

Kershaw Family Endows UC San Diego's First Faculty Chair In Archaeology

To celebrate UCSD's latest endowed chair and its chairholder, Thomas Levy, the public is invited to the "Biblical Archaeology and the Future" symposium on Sunday, April 30, 2006

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Judy Piercey

Norma Kershaw, retired Orange County educator, lecturer and volunteer in the fields of archaeology and cultural studies, first met UC San Diego professor of Anthropology and Judaic Studies Thomas Levy, Ph.D., some 20 years ago while she was excavating at a site in Israel. Their shared interest in the history and archaeology of the Levantine region has kept the two in touch since they met.

But it still was a surprise to Levy earlier this year when Kershaw and her husband, Reuben, made a significant donation to UCSD through the Kershaw Family Trust to establish the Norma Kershaw Endowed Chair in the Archaeology of Ancient Israel and Neighboring Lands. This is the university's first endowed faculty chair in the Department of Anthropology and the fifth endowed chair in Judaic Studies within the UCSD Division of Social Sciences. This philanthropic gift contributes to UCSD's \$1 billion fundraising initiative, The Campaign for UCSD: Imagine What's Next.

The campus has named Levy as founding chairholder. His most recent book (with T. Higham, Oxford University) is *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating - Archaeology, Text and Science* (London: Equinox). Based on his publications and fieldwork in both Israel and Jordan, Levy is recognized as one of the leading experts on the archaeology of the Middle East.

"Our goal is to strengthen the research and scholarship of already superb programs in Judaic Studies and the Department of Anthropology at UCSD," said Norma Kershaw. "We reside in Southern California, and find it natural to help support a Southern California university and provide for UCSD's outstanding faculty and students. "We're pleased to provide this support to Dr. Levy, an outstanding scholar who can also communicate with the public. His work is highly respected in academia and across political borders."

Norma Kershaw holds an M.A. in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University, and has held leadership positions in professional and volunteer organizations focusing on archaeology of the Near East since retiring from teaching and excavating in Israel and on Cyprus.

"We are very grateful to the Kershaw family for their generous support of UCSD's Department of Anthropology and for the recognition of Tom Levy's outstanding work," added Paul Drake, dean of the Division of Social Sciences. "The impact of this gift will make a significant difference for generations of faculty and students who are committed to studying this critical region."

To celebrate the establishment of the chair and Levy's appointment as founding chairholder, the UCSD Judaic Studies Program will present a day-long symposium on Sunday, April 30, 2006 entitled: *Biblical Archaeology and the Future*. This event will feature nine distinguished participants, all noted scholars in archaeology and biblical studies. The program will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at UCSD's Institute of the Americas, Hojel

Auditorium, 10111 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla. Parking is free on Sundays. For further information, visit www.anthro.ucsd.edu/~tlevy, or contact Erin Svalstad to register at (858) 534-4551 or esvalstad@ucsd.edu.

Levy indicated that the funding provided through the endowment will help offset a variety of expenses related to researching distant archaeological sites, such as annual travel costs for himself and some of his graduate students, processing radiocarbon dating samples, procuring expensive remote sensing data such as satellite imagery, and other research related activities. As part of the establishment of the chair as a request from the donors, Levy will give a public presentation each year in Orange County.

"On the personal side, it's wonderful to have the recognition of my peers and the community, and have this level of support for my work," added Levy. "In terms of the bigger picture, it's also great to know that, through this chair, the study of the archaeology of Israel and neighboring lands will be a component of UCSD's curriculum in perpetuity."

A member of the UCSD faculty since 1992, Levy has chaired the Department of Anthropology and is currently director of the Judaic Studies Program. An anthropological archaeologist, Levy has directed and been the principal investigator of a number of multi-year excavation projects in the Middle East. His current research focuses primarily on the Iron Age (ca. 1200-500 BCE) in southern Jordan - a time when the first historic state level societies evolved in the region and the period that coincides with much of biblical history.

At the University of California, endowed chairs are teaching/research positions occupied by distinguished scholars. The university provides the teaching/research position and pays the salary of the person appointed to the endowed chairs. The permanent endowed fund created by philanthropic gifts provides perpetual annual income in support of the teaching and research activities of the person holding the chair.

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