

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 2017

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**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY ENGAGES EDUCATORS FROM
ACROSS THE COUNTRY AT SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL EDUCATORS INSTITUTE**

**Held July 9-12, the Institute's Participants Focused on
"The Art and Science of Teaching Jewish History in America"**



Dr. Jonathan Sarna with participants in the National Educators Institute at NMAJH, July 2017.

PHILADELPHIA—The **National Museum of American Jewish History** (NMAJH) welcomed teachers from across the country to its second annual **National Educators Institute**, *The Art and Science of Teaching Jewish History in America*, from Sunday, July 9 through Wednesday, July 12. The first-of-its-kind Institute is a professional development program designed to empower secondary-level Jewish day school and Hebrew school teachers to transform—and

sometimes initiate—the teaching of American Jewish history in their classrooms by utilizing the trove of artifacts and resources available at NMAJH.

“As a leading institution creatively teaching, interpreting, and inspiring dialogue about the American Jewish experience, NMAJH is dedicated to bringing the lessons of this Museum to classrooms across the country,” says NMAJH’s Senior Manager of Education & Interpretation, **Ronit Lusky**. “Through the Institute, we are spearheading the effort to give teachers invaluable tools to help students understand and identify themselves within the larger arc of American Jewish history.”

This year’s Institute attracted 14 participants from 6 states—including California, Colorado, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania—representing secondary-level teachers (grades 5-12) from both Jewish day schools and Hebrew schools. Direction was provided by **Ronit Lusky** (NMAJH) and leading scholars of Jewish history and education **Dr. Benjamin M. Jacobs** (George Washington University) and **Dr. Jonathan Krasner** (Brandeis University). Additional notable faculty included preeminent scholar of American Jewish history and NMAJH’s Chief Historian **Dr. Jonathan Sarna** (Brandeis University), **Dr. Jenna Weissman Joselit** (George Washington University), and **Dr. Abby Reisman** (University of Pennsylvania).

One educator reflected on the experience: “I expected to learn from experts in the field the broad themes associated with American Jewish history...We were blown away by their depth of knowledge and passion for the subject.” Others noted, “The program has exceeded my expectations,” and “I am very impressed with all the amazing information and lectures, [...] individual attention, and more.”

The intensive four-day long program exposed educators to new developments in the fields of both history education and American Jewish history scholarship, and to new educational concepts that combine a historical approach together with a social-emotional learning. Teachers benefitted from workshops aimed at developing their curricula and discussing educational strategies with each other. The various lectures, panels, and workshops included “Core Themes in American Jewish History,” “Four Tensions in American Jewish life through Museum Objects,” “The Power of Paired Learning,” “Reading Like a Historian,” and more.

After finding inspiration from the speakers and workshops, the teachers then proposed and began developing projects outlining ways to truly immerse their students in American Jewish history. They will continue developing or begin implementing their projects during Academic Year 2017-2018, with support from NMAJH educators. Participants will be encouraged to submit results of their projects to NMAJH's National Educational Resources for Teaching American Jewish History database and join the growing network of educators that use Museum resources, share innovative lessons, and collaborate across school departments and state lines.

To learn more about NMAJH's annual National Educators Institute, visit NMAJH.org/NEI.

Leadership funding provided by the Lasko Family Foundation and an anonymous national foundation. Additional support provided by the Solomon and Sylvia Bronstein Foundation, Michele and Jeffrey Brotman, Robin and Bradford Klatt, The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, and Norma z"l and Abe z"l Shanzer.

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About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Wednesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$13.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID; reduced prices available if purchased online. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.