

For over sixty years, the philanthropy of Jack H. Skirball, z"l, his life's partner of 38 years, Audrey Skirball, z"l, and the Skirball Foundation have been inextricably bound up with the destiny of the College-Institute. Together, they represent the single largest individual donor to HUC-JIR in its history, with support exceeding \$50 million over the past six decades.

Born in Homestead, Pennsylvania, Jack Skirball (1896-1985) attended the University of Cincinnati and Western Reserve College in Cleveland and then studied for the rabbinate at Hebrew Union College. Following



▲ Jack and Audrey Skirball at the Skirball Center for Biblical and Archaeological Research at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem.

► (From left) Dr. Uri Herscher, Dr. Joshua Holo, Dean, and Rabbi Ellenson at the newly dedicated Jack H. Skirball Campus in Los Angeles.

An Enduring Legacy: Jack H. Skirball, Audrey Skirball, and the Skirball Foundation

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his ordination in 1921, he pursued graduate work in philosophy and sociology at the University of Chicago, and then served as an assistant rabbi at the Euclid Avenue Synagogue in Cleveland for two years and rabbi of the Washington Avenue Temple in Evansville, Indiana, for seven years.

In 1933, he took a leave of absence from the Evansville congregation to become the manager of Educational Films Corporation, a pioneer in the field of audiovisual education. He produced *Birth of a Baby* (1938), the first motion picture to show the actual birth of a child and a cinematic landmark that became instantly famous and prompted the opposition of religious groups. As President of Skirball Productions, he produced film classics such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Saboteur* (1942) and *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). Beginning in the 1950s, he began his successful career as a real estate developer. He created Vacation Village in San Diego, which became a model for family resorts across America.

Although Jack Skirball did not return to the rabbinate, he remained active in the Reform Movement, assisting the establishment of new congregations and serving as regional president for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the URJ). He served as a Vice-Chairman and member of HUC-JIR's Board of Governors for over 30 years as well as Chairman of the Board of Overseers of the Los Angeles campus, and was a moving force behind every significant endeavor of the College-Institute.

Audrey Skirball was born in Birmingham, Alabama, to banker Otto Marx and was raised in New York. Her grandfather, Henry Mosler, was a prominent 19th-century American artist whose works she extensively collected. A patron of art, culture, and higher education, she served as Vice-Chair of HUC-JIR's Board of Governors and its Library, Museums, and Archives Committee.

Jack Skirball secured the California state charter for HUC-JIR's Los Angeles campus in 1954, and spearheaded the development of this campus, which was expanded and relocated from the Hollywood Hills to be adjacent to the University of Southern California in 1971. The Skirballs created the Skirball Museum at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, Skirball Museum at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, and Skirball Center for Biblical Research and Museum at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem. In 1983 they provided the initial funding and later located the site for the Skirball Cultural Center, whose vision was guided by Dr. Uri D. Herscher, its Founding President and Chief Executive Officer. It was named in memory of Jack Skirball and inaugurated in 1996.

HUC-JIR's Los Angeles campus was named in memory of Jack H. Skirball on February 6, 2011, in recognition for his invaluable contributions from its inception and in tribute to his lifelong devotion to Jewish education and culture. **Rabbi David Ellenson stated, "We are honored that Jack Skirball's name will add to the prominence of the College-Institute in the Los Angeles community and the larger world.** We are enormously grateful to Jack and Audrey Skirball, of blessed memory, and to the Skirball Foundation for their generosity as the single largest individual donor to HUC-JIR in its history. Their support, exceeding \$50 million over the past six decades, is a living legacy that continues to sustain our institution and our sacred mission of preparing leaders for North American and world Jewry."



Dr. Uri D. Herscher, Founding President and CEO of the Skirball Cultural Center noted, "Jack H. Skirball believed deeply in the values of the Jewish tradition. He was often heard to say that the Jewish tradition has so much to contribute to the ideals of peace, social justice, integrity, and moral concepts. He felt it was essential for Jews and the rest of the world to be aware of the deep roots of the Jewish story. By having an integral role in the development and growth of the College-Institute throughout the decades, he had an opportunity, in his own way, to have a share in the telling of that story, a grand story the world would continue to relish as his legacy."