

February 13, 2020 | By Brittany Hook

## UC San Diego Receives \$1.3M from Koret Foundation to Support Marine Archaeology Research

**Three-year gift will support scientific collaboration between the Scripps Center for Marine Archaeology and the University of Haifa in Israel**

The University of California San Diego has announced a gift of more than \$1.3 million from the [Koret Foundation](#) to support research collaborations focused on marine archaeology between UC San Diego's [Scripps Center for Marine Archaeology](#) (SCMA) and the University of Haifa's [Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies](#) in Israel.

This three-year award will facilitate scientific exploration of coastal environments in Israel, which offer the most sensitive deep-time records for how humans have adapted to climate and environmental change over the past 11,000 years. The relatively new field of marine archaeology offers new ways of investigating these issues through the ages. Through this collaboration, UC San Diego and the University of Haifa will deepen a long-term research and teaching collaboration along Israel's Carmel Coast.



*Nearshore excavation with newly developed barge system at Biblical port of Tel Dor, Israel, by researchers at the University of Haifa and UC San Diego's Scripps Center for Marine Archaeology (SCMA). Photo: Anthony Tamberino, SCMA*

“The Koret Foundation is thrilled to support this groundbreaking partnership between two world-class academic institutions as they make new discoveries to benefit all humankind,” said [Anita Friedman](#), president of the Koret Foundation. “This partnership will further strengthen the bonds between the U.S. and Israel, reinforcing the close ties between our two countries to respond to some of today’s most pressing environmental issues.”

The Koret Foundation’s U.S.-Israel Bridge-Building Initiative aims to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship in diverse ways by supporting organizational collaborations, educational and humanitarian action programs, and opportunities for cooperation and exchange. In addition to its support of this project, Koret has supported other high-level collaborations among Stanford University,

UC Berkeley and Tel Aviv University, and the Rambam Medical Center. These academic collaborations both advance critical scientific research, while simultaneously creating opportunity for deep relationships to develop between leading scholars from Israel and the United States.

This unique collaboration between the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies and SCMA – which is co-led by Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the Department of Anthropology at UC San Diego – has the potential to advance the study of climate and environmental science by utilizing the rich archeology of the eastern Mediterranean. Israel’s Carmel Coast provides an exceptional case study for investigating these problems because of its rich submerged cultural heritage.

Over the past century, Scripps Oceanography has developed cutting-edge research tools to study environmental change involving marine geology and geophysics, coastal processes, paleomagnetism, paleobiology, and climate science. SCMA researchers will utilize these tools and work in tandem with the University of Haifa to create a state-of-the-art research facility in Akko, Israel, where qualified scientific diver students will come on annual field school seminars.

“The world’s oceans and seas are the last great frontier of archaeological exploration, and the Mediterranean Sea holds the oldest and most densely traversed maritime network in the world,” said Thomas Levy, distinguished professor in the Department of Anthropology at UC San Diego and co-director of SCMA. “This new California-Israel collaboration will provide students and faculty from both the U.S. and Israel with unique opportunities for original research concerning climate, environmental, and culture change.”

John Hildebrand, distinguished professor of oceanography at Scripps and co-director of SCMA, added, “The Koret Foundation’s gift enables SCMA to marshal the excellence in marine and environmental science at Scripps Institution of Oceanography with more than 50 years of underwater archaeology expertise from the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies. We see this as a unique opportunity to build up SCMA’s international presence, as well as to bring the tool-kit we develop home to San Diego and apply it off the beach here in La Jolla.”

“Along the coast of Israel, submerged settlements, ancient harbors and sunken ships tell a unique story of 11,000 years of human resilience and adaptation. The exploration of this frontier can only be done with cutting-edge technologies and innovative training programs for archaeologists,” said Assaf Yasur-Landau, director of the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies at the University of Haifa. “I am very excited for this tremendous opportunity in which both partners – the University of Haifa and UC San Diego – join forces to create pathbreaking underwater and coastal research as well as a joint training program on the Carmel Coast.”

Levy and Hildebrand anticipate that this joint project in Israel will have significant public and scientific impact, bringing to light new discoveries including ancient shipwrecks and submerged villages, ports, and cities from the past 10,000 years in the Mediterranean region.

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### **About the Koret Foundation**

*The Koret Foundation is dedicated to elevating the quality of life in the Bay Area, and to strengthening the Jewish community in the US, Israel and around the world. Grounded in historical Jewish principles and traditions, and dedicated to humanitarian values, the Foundation is committed to innovation, testing new ideas, and serving as a catalyst by bringing people and organizations together to help solve societal and systemic problems of common concern. Learn more about the Koret Foundation and its grantees at [koret.org](http://koret.org).*

### **About the Campaign for UC San Diego**

*Through the Campaign for UC San Diego – a university-wide comprehensive fundraising effort concluding in 2022 – the university is enhancing student support, ensuring student success, transforming the campus, connecting the community, and redefining medicine and health care on a global scale. Together with philanthropic partners, UC San Diego will continue its nontraditional path toward revolutionary ideas, unexpected answers, lifesaving discoveries and planet-changing impact. Visit the Campaign for UC San Diego website at [campaign.ucsd.edu](http://campaign.ucsd.edu).*

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