

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 11, 2024

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TWO-MILLION-DOLLAR GIFT FROM THE KARSH FAMILY FOUNDATION WILL FUND BLACK-JEWISH CONNECTION PROJECTS

Generous Grant Supports the Skirball's Ongoing Work to Highlight the Interconnectedness of Black and Jewish Americans

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center officially announced a two-million-dollar gift from the Karsh Family Foundation to support the Skirball's ongoing work to highlight the interconnectedness of Black and Jewish Americans.

In making the announcement, Skirball President and CEO **Jessie Kornberg** said, "There has never been a greater need for solidarity between Black and Jewish communities as threats of antisemitism and racism continue to bedevil our democratic freedoms. We know this gift from the Karsh family will allow the Skirball to meet that need and we are so grateful."

Martha Karsh, who co-founded the Karsh Family Foundation alongside her husband, said, "Bruce and I are proud to support the Skirball's ongoing efforts to celebrate those who have worked to dismantle systems and laws that have segregated and subjugated Jews, Blacks, and other historically oppressed minorities. These alliances have been a bedrock of American progress and can be again."

The announcement was made during a program that featured Civil Rights icon the **Rev. Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr.** in conversation with Los Angeles Councilwoman **Katy Yaraslovsky**. Held on December 5, the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, the program, "Perspectives on Black-Jewish Relations in the Fight for Civil Rights," explored the relationship between Jewish values and the establishment and defense of civil rights. Additionally, the Howard I. Friedman Memorial Graduate Essay Prize was presented to PhD candidate Erin Faigin.

The program was inspired by the Karsh Foundation gift and the Skirball's current exhibition, *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*. On view

through February 25, 2024, the exhibition showcases more than 150 photos taken by Movement insiders—photographers of different ethnic, racial, religious, and geographic backgrounds, including at least one American Jewish photographer—who chronicled the vital work undertaken by a broad coalition of organizers and everyday people whose collective action changed America.

The Skirball has created a collaborative community to explore Black-Jewish relations comprised of trustees, community advisors, and key stakeholders—including **Cynthia Mitchell Heard**, Chief Operating Officer of the Los Angeles Urban League; **Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson**, independent historian and curator; **Dr. Michael Lomax**, Chief Executive Officer of the United Negro College Fund; **Karen Mack**, Chief Executive Officer of LA Commons; and **Distinguished Professor David Myers**, the Sady and Ludwig Kah Chair in Jewish History at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Speaking as a member of the collaborative, **Alison Rose Jefferson** said, “Meaningful exhibitions like *This Light of Ours* and the public program with the Rev. Dr. Lafayette are part of the Skirball’s commitment and dedication to creating opportunities for cross-cultural connection. The Karsh Family’s gift will fund important research and planning for additional exhibitions and curriculum design, as well as community gatherings. We are excited to be engaged in this important work alongside one of the nation’s most important Jewish cultural centers.”

Supported in part by the Karsh Family Foundation grant, the Skirball will open its doors for FREE on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 15, 2024. Among the 150 photographs showcased in *This Light of Ours* are rarely-seen photos of Dr. King, as well as Coretta Scott King. The exhibition was deemed an important opportunity to contribute to the conversation around civil rights and voting rights that honor Dr. King’s legacy. The Skirball plans to host spotlight tours of the exhibition, special programs, and service-oriented activities throughout the day.

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This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement and its related educational programs at the Skirball Cultural Center are made possible by generous support from the following donors: Margaret Black and John Ptak, Stephanie and Harold Bronson, Nancy Sher Cohen and Robert Neil Cohen (z”l), Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Gelila Assefa Puck, Resnik Family Foundation, Steve Tisch Family Foundation, US Bank and Willis Wonderland Foundation.

The Howard I. Friedman Memorial Graduate Essay Prize and its related programs at the Skirball Cultural Center are made possible by generous support from the following donors: Pam and Jeff Balton, Howard Bernstein, Alyce and Philip de Toledo, The Friedman Family,

Marcie and Cliff Goldstein, Dennis Holt, Jessie Kornberg and Aaron Lowenstein, Madeline and Bruce Ramer, and May and Richard Ziman.

About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society.

Visiting the Skirball

The Skirball is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 12:00–5:00 pm; Saturday–Sunday, 10:00 am–5:00 pm; closed Mondays and holidays. General Admission to the Skirball will include *The American Library* by artist Yinka Shonibare CBE RA and *RECLAIMED: A Family Painting*. Other exhibitions, including *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement* and *Noah’s Ark* at the Skirball, are ticketed separately. Special Pricing: \$18 General; \$15 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$13 Children 2–12.