



Photo: Noam Galai

University of Haifa

The Senate of the University of Haifa, by virtue of the authority vested in it by the constitution of the University and in accordance with the recommendations of the President and the Executive Committee

hereby confers upon

Shira and Jay Ruderman

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa

In recognition of visionary leadership for making those who are different and outsiders become accepted and mainstream out of an understanding that the moral strength of a society is measured by its capacity to make everyone feel they belong; for activities in the public interest with a goal of bringing about a change in reality and creating a better society; for uncompromising investment in strengthening relations between American Jews and Israel – sister communities, whose fate is inexorably intertwined; for the contribution to establishing the Ruderman Program for American-Jewish Studies at the University of Haifa, which trains its graduates to construct the bridge between the communities through academic research; and for their being true friends of the University.

Conferred in 15 Sivan 5775/June 2, 2015

Haifa, Israel

Ami Ayalon

Chairman of the Executive Committee

Amos Shapira

President

Prof. David Faraggi

Rector



Photo: Chana Nudelman Faust

THE RUDERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Ruderman Family Foundation is a strategic philanthropic foundation, which works for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Israeli society and in Jewish communities in the US. The Foundation operates through its two branches in Israel and Boston, led by its President, Jay Ruderman, and its CEO, Shira Ruderman.

Every year the Foundation invests millions of dollars and serves as a professional entity and a major player for promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. The Foundation's philanthropic work is organized through initiation of strategic partnerships, advocacy activities, and development of innovative solutions of broad impact, such as the strategic "Disabilities Database" undertaking, in partnership with the Joint and the Government of Israel.

In this vein, it set up the "Ruderman Prize for Inclusion," which is awarded to Jewish organizations around the world that serve as inspiration for the inclusion in society of people with disabilities, as well as the "Morton E. Ruderman Award in Inclusion", given to an individual for making an outstanding contribution to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities.

In addition, the Ruderman Foundation works vigorously to strengthen relations between American Jews and Israel. In this context the Foundation contributed to the establishment of an MA degree at the University of Haifa - the Ruderman Program for American-Jewish Studies, the only program of its kind in Israel.

In 2014, the Foundation won an excellence award for philanthropic activity for the Jewish Community from the CJP - Combined Jewish Philanthropies and, in 2015, a Visionary Leadership Award from the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

As people who are frequently interviewed, Jay and Shira take every opportunity to address the importance of relations between Israel and American Jewry. They work to build and deepen such relations, all the while placing special emphasis on cooperation for the inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

JAY RUDERMAN

Jay Ruderman is President of the Ruderman Family Foundation. He grew up in Boston in a modest and ethical Jewish family, and first visited Israel at the age of 13 as a gift for his Bar mitzvah.

Jay completed his undergraduate degree at Brandeis University and his legal studies at Boston University in 1993. Jay began his legal career as Assistant District Attorney in Essex District, Massachusetts.

In 2001 Jay joined the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, AIPAC, and served as Deputy Director of AIPAC in New England, where he significantly expanded the organization's activities.

In 2005 the Ruderman family made Aliyah, and settled in Rehovot. Jay enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and served as the IDF's liaison officer with US Jewry in particular and Diaspora Jewry in general. It was the first role of its kind and Jay filled this complex and valuable role at a time when he himself was a new immigrant. After his discharge from the IDF, Jay returned to AIPAC Israel, where he made contributed considerably to leveraging its activity.

Jay has extensive experience in professional public action, political campaign management and in the field of law, whether advocating for – or writing about – the areas with which the Foundation is identified.

Jay serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Global Jewish Joint Distribution and as a member of the Executive Committee of the organization of Jewish philanthropists in the United States: Jewish Funders Network. He is active too in a number of organizations that engage in strengthening ties between American Jewry and Israel.

In his capacity as President of the Ruderman Family Foundation, Jay devotes all his time to philanthropic activity and to advocacy for and raising awareness of the importance of the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, in all aspects of life, and of the strategic importance of the relationship between the State of Israel and Israeli society and United States Jewry.

Together with Shira, his wife, they are behind groundbreaking and important initiatives for Israeli society and the Jewish community, such as the MA Program at the University of Haifa and the "Disabilities Database" at the Israel Joint.

Jay lives in Boston with Shira and their four children.

SHIRA RUDERMAN

Shira Ruderman is an entrepreneur with extensive experience in managing and leading strategic processes. She is one of the founders of the Ruderman Family Foundation and has served as its CEO in America since 2002, and its CEO in Israel from 2006 to the present. Before turning to professional philanthropic activity, Ruderman managed projects and organizations in the education and community field in Israel and in the United States.

Over the 15 years the Foundation has been in operation, Ruderman has founded and established strategic and groundbreaking ventures in Israel and the United States that have changed the reality of how people with disabilities are included in all aspects of life.

Such projects include the Gateways organization for the inclusion of students with disabilities in the education system in the US; the program “Parents Build Community” sets up leadership communities drawn from among the parents of children with disabilities in towns and villages of the three main population sectors; the “Disabilities Database” initiative set up in partnership with the Government of Israel and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC); the “Ramp” program for the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment, in partnership with the Israel Ministry of Economics and the Israel Joint; the exellHT project, a national program for the inclusion of young people from the Druze community in employment in the hi-tech sector, in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister; initiatives and campaigns of coalitions that advocate, legislate and raise awareness of the need for inclusion in areas of housing and community, and more.

In the field of relations between Israel and American Jewry, Ruderman managed and developed the Foundation’s flagship program among Members of the Knesset and Israeli journalists; accompanied the American Jewish Studies Program at the University of Haifa, and more.

In addition to these activities, Ruderman is a member of “Committed to Give” - a group of Israeli philanthropists who work to encourage private philanthropy in Israel. She accompanies entrepreneurs and young company managers on a voluntary basis, and serves as an active member of public boards and the managerial committees of civil society organizations in Israel and the United States including, among others, the JDC, the Anti-Defamation League, Keshet, of which she was Chairperson over a period of five years, and others.

Ruderman is considered a young and outstanding philanthropist in Israel, and serves as a role model for entrepreneurial, trailblazing women in the field of voluntary and professional leadership in Israel and the Jewish world. She has a BA in Education and an MA in Public Policy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Shira is married to Jay Ruderman, the President of the Ruderman Family Foundation, and mother of four.