resonated with Carroll's desire to repair the world. Dedicated to the concept of *tikkun olam*, he was a leader of many human rights efforts.

Trained as a pediatrician, Dr. Weinberg spent most of his career in psychiatry, treating adults and children. Professionally, he explored the psychology of suicide terrorism, torture and ethnic conflict. Personally, he was deeply interested in civic affairs, the arts and Jewish life.

Dr. Weinberg was a Founder, longtime Philadelphia Chapter officer and a leader of the chapter's Health Sciences and Academic Affiliations Committee. He and Charlotte were honored by the region at its 2012 Tribute Brunch.

This fund, dedicated to cancer and cardiac research, will carry Carroll Weinberg's name in perpetuity and continue his lifelong mission of making a difference in the lives of others.



### REMEMBERING AILEEN EPSTEIN WHITMAN

AABGU honors the memory of Aileen Epstein Whitman *z"l*, a devoted leader in the organization, Philadelphia Chapter officer, national board member, and member of BGU's board of governors and Ben-Gurion Society. She touched the lives of many with grace and generosity. Her legacy lives on through the involvement of her children, Chuck and Roslyn Epstein and Barbara Epstein Sivan, who serve as officers of the Philadelphia Chapter.

### MOVING FORWARD IN DELAWARE

The Hebrew word *kadima* has great meaning for the new Delaware Chapter as it quickly moves forward to attract new friends in support of AABGU. In May, the chapter held its official launch at the home of Chapter Chair Dr. Barry Kayne and his wife, Reiko.

In July, Associate Chair Dr. Neil Hockstein and his wife, Dr. Carolyn Glazer-Hockstein, hosted a reception where AABGU Executive Vice President Doron Krakow spoke on the topic, "The Negev Is Now."

In total, these events welcomed more than 80 individuals, mostly new friends who look forward to becoming more engaged with BGU's mission.



Seated: Robin Karol-Eng; Lelaine Nemser  
 Standing: Dr. Stuart Nemser; Dr. Barry Kayne; Neil Hockstein; Bob Davis

### 2016 TRIBUTE BRUNCH

The 2016 "Footprints in the Negev" Tribute Brunch is being held Sunday, November 20, 2016 at Philadelphia's Fairmont Park Horticultural Center. This event honors Lelaine and Dr. Stuart Nemser and Marla and Dr. Robert Zipkin. It also features a thank you to Jack R Bershad, Esq., outgoing regional chair, and a welcome to Connie and Sam Katz, incoming regional chairs.



## NEW ENGLAND

Kevin M. Leopold  
*Executive Director – Northeast*  
 Diane Romirowsky  
*Associate Director*  
 Dana Ben-Benjamin  
*Program Manager*  
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### COCKTAILS AND CONVERSATION

The New England and Greater Florida regions collaborated on an elegant cocktail reception hosted by Karen and Gene Kroner in their beautiful



Prof. Dan Blumberg with Karen and Gene Kroner

home. Guests were treated to a discussion led by Prof. Dan Blumberg, BGU's vice president and dean for research and development and director of the University's Homeland Security Institute. He covered a variety of topics related to the tremendous growth Beer-Sheva is experiencing and how David Ben-Gurion's vision of developing the Negev is now a reality.

The audience was inspired by his report that Beer-Sheva was named one of seven future global cities for high-tech and innovation by T3 Advisors and the Brandeis International Business School, and how the city was acknowledged as the cyber capital of Israel by

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Prof. Blumberg illustrated the impact of the new Advanced Technologies Park (ATP) adjacent to BGU's Marcus Family Campus, and the moving of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). With plans to relocate approximately 32,000 soldiers to the Negev by 2022, the IDF's technology intelligence units are moving to a high-tech campus adjacent to BGU and the ATP. This strategic move will add 4,000 new students to BGU, in addition to new young researchers.

Beer-Sheva is clearly the place to be. With the University as a driving



Members of BGU's student team who competed in Boston at the iGEM 2016 competition in October

force, the area is experiencing unprecedented growth. It's an exciting time to be involved with BGU, an institution that embodies the pioneering spirit of the Zionists who helped found the State of Israel over six decades ago.

### PLASTIC WITH A PURPOSE

Fourteen BGU students set out on a journey with dreams of victory in this year's international Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition in Boston, just like their classmates achieved last fall.

iGEM is a prestigious competition for students that promotes innovation in the fields of synthetic biology and

genetic engineering. It is recognized as one of the premier collegiate academic competitions in the world.

This year's group of committed and passionate students, led by Tomer Shary, come from a variety of academic backgrounds: biotechnology, physics, life sciences, biology, computer science, and economics. They are all collaborating to create a project called "Engineering Bacteria: Disintegrating Plastic Polymers and NOT the Environment."

This revolutionary project will demonstrate how bacteria can be engineered to "eat" plastic bottles,

transforming the residual material into an energy source that eventually turns into electricity.

Shary expressed that the team's goal is to overcome this evolutionary hurdle using synthetic biological tools for efficient plastic biodegradation, and to utilize the high levels of energy stored in PET molecules

(a plastic resin and form of polyester) for electricity production.

"Our vision is to convert the chemical potential derived from the redox (reduction-oxidation) reactions of the plastic degradation pathway into electrical energy, while increasing awareness of environmental topics within society, especially the damages caused by plastic and the need to recycle and reduce its usage," says Shary.

"That's why we nicknamed the project PlastiCure since it essentially eliminates harmful waste in the form of plastic bottles and instead creates usable energy."

# NORTHWEST

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## NEW RESEARCH TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Suicide devastates the families, friends and communities of those who take their own lives. For Martin Katz, that devastation came twice.

Thirty-five years ago, Martin's 21-year-old son, Barry, committed suicide following a period of deep depression. In 2012, his 21-year-old grandson, Ricky—a star student and athlete—ended his own life, too.

A retired pharmacologist and senior vice president of research and development for a major pharmaceutical company, Martin has long been curious about the interaction between biological and behavioral processes in suicidal depression.

On a recent trip to Israel, he met Prof. Golan Shahar of BGU's Department of Psychology, an expert in the relationship between stress and suicide risk in young adults. Impressed by Prof. Shahar and his work, Martin made a leadership gift to establish a pioneering suicide study at BGU. He then invited friends and family members all over the U.S. to join him. Their collective support and the scope of the study inspired a San Francisco-based family foundation to make an additional leadership gift.

As a result, one of the world's most comprehensive suicide studies is underway at BGU. Prof. Shahar and his team are investigating the risk of suicidality using three modalities: in-depth behavioral assessments, blood screening to identify biological markers, and fMRI scanning to study neural activity associated with self-critical thinking.



Dr. Martin Katz of Menlo Park, California, a retired pharmaceutical research executive who is now a prolific sculptor. At left, his bronze “Moebius Loop Torah” on permanent display at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California.

Prof. Shahar hopes their findings will lead to the development of objective diagnostic tools and new therapies to prevent future tragedies.

Noting that suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people aged 18 to 24, Martin says emphatically, “Imagine if there was a blood test or a brain scan that could identify suicidal risk. If this research can save even one life, the investment will be well worth it.”

## ACADEMIC VISIONARIES HONORED

Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D., and Jeffrey Ullman, Ph.D., were awarded honorary doctorates at BGU's 46th Board of Governors.

Dr. Fineberg's career in health policy and medical decision-making has made a global impact. He has held academic positions at Harvard University, led the U.S. Institute of Medicine and consulted for the World Health Organization. As president of the Gordon and Betty



BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi and Rector Zvi HaCohen bestow honorary doctoral degrees upon Dr. Harvey Fineberg (top) and Dr. Jeffrey Ullman (bottom).

Moore Foundation, he is dedicated to fostering transformative scientific discoveries and improving the quality of life for future generations.

Dr. Ullman has made an indelible mark on the field of computer science. He is renowned for his research that laid the foundations for database theory, and for his seminal textbooks. As a professor at Princeton and Stanford, he was the doctoral advisor of an entire generation of students who later became leaders in the field, including Google co-founder Sergey Brin. As an annual visiting scholar to BGU's Department of Computer Science, Dr. Ullman is sharing his expertise with the next generation.



# SOUTHWEST

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## EXCLUSIVE CYBER SECURITY RECEPTION IN BEVERLY HILLS

The Southwest Region hosted an evening VIP reception at The Peninsula Beverly Hills in conjunction with the CyberTech Beverly Hills Conference.

The reception featured a panel of cyber security experts, including Prof. Yuval Elovici, director of BGU's Cyber Security Research Center and Deutsche Telekom Innovation Labs@BGU; Udi Mokady, president and chief executive officer of CyberArk; Gadi Tirosh, managing partner of Jerusalem Venture Partners, a co-sponsor of the reception; and Prof. Dan Blumberg, BGU's vice president and dean for research and development and director of the Homeland Security Institute at BGU.

Greetings were delivered by the Honorable David Siegel, consul general of Israel to the Southwest Region and BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi, who received a proclamation from Beverly Hills Mayor John Mirisch.

Deep gratitude to reception sponsors: Lisa Field; Robyn Field and Anthony O'Carroll; Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and Ben Marandy, host committee chairs; Steve Halaj; Judge (Ret.) Leon S. Kaplan; Rhoda Levine; Diana and Dr. Gabriel Rubanenko; and Rivka Seiden and Larry Field.



1. David Polak; BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi; Zin Fellow Jeff Polak 2. BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi (center) with Ben Marandy and Ruth Flinkman-Marandy 3. Liz and Jim Breslauer; Marvin Suomi; Hon. David Siegel; Southwest Regional Director Philip Gomperts



4. Anthony O'Carroll; Lisa Field; Rivka Seiden; Larry Field; Robyn Field 5. Consul General David Siegel; Beverly Hills Mayor John Mirisch; BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi; Beverly Hills Vice Mayor Nancy Krasne; James Krasne 6. Steve Levine; Southwest Region Associate Director Andrew Hoffer; Denton Fisch



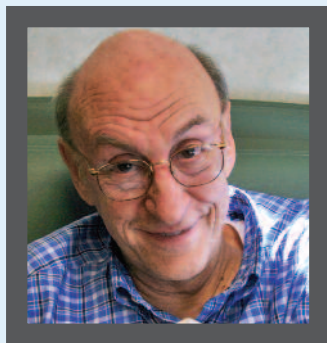
# WASHINGTON/ BALTIMORE

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## REMEMBERING A LEADER AND A FRIEND

The Washington/Baltimore Region mourns the passing of Dr. Robert I. Keimowitz ז"ל. Bob and his wife, Hazel, have been steadfast supporters of AABGU and Ben-Gurion University for more than 25 years. A former AABGU national board member, Bob was devoted to providing student scholarships, supporting the Bedouin community, and brain and diabetes research. He was an integral part of the local leadership group and a dear friend to so many. **May his memory be a blessing.**



Dr. Robert I. Keimowitz ז"ל



1. The WB Region in Italy: Associate Director David Speer; Margit Meissner; Dava Berkman; John Garms 2. Baltimore supporter Jim Blum with Japanese art expert Dr. Galit Aviman at the Oasis of Innovation at BGU's 46th Board of Governors 3. Daniel Hirschhorn and Joel Shalowitz with BGU water expert Prof. Eilon Adar (center) in Baltimore

## OVERCOMING WATER SCARCITY AND WHAT THE WORLD HAS LEARNED FROM ISRAEL

In June, Prof. Eilon Adar from BGU's Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research spoke at programs in Baltimore and Washington, highlighting advances made in overcoming water scarcity in Israel.

Prof. Adar, an internationally renowned expert in arid zones hydrology and Middle East water issues, is sharing Israeli water management expertise with Latin American and African countries, and with California's top water specialists. He has represented

Israel around the world, speaking on water-related issues, and takes an active role in helping start-up businesses use innovative water technologies developed at BGU.

The Washington/Baltimore Region is grateful to Daniel Hirschhorn, trustee of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, and the American Trading and Production Corporation (Atapco) for hosting the Baltimore program.

## ENJOYING ITALY AND CELEBRATING BGU

Margit Meissner, John Garms and Dava Berkman enjoyed traveling with AABGU for Piemonte Ebraica: A Jewish Journey Through the Italian Piedmont.

More from the region joined the group in Israel for BGU's 46th Annual Board of Governors: Jim Blum; Joanne Moore; Toby and Mort Mower; and Sue and Lew Winarsky.

## NEW NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS FROM WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE

Congratulations to Dava Berkman (Washington) and Bruce Sholk (Baltimore), new members of AABGU's national board.

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR DAVID K. SPEER

The region would like to acknowledge and congratulate David on his well-deserved promotion to associate director of the Washington/Baltimore Region. *Mazal tov*, David!



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

AABGU salutes our philanthropic partners who joined BGU's most prestigious giving societies this past year.\* Their names were inscribed on recognition walls or pillars on the Marcus Family Campus and unveiled at special ceremonies during the 46th Board of Governors in June 2016.

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In memory of my parents, Aziz and Nosrat Rasson  
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