



The 2011 Austin Jewish Film Festival (AJFF) is pleased to honor the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and its charismatic director, Robert Abzug, Ph.D., for stellar contributions to local, national and international Jewish communities. The Center was created in the fall of 2007 and provides a multi-disciplinary Jewish Studies curriculum for students at UT-Austin. The Jewish Studies program at the University of Texas is designed to reflect the dynamic complexity of Jewish histories, literatures, populations, and traditions wherever they exist. The Center embraces a wide range of interrelated studies, including history, archaeology, languages, literature, textual analysis, ritual studies, sociology, art, and religious thought, with a special area of focus—the study of Jewish life in the Americas.

In a recent development, director Robert Abzug, a noted authority on many fields of Jewish study, particularly the Holocaust, has greatly expanded the curriculum; he completed a successful campaign to secure matching funds for a \$6 million grant from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, which will secure the Center's future. This will enable the Center to undertake a broad program of enrichment and expansion involving the hiring of new and distinguished faculty. Even as it strengthens its curriculum, the Center will reach beyond the classroom by supporting University and community-wide events and visiting scholars who wish to use the University's rich Judaica collections, as well as through lectures, conferences, exhibits, and concerts displaying the full range of Jewish culture. The Schusterman Center will become an internationally recognized crossroads for Jewish Studies scholars.

In addition to being director of the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, Dr. Abzug is a member of the Department of American Studies at the University of Texas. Before coming to Texas in 1978, he taught at the University of California, Berkeley and at UCLA. He held the Eric Voegelin Visiting Professorship at the University of Munich, 1990-91. He is also a former chair of American Studies (1990-96) and founding Director of Liberal Arts Honors Programs at the University of Texas at Austin (1996-2002).

Dr. Abzug's scholarship explores the formation of social and moral consciousness in American culture. He has worked in three major fields: social reform and religious life in antebellum America; America and the Holocaust; and, most recently, the interpenetration of religion and psychology in modern American culture. Dr. Abzug has published books and articles in reform history, holocaust history, history of psychology, and American religious history, and he is in the final stages of preparing a biography of the American psychologist, Rollo May. His scholarship explores the formation of social and moral consciousness in American culture.

The AJFF appreciates the Schusterman Center's support and participation in our festival and congratulates Dr. Robert Abzug on his outstanding accomplishments.