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DR. GARY ZOLA INVITED TO WITNESS PRESIDENT OBAMA'S REMARKS AT HISTORIC APPEARANCE IN WASHINGTON SYNAGOGUE

The President will be speaking in celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month

CINCINNATI, OH:--- On Friday, May 22, 2015, President Barack Obama will deliver remarks in celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) at Adas Israel Synagogue in Washington, D.C. The event also coincides with *Solidarity Sabbath*, when government officials in Europe and North America will be taking part in synagogue visits and other events to highlight their commitment to combating anti-Semitism.



Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and the Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, has been invited to attend the historic event. "This particular occasion marks only the fourth time in United States history that a sitting U.S. President will address an audience or an assembly from the pulpit of an American synagogue," noted Dr. Zola, appointed by President Obama in 2011 as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad. "It will also be the first time that JAHM is honored from inside an American synagogue."

Zola says that although U.S. Presidents have laid cornerstones for American synagogues, and some sitting Presidents have spoken in synagogues outside of the USA, research at the American Jewish Archives shows that there are only three prior occasions when a sitting U.S. President spoke from the pulpit of an American synagogue addressing an assembly or audience.

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Adas Israel Congregation in Washington D.C.

These occasions include:

1. William Howard Taft (Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA, May 29, 1909)
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower (Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D.C., May 6, 1955)
3. Ronald W. Reagan (Temple Hillel, North Woodmere, NY, October 26, 1984)

In addition to his work on the Presidential Commission, Dr. Zola has previously served in a number of leadership positions that have heightened the awareness of how American Jewish history illuminates the history of the American nation.

- Dr. Zola chaired the congressionally recognized *Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History* (2002 to 2005).
- In 2006, Zola was the first American Jewish historian and the first American rabbi to receive an appointment to the Academic Advisory Council of the congressionally recognized *Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission*.

Zola is the author of *We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American Jewry*, a Documentary History. It is the first full-length documentary volume that focuses on the history of Lincoln's relationship, image, influence, and reputation among American Jews.

He is also the author of *The Americanization of the Jewish Prayer Book, Isaac Harby of Charleston* and has edited several books, including *The Dynamics of American Jewish History: Jacob Rader Marcus's Essays on American Jewry* and *Women Rabbis: Exploration & Celebration*.

For questions and additional information, please contact Joyce Kamen at 513.543.8109.

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 by its namesake on the historic campus of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. The Marcus Center contains over 15,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, nearprint materials, photographs, audio and videotapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials.