



**THE MAAS CENTER
FOR JEWISH JOURNEYS**
OF AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY

Press Release – For Immediate Release

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**American Jewish University Unveils Bold New Vision with Launch of
Maas Center for Jewish Journeys**

Virginia and Frank Maas, longtime board members of American Jewish University, announce \$2.5 million gift in support of new AJU Center designed to meet the needs of rapidly changing 21st Century Jewish Community.



Pictured (R to L): Virginia and Frank Maas.

LOS ANGELES—Today, American Jewish University (AJU) announced a \$2.5 million gift from Virginia and Frank Maas to support the creation of the Maas Center for Jewish Journeys. The Maas Center will stand at the heart of AJU’s new vision for 2020 and beyond, working to meet the evolving needs of the community that the University has been serving for decades.

A vital component of AJU’s mission of fostering inclusive Jewish communities, the Maas Center will champion those too-often relegated to the periphery of Jewish life, guiding them through a suite of interconnected programs that enrich their Jewish journeys.

“American Jewish University serves a critical role in our community and nationally,” said Virginia and Frank Maas. “We are proud to further enhance our long-time commitment to the University through the Maas Center for Jewish Journeys. Our hope is that as we look to the future, the Maas Center will guide, encourage and support the lives of thousands of people through the programs that currently exist and new programs that will be developed with our gift.”

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Virginia and Frank Maas have been leaders in the Los Angeles Jewish community for over 45 years. Their long-term involvements include leadership at American Jewish University, the Jewish Federation, Hillcrest Country Club, the LA Jewish Community Centers, Beit T'shuvah, and Temple Beth Am, as well as other Jewish and secular service organizations.

“We are deeply grateful to visionary leaders Virginia and Frank Maas for their generous gift, which will be a far-reaching investment in the Jewish future,” said AJU President Jeffrey Herbst. “The Maas Center will create a cohesive experience that supports people in their quest for spirituality and meaning. It will champion a range of ideas and innovative solutions to address some of the most complex issues facing the Jewish community in the modern world.”

“The generosity of Virginia and Frank Maas has empowered AJU to amplify a critical message for our Jewish community today: people are out there searching. Whether they are newcomers to Judaism seeking an open door, or interfaith couples looking to build a shared future, or Jews by birth looking to reclaim their heritage for themselves, we’re here to help,” said Rabbi Adam Greenwald, Director of the Maas Center for Jewish Journeys. “The Maas Center exists to meet people where they are and welcome them to explore their Jewish journey.”

The Maas Center will unify a suite of programs to address the rapidly changing Jewish community. Through in-person courses, conferences, events, and digital outreach, the Center will provide thought leadership on issues of Jewish engagement and inclusion, particularly those affecting the next generation.

Among these programs are [Miller Introduction to Judaism](#), the nation’s leader in empowering those seeking to convert to Judaism, interfaith couples, and anyone who wants to find their home in the Jewish community; the [Ziering Brandeis Collegiate Institute \(BCI\)](#), an immersive experience in Jewish learning, arts, culture, and community offered every summer to Jewish young adults from around the world; [Marriage for Life](#) retreats, which help couples envision their Jewish life together; the [Community Mikveh](#); and planned, new online and in-person learning opportunities. The Center will also serve as a platform for strengthening AJU’s nationwide network of affiliates.

About AJU:

American Jewish University (AJU) is a thriving center of Jewish resources and talent that serves the Jewish community of the twenty-first century. A portal for Jewish belonging, AJU equips students, faculty, campers, and learners of all ages with the tools to create the ideas, build the structures, and develop the programs to advance Jewish wisdom and elevate Jewish living. For more information, visit www.aju.edu.

About Virginia and Frank Maas:

Virginia and Frank Maas are longtime supporters of American Jewish University and members of the Board of Directors. Virginia Maas currently serves at the chair of the Board of Directors, and Frank Maas served as chair from 1992-1998. Their trailblazing vision and generous gift have created a major legacy at AJU that will serve the Jewish people for years to come. To learn more about the Maas Center for Jewish Journeys, please visit www.aju.edu/maascenter