

TOURO LINKS

DIVISION OF GRADUATE STUDIES • SUMMER 2019



FOOTBALL PLAYER
TURNS PHYSICAL
THERAPIST REWRITES
HIS PLAYBOOK
p. 14



TOURO COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Where Knowledge and Values Meet

Touro is a system of non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was chartered in 1970 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American and global community. Approximately 19,200 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has 30 branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem and Moscow. New York Medical College; Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus; Touro University Worldwide and its Touro College Los Angeles division; as well as Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois are separately accredited institutions within the Touro College and University System. For further information on Touro College, visit www.touro.edu/news.



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Cause to Celebrate

I am proud to present the 2019 edition of Touro LINKS. The Division of Graduate Studies continues to provide outstanding educational opportunities that lead to both personal and societal transformation and enrichment. You will be pleased to hear that the Graduate Division is on the move, with growth and innovation. Touro College's first Ph.D. program was approved by the New York State Education Department and enrolled its first cohort of scholars in Fall 2018 who are pursuing a doctorate in Jewish Studies. An Advanced Certificate in Behavior Analysis was developed in our School of Health Sciences, and has already produced well-trained practitioners to provide therapy for children with autism. A Health Care Management concentration has been added to our MBA program and to our new M.S. program in the Graduate School of Business, capitalizing on the role of Touro College and University System as a leading national provider of health and medical education. We have recently enhanced the choices students have to take control of their own education, with online and/or Flex program options in the Graduate School of Social Work and the Law Center.

As you will find in this issue of Touro LINKS, a Touro graduate education results in alumni who pursue the career of their choice with heart, empathy and passion. How do we do this? The Graduate Division does this by:

- retaining faculty who mentor and believe in individual students so that the students, in turn, truly believe in themselves and their ability to succeed;
- offering opportunities such as dream internships and participation in public advocacy centers;
- providing skills in cultural competency so that our graduates are prepared to heal diverse patient populations;
- teaching self-care to those practitioners whose job involves serving the most needy day in and day out.

I urge alumni to partner with us in our vision for excellence, and to contribute in any way you can to benefit the next generation of students in the Graduate and Professional Divisions. Feel free to contact me with your ideas at nadja.graff@touro.edu.

Nadja Graff
Vice President



Summer 2019

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ON THE COVER

Jermaine Lee went from pro athlete to physical therapist.

See his story on page 14.

▲
FRANCIS DE LEON

Tech Career 2.0

Graduate School of Technology grad, Francis De Leon, has had a wild ride, working in some of the most exciting companies the tech world has to offer.



STYLE UPGRADE

Tech Career 2.0

One Grad's Career Relaunches with a Dream Internship

Five years ago, as a recent college graduate working in Manila as a graphic designer, Francis De Leon was frustrated. “The job market was limited. I wondered if there would be better opportunities somewhere else,” he recalls.

As a Filipino-American who grew up in the Philippines, De Leon had always wondered about working in the U.S. With relatives in New York who could provide him with a place to stay, this ambitious young man packed his things, boarded a plane and arrived in the Big Apple with high hopes. Soon, however, he discovered that the portfolio that had landed him a job in Manila was not up to par with other New York City applicants. If he wanted a job in the U.S., it would need an overhaul.

SECOND CHANCE

Recalls De Leon, “The best way to upgrade my portfolio so that it was state-of-the-art was to return to school.” The young designer looked at a number of programs and ultimately enrolled in Touro’s Graduate School of Technology (GST). Explains De Leon, “Touro gave me a chance.”

To support himself, De Leon worked as a graphic design instructor at an occupational business school and attended classes at GST two nights a week. While there, he acquired digital designing skills in a range of media including video, interactive gaming, shopping, virtual

reality and augmented reality. “I’ve learned how to create interfaces and to apply my graphic design training to all my assignments to reflect both my technological know-how and my design ability,” he explains.

“The best way
to upgrade
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BIG BREAK

A huge break came last year when De Leon was hired as a paid intern for eight months at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. His role there focused on concept design for the corporation’s theme parks, particularly in Asia. “I loved the environment, was very stimulated working with such a talented group of professionals and learned a lot,” he recalls. While there, De Leon utilized both his Touro technology background as well as his earlier art training as he developed environmental designs for the parks. At Universal, he was exposed to a

range of team members, including architects and engineers and learned a new, extremely useful skill, 3-D design. When his internship was ending, De Leon was asked to stay on, which was a huge sign of support. Although it was a fantastic opportunity, he still had a year before he completed his degree. After some hard deliberation, De Leon made the decision to return to New York and finish his degree. Today, with plans to graduate in Spring 2019, he is using the same skills he developed at Universal Studios in his current work at the environmental design firm, Pentagram, which is one of the world’s largest independent design consultancies. At Pentagram, he develops outside signs, wall decorations and logo placements for a range of companies including Soul Cycle and the Headquarters for the Big 10 Conference.

LIFE-CHANGING

For De Leon, moving to New York City and attending GST has been life-changing. He’s extremely appreciative of both the opportunities that have come his way and the education he’s received. Explains De Leon, “In my ‘Foundation of Art and Design’ class we learned basic design techniques and ways to think about design. It’s something that I use all the time. Design is everywhere and this class helped me to think beyond the computer and to see design possibilities all around me.” ■



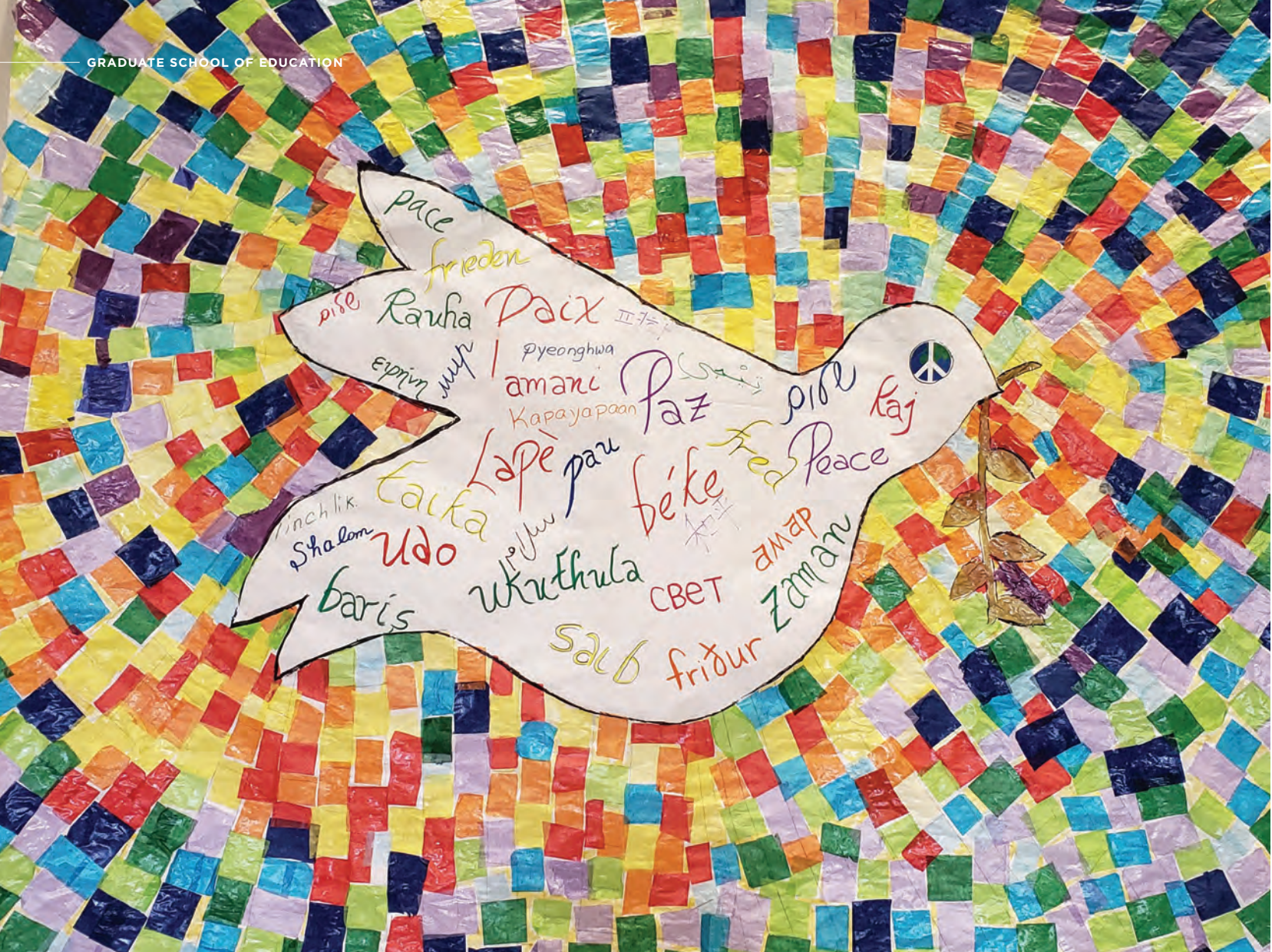
**FRANCIS DE
LEON**

*Freelance Graphic
Designer*



A WALK IN THE PARK

From top: De Leon uses paper and pen to first sketch out ideas before transferring them to the computer. He worked on large-scale projects for Universal theme park in Florida. De Leon had daily access to Universal's park where he could wander around for inspiration.



CREATIVE STATEMENT



DR. SHOSHANAH FINDLING

Site Director of the Graduate School of Education/Special Education Program

Stronger Than Hate

Fighting Acts of Hate with Acts of Kindness

Following the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Temple in Pittsburgh last October, Dr. Shoshanah Findling knew she had to do something. “I wanted to find a way to respond that would help people to heal,” she recalls. Dr. Findling, who serves as Site Director of the Touro Graduate School of Education (GSE)/

Special Education Program and who is also a self-trained artist, often turns to art during such times.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

“A prayer for peace is one of the 19 blessings said every day in the Jewish Amidah,” explains Dr. Findling. “I began to envision an interactive

art project, centered around peace, in which we could involve the entire school.” For Dr. Findling, incorporating art into her teaching and her role as an administrator at Touro has always been a guiding principle. Now there was an immediate and compelling need that her skill and knowledge could address.

A SCHOOL-WIDE EFFORT

Using the symbol of a white dove as the dominant design element, Dr. Findling set out to create, with the help of students and Touro staff, an oversized collage painting. The white dove at its center was to be surrounded by colorful mosaics made of individually hand-cut, small squares of colored tissue paper. “It is my belief that we must fight acts of hate with acts of kindness,” explains Professor Findling. Staff, faculty and students from the GSE Brooklyn and Staten Island campuses worked together to create the collage. Faculty helped logistically by allowing students time off from class to cut out the mosaics and glue them to the piece of art. School staff, faculty and administration all found time to cut out squares and glue. In addition, the giant white dove was then inscribed with the word “peace” in 33 different languages by members of the school community, representing all the languages spoken in the hallways of GSE. Finally, the school staff assisted with the framing and final installation. “Everyone had a chance to contribute and feel part of this project and feel creative,” recalls Dr. Findling.

The unveiling took place on January 15th, Martin Luther King’s actual birthday. This date was selected to both commemorate and underscore Dr. King’s universal message of peace and justice. The artwork now hangs inside the GSE Brooklyn campus entrance and is the first image one sees when visiting the school.

ART AS A TEACHING TOOL

“In education we talk a lot about ‘the curriculum.’ There is also the ‘hidden curriculum’ which must be addressed,” explains Dr. Findling. “School is supposed to prepare students to be good citizens and productive members of society. The peace project allowed us to start a conversation about such things as democracy, respecting different cultures, religions and so on. Also, by beginning the project on Veterans Day, hanging the completed symbol of peace on Martin Luther King’s birthday, and seeing and hearing the many different ways to say ‘peace’ in other languages,

allowed students to both learn and feel a sense of belonging at the same time.”

For Dr. Findling, such art projects are ways for teachers to help develop their skills in a hands-on and uniquely engaging way. “Many of the GSE students participating in the peace collage said that they were going to replicate it in their own classrooms,” recalls Dr. Findling. “This project could work extremely well as a social studies, math or language arts lesson. For social studies, students could be encouraged to talk about the concept of peace,” she continues. “For language arts, vocabulary could be developed around words for peace. For math, measuring the paper and small squares, counting on the various colors or estimating the number of squares on the finished collage could all build and reinforce math learning. The possibilities are only limited to a teacher’s imagination.”

TEACHERS REACT

For Carl Santa Maria, the Principal of lower school PS 143 in Brooklyn, the peace project was a remarkable concept. “I really enjoyed the engagement it brought,” he says. “I will use this idea at my school in some way.”

For student Orit Mor, the project had particular meaning. “I am graduating this year with a degree in Special Education and I’m an art teacher at The International Charter School in Brooklyn,” says Orit. “I worked closely with Professor Findling on this project, helping with the cutting, pasting and organizing of the tissue squares and collage.” For Orit, it was gratifying to see how this project helped to bring the community together. “It was very impactful. People would come in for class, stop at the room where the mosaics were, create their mosaic and add it to the piece. Over several weeks, all the spaces were filled in with a beautiful design of colors. Other students wrote the word ‘peace,’ in their native languages, which was another way of uniting all of us.” Following her graduation, Orit plans to incorporate all school art projects into her teaching. “This kind of artistic activity can unite a school community around an issue, raise awareness or help them to heal together.” ■



PAINTING FOR PEACE
Students work together on the mosaic project.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT A COLLEGE THAT REALLY CARES? GO TO GSE.TOURO.EDU.

NEW OFFERINGS

Meeting a Need

Behavior Analysis Comes to Touro

“One in 59 children today is diagnosed with some form of autism, and so the need for qualified professionals who can assess and work with this population has never been greater,” explains Karrie Lindeman, Assistant Professor and Program Director, Behavior Analysis, at Touro’s School of Health Sciences’ Department of Behavioral Sciences. To meet this need, Touro began offering an Advanced Certificate program in Behavior Analysis (ABA) and graduated its first class of behavior analysts in 2018. Now these behavior analysts are applying their skills and using their credentials to help individuals who have been diagnosed with autism, autism spectrum or related disorders.

The 27-credit course of study, which is an advanced post-master’s certificate, can be completed in as few as three semesters. The program involves both classroom work as well as 150 hours in the field and students receive state and national certifications: New York State Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA) and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Explains Professor Lindeman, “The curriculum covers theory, training and supervision in behavior analysis and involves both an in-class curriculum as well as training and supervision in behavior analysis by faculty.”

FASCINATED BY ABA

Victoria Ruocco first learned about

ABA as a master’s student at Touro. “I took a behavior class with Professor Lindeman and was immediately fascinated by the concept,” Ruocco recalls. “I was excited by the idea of using ABA-based interventions to treat people with developmental disabilities.”

The first year the ABA Certification was offered at Touro, Ruocco, then a school psychologist at the Baldwin Union Free School District, enrolled. “I wanted the knowledge and training to best help the children diagnosed with autism, autism spectrum and related disorders who I saw in my role as school psychologist, as well as the ones I worked with privately in their homes,” she explains. When Ruocco discovered that Professor Lindeman, the person who had originally ignited her enthusiasm for ABA, would be heading the program she was thrilled.

THEORY, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

“The classes focus on theory, best practices and developing strategies for helping individuals to increase desired behaviors while decreasing undesired ones,” explains Professor Lindeman. Students study approaches for taking data, which involves learning to observe the language and behavior of children, teens and adults. They are also trained to work in a range of settings including ones

that are center-based or in an individual’s most familiar environment, such as the home.

“The curriculum covers theory, training and supervision.”

With her coursework completed, Ruocco still keeps in touch with Professor Lindeman as questions arise in her fieldwork. “I know I can reach out to Professor Lindeman for guidance and often shoot her emails with questions,” explains Ruocco. When the required hours of fieldwork for certification are completed, Ruocco will be practicing as a behavior analyst privately and hopes to work in this capacity in a school setting as well. “My passion has always been serving people. This certification is providing me with the skills and credentials to help a child with autism, autism spectrum or related disorders to live a meaningful life.” ■



**KARRIE
LINDEMAN**

*Assistant Professor
and Program
Director, Behavior
Analysis*



TO SEE WHAT STUDENTS ARE DOING IN THE REALM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, GO TO [SHS.TOURO.EDU](https://www.touro.edu).



HOW ARE TOURO'S BUSINESS STUDENTS MOVING AND SHAKING? FIND OUT AT GSB.TOURO.EDU.

FOLLOW YOUR PASSION

Meet Roy JD Maleh

An Explosive Force in Integrated Digital Marketing

A few years into training to become a pharmacist, Roy JD Maleh realized he was on the wrong path. "I was doing field placement and felt in my gut that a career as a pharmacist was not what I really wanted," he recalls. For JD, the small, part-time digital marketing business he ran outside of school was where his heart was.

JD changed direction, switching his area of study to one in Business, Management and Finance and upon graduating, devoted himself full-time to building his company, Media Explode. With a team of four, he began growing the company's specialties to include brand identity, website development, digital marketing, media production, public relations, print services, promotional products, branded apparel and everything in between.

NO LONGER THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

As the company's services expanded, JD found himself providing his clients with a high level of strategic advice to help them reach their business goals. "Although my

company began by offering web design and social media support, we'd grown into an integrated marketing company with an array of services to help businesses and we were now offering clients sophisticated problem-solving through strategic marketing strategies." In a few years, his part-time business had evolved into one where clients could shop full-service for a range of services that would best tell their stories and get their messages out to the right audiences. "We were no longer the 'new kid on the block,' but seasoned pros providing a high level of strategic thinking and support for brands, companies, franchises, non-profits and startups." That's when JD decided to pursue his MBA with a specialization in Health Care Management, which would give him additional training in business as well as a credential that matched his know-how.

JD decided to enroll in Touro Graduate School of Business (GSB) because it would provide him with the knowledge he sought as well as offer him the flexibility needed to continue running his

business. In addition, he was eager for a chance to learn more about health care and business, an area of concentration that GSB offered, which JD believed would be in the best interest of Media Explode.

GSB PROVIDES NEW PERSPECTIVE

While JD had expected to increase his health care industry knowledge and business acumen at Touro, a course in change management provided JD with new insight. "I had hands-on experience in providing services to small and medium-sized companies," JD explains. "This course looked at effecting change in a large corporation and helped me to see ways that my business might be able to expand into working with large corporations and multinationals."

Since earning his degree three years ago, JD's business has continued to expand. Today it has offices in Brooklyn, New York and Lisbon, Portugal. Explains JD, "The Lisbon office has been a huge benefit to us. In an era when the internet never sleeps, the five-hour time difference makes it possible



ROY JD MALEH

*Founder and CEO,
Media Explode*



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS
Maleh meets with a client.

“This course looked at effecting change in a large corporation and helped me to see ways that my business might be able to expand...”

for Media Explode to provide clients with 24-hour service.” With a team of almost 20, JD’s company provides strategy and creative design across digital, social, mobile, content and visual production channels for a roster of clients that

includes medical and educational institutions, law firms, financial services, restaurants, nightclubs, car dealerships, spas and fitness clubs. In addition, just as he had envisioned, Media Explode has attracted health care organizations, among them nursing homes, medical offices, dental practices and homecare organizations.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

With a workday that starts early and can finish well past 10PM, JD feels fortunate to have a talented team of creative designers, marketers and developers who collaborate on all client projects. He says he owes his growing success to the team he surrounds himself with and the resources he has developed over the years. “We take pride in growing from each other’s knowledge, constantly evolving with the times and expanding our team-base to cover new technologies. We are always seeking opportunities and possibilities for our clients and pushing them so they can be out in front of the competition. I think this is part of what sets Media Explode apart.”



Some of Maleh’s recent projects.



MELTING POT

Cultural Competency

Healing Diverse Patient Populations



**DR. JOYCE
ADDO-ATUAH**

*Touro College of
Pharmacy*



**DR. JEFFREY
GARDERE**

*Assistant Professor
of Behavioral
Medicine,
Touro College
of Osteopathic
Medicine*

“If you aren’t a culturally sensitive health care provider, there’s a good chance you won’t get to the bottom of a patient’s problem,” says Dr. Jeffrey Gardere, Assistant Professor of Behavioral Medicine, Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM). Dr. Gardere and Dr. Joyce Addo-Atuah of Touro College of Pharmacy (TCOP) are co-leading a relatively new interdisciplinary course, “Cultural Competency in Health Care.” This course for first-year TCOP and TouroCOM students, introduces and sensitizes aspiring physicians and pharmacists to the challenges of providing quality, culturally-appropriate and patient-centered health care, while navigating the shifting waters of patient populations. During the semester-long class, students develop the skills and understanding for practicing medicine in diverse communities, especially underserved ones.

GLOBAL IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE

“The impact of globalization has created patient populations today reflecting a diversity of races, ethnicities and religions, all of which present an array of health-related beliefs, values, attitudes and practices. These factors can impact a patient’s access to health care as well as how well they navigate and stay within the system and adhere to health care directives and med-

ications,” explains Dr. Addo-Atuah. The course was developed in conjunction with the Institute of Medicare (IOM) and the Agency of Health Care Research and Quality (AHRQ).

“We want our students to be aware of social determinants of health, like income, insurance, educational level and environmental factors.”

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The course adds an additional component of diversity for the students by placing DO and Pharmacy students together in the classroom and working as teams. Together they experience, firsthand, the value of an

interdisciplinary approach to “learn about, with and from” one another, which can pave the way for future collaboration.

Through lectures, in-class exercises, case studies and teamwork, the course takes students through a combination of historical contexts, observations, self-reflections and experiences involving diverse population groups. These exercises help students develop a cultural social intelligence and an awareness of their personal biases, including those related to race, ethnicity, religion, appearance, sexual orientation or age. “Many of the students we teach arrive at Touro very insulated. These are the students who excelled on tests and with book learning but who had limited experience of the world beyond their community and family,” explains Professor Gardere. Attending Touro, which some fondly call the “United Nations of DO and Pharm Schools” because of its diverse student population, is an ideal setting for students to look at and understand how their original families and communities can impact their view of the world. Says Professor Gardere, “We try to get them to start working with their hearts not just their brains.”

A key part of the learning experience is helping students to notice the subtle signals a patient might be sending, perhaps via their body language. “We want our students to see the patient and not simply

make assumptions. For instance, it's important to ask, 'May I shake your hand,' rather than simply sticking out a hand and assuming that everyone understands and is comfortable with this form of greeting," explains Dr. Gardere.

Lectures focus on health care in the Hispanic, Asian American, African American and the LGBT communities, while others touch on religious sensitivities. Students learn about health disparities routinely experienced by racial/ethnic minorities, or those who may experience health care differences based on their gender, age, socioeconomic and insurance status, as well as religious or cultural beliefs/practices, sexual orientation and physical and mental disabilities.

During the course, teams of TCOP and TouroCOM students work together to evaluate case studies and come up with treatment plans. These projects involve working with immigrant, prison, HIV or elderly populations and identifying the biggest health problem facing this group. "We want our students to be aware of social determinants of health, such as income, insurance, educational level and environmental factors like ventilation. For example, minorities are more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer and they also account for a disproportionate amount of AIDS cases," explains Professor Addo-Atuah.

Each team then sets out to develop an awareness campaign about this health risk. Components of the project include team-created fliers to reach this group with key messages, as well as a PowerPoint presentation that reflects an understanding of the language and the nuances of the population.

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Despite her deep knowledge in the area of diversity, Cultural Competency class was a learning experience for TouroCOM student, Krystal Savice. With leadership roles in cultural competency action and support groups, including serving as president of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), an organization that helps minority students with professional development, working as creative director of the Diversity Task Force on campus and secretary of the Rainbow Health Coalition, Krystal entered the class believing she was fairly culturally sensitive.



For Krystal Savice, a 2nd year student at TouroCOM, "Cultural Competency in Health Care" has been an important part of her medical education.

"But in the class, I learned otherwise," she explains. "A case study described a situation with a 17-year-old girl from Mexico who needed a C-section but the medical team was unable to get consent for the procedure because the patient spoke an indigenous language. I assumed everyone from Mexico spoke Spanish," explains Krystal. "I had never heard of this. It made me stop and think about the assumptions I'd made about this patient population." After analyzing the case

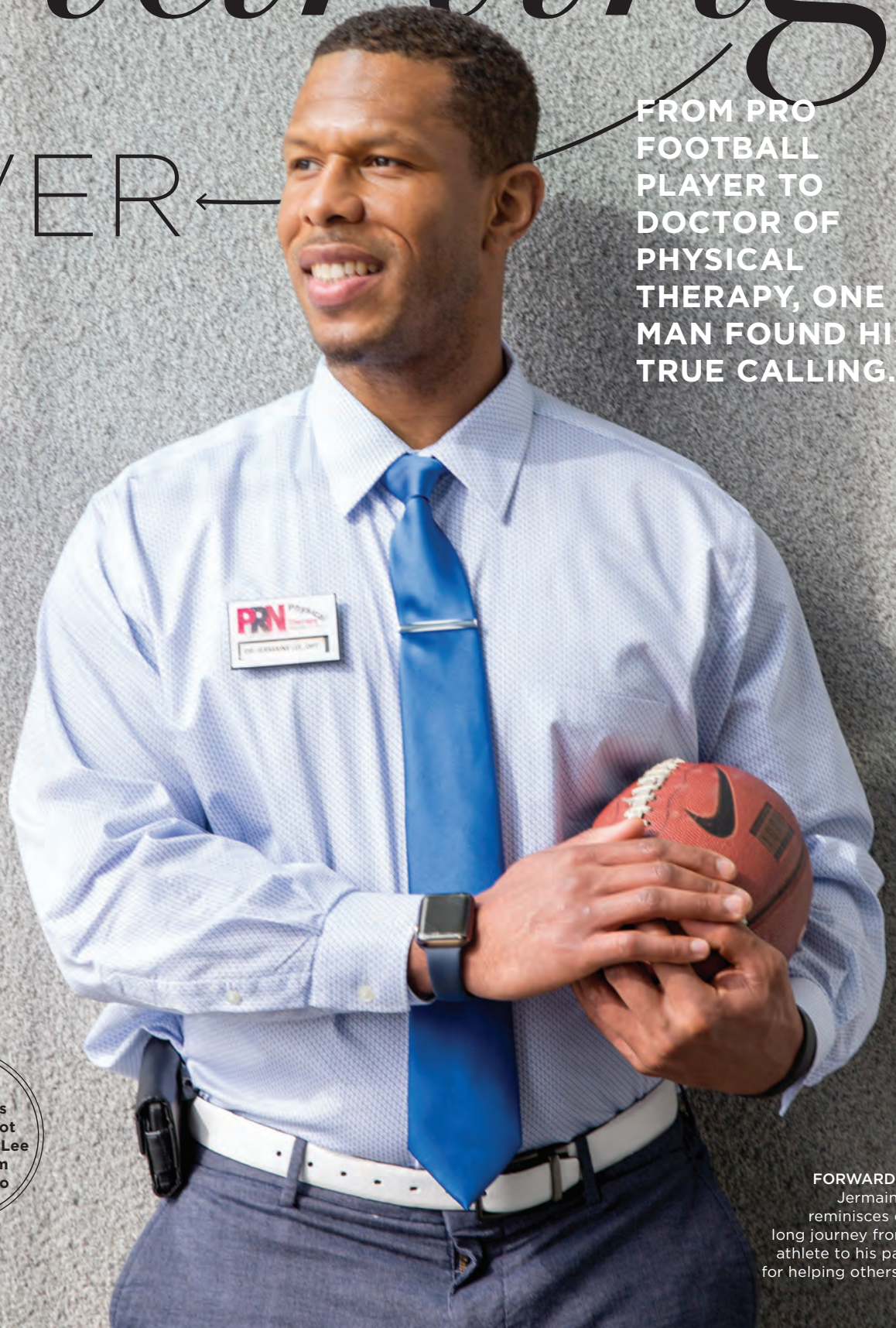
study, Krystal and her team recommended that in this medical setting it would be important to have an interpreter trained in indigenous languages and to also make sure there was staff training conducted in cultural competency.

For Krystal, this course has been an important part of medical education. "There are many unconscious biases that we need to be mindful of," she said. "This course helped each and every one of us to see this." ■

Starting

OVER ←

FROM PRO FOOTBALL PLAYER TO DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY, ONE MAN FOUND HIS TRUE CALLING.



See more photos from our shoot with Jermaine Lee on Instagram @wearetouro

FORWARD PASS
Jermaine Lee reminisces on his long journey from pro athlete to his passion for helping others heal.

All through elementary school,

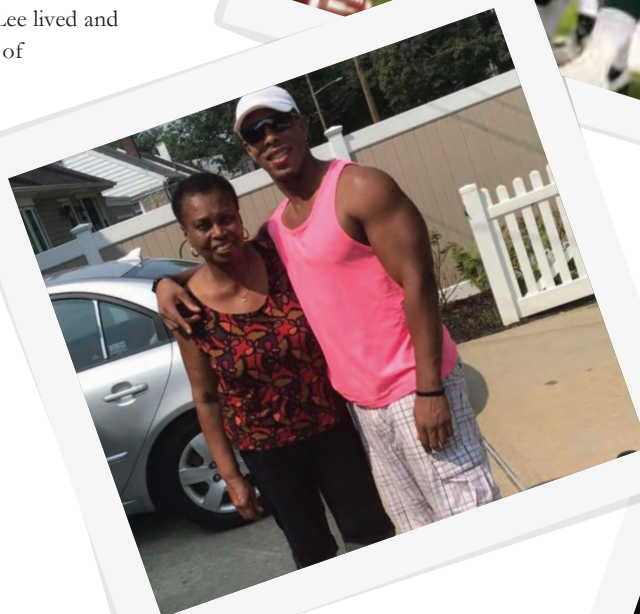
high school and college, Jermaine Lee lived and breathed football. Then, at the age of 22, his dream came true. He was signed as a defensive end for the Canadian Pro Football League team, the Edmonton Eskimos. Two years later, like many football players, an injury changed everything. With a bum hamstring, Lee was released from the team and suddenly the life he had trained and planned for was finished. For 24-year-old Lee, it was time to start over.

RETURNING HOME

“My mom was my backbone,” Lee recalls. “She really helped and encouraged me,” he says, looking back. Lee returned home to Long Island, enrolled in Nassau Community College and committed himself to taking additional college classes that would prepare him for his next chapter. “I wanted to use what I’d learned as an athlete in a setting where I could help people,” he says. Initially, Lee worked as a sports trainer but soon he turned his sights to something more substantial. “I wanted more,” he explains. Lee decided to obtain the training needed to become a physical therapist so that he



IN THE GAME
Clockwise from top: The Canadian Pro football team, the Edmonton Eskimos, in action. Lee and his mentor, professor Dr. Shira Weiner, at graduation. Lee’s headshot for the Eskimos. Lee and his mom.



could really make a difference in the lives of people with whom he worked.

“That was an intense time,” recalls Lee. “I was supporting myself doing sports training, going to school to beef up my college transcript and volunteering at a physical therapy center to build up my resume.”

NEVER GIVING UP

Unfortunately, Lee’s first application to graduate school was rejected. “I was disappointed but I wasn’t going to give up,” he recalls. Lee doubled down, reworked his application and applied again the following year. Dr. Anthony Polemeni, former Vice President of the Touro College Division of Graduate Studies and a friend of the family, encouraged Lee to apply to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Touro’s School of Health Sciences (SHS). Lee was accepted at Touro and another school, ultimately deciding to attend Touro, due to Polemeni’s encouragement.

Continued on next page. →

ON THE FIELD

At PRN Physical Therapy, Lee puts into practice the core skills that he learned in class, from hands-on manipulation to working with patients in a professional setting.



“But that was just the beginning,” he explains. “I was a football player. My mother didn’t even finish high school. I had a lot of anxiety about the demands of the program and doing schoolwork that required courses in physiology, neuroscience, pharmacology.”

IMPORTANT MENTORS

One of the factors that helped in Lee’s ultimate success was the mentoring relationships he developed at SHS, particularly with his professor, Dr. Shira Weiner. Mentoring is a critical part of the Physical Therapy program. “From orientation on, all our students are assigned to an advisor who is their first point of contact,” explains Dr. Weiner. “But, really, the entire faculty is there for them. We all know the students on a first-name basis by the end of week one of the program. There is a collective commitment to make sure that our students succeed.” At SHS, when a student asks a professor for assistance, they help the student find ways to succeed. Sometimes, they’ll re-teach a course section that was particularly troublesome. Or, they’ll help them find a student to tutor them or connect them with a study group.

MORE THAN AN ADVISOR

Although not Lee’s “official” advisor, when Dr. Weiner first met him in her anatomy class, the two of them clicked. “I could see immediately that he possessed the soft skills necessary for helping people,” she explains. “There was a kindness, an empathy and a gentleness that is so needed with patients. I just had an intuitive sense that I could help him with what we call the ‘hard skills,’ which is the clinical and academic work.”

For Lee, Dr. Weiner was more than an advisor. “She was like a life coach for me. She was there for me. She would say, ‘Jermaine, you can do this. You played professional football—I know you can do this.’” After failing a course, a devastated Lee sought out Dr. Weiner. “She went to bat for me,” recalls Lee. Together, they developed new approaches for mastering challenging material, including flashcards for self-quizzing and finding a study partner. Lee retook the course, aced it and triumphantly graduated in 2017.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Now happily working as supervisor and physical therapist at PRN Physical Therapy in Hicksville, Long Island, where he sees a range of orthopedic, cardiac rehab and stroke patients, Lee stays in touch regularly with Dr. Weiner. “I value her thoughts and advice about how to approach challenging cases or various treatments,” he says.

Although he no longer plays competitive sports, fitness remains an important part of Lee’s daily life. He currently works out with weights three times a



AT PRACTICE
Lee uses all of the skills he learned in PT school on his patients.

"My mother didn't even finish high school."

week and does daily cardio workouts by jogging, biking or doing 30 minutes on the elliptical machine. Looking back at his journey, Lee grows philosophical. “There’s a quote I live by,” he says. “You will be remembered more for your kindness than any success you could possibly attain in life. This is true for Dr. Weiner. I don’t remember many of the teachers who taught me subjects. Although Dr. Weiner taught anatomy, what I remember most is the way she encouraged me and believed in me when I couldn’t be there for myself.”



HOW ARE PHYSICAL THERAPISTS MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE? FIND OUT AT [SHS.TOURO.EDU](https://www.touro.edu).

JOY RIDE

AtStathi takes a breather, a new habit she is practicing to help calm and center herself.



Take Care



HEIDI ATSTATHI FOUND OUT THAT THE SECRET TO HELPING OTHERS IS SELF-CARE. A PROFESSOR IN TOURO'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK HELPED LEAD THE WAY TO A MORE BALANCED LIFE AND BETTER CARE FOR HER FUTURE PATIENTS.

“Uh-oh, it’s time to pay up.”

That’s what I thought when I entered my Practical Field Seminar class last year and heard Professor Melissa Halpern Rojas speak,” recalls Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) student Heidi AtStathi. Designed to assist students transitioning into their professional roles as social work interns in the field, the seminar helps students acquire the skills, knowledge and self-awareness to develop a professional identity and learn approaches to self-care that will sustain and nourish them through the often draining and demanding job of social work.

SCHOOL-WIDE INITIATIVE

Self-care, part of a new initiative spearheaded by Dean Steven Huberman, is a school-wide effort to encourage students, and also faculty and staff, to practice self-nourishment, which can include following healthy eating routines, meditating, communing with nature, exercising or gathering with significant others or friends. Explains Dean Huberman, “We want our students – our future social workers—to know that if they’re going to take care of others, that the first step in doing this is taking care of themselves.”

One of the components of this initiative

is Professor Halpern Rojas' seminar and its curriculum, which she has been developing over her years at GSSW. “The idea grew out of my experience of being a wife, a stepmother, a caretaker for my mother-in-law and other family members and working as a social worker the whole time. I had to learn this for myself. It’s not in a textbook.”

Defined as the practice of self-compassion and nourishment of the body/emotions/mind and spirit, self-care is critical for social workers who can be at risk of professional burnout. Explains Professor Halpern Rojas, “Most social workers are hard-working, not paid enough and often not afforded much respect from the greater community. My goal in this class is to help them create a pattern of understanding of how much work they do, how exhausting their work can be and that it is their responsibility to nourish themselves.”

RECOGNIZING THE NEED

Students taking the seminar undergo a series of self-assessments that look at their existing methods of self-care including physical, psychological, social, spiritual and professional. Over the course of the year, students develop ways of incorporating self-care into each day by journal-keeping and classroom or one-on-one discussions with Professor Halpern Rojas. Recalls AtStathi, “There couldn’t have been a better person to go through this course than me.” As someone who likes to care for others

TENDER LOVING CARE

Halpern Rojas and AtStathi enjoy a tender moment together. Halpern Rojas uses the class to teach her students to nourish themselves in many different ways, including spending time with people they enjoy.





TO LEARN HOW
STUDENTS ARE
MASTERING
CARING FOR
THEMSELVES
AND OTHERS,
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POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Halpern Rojas developed the curriculum for the course over her many years as a teacher at GSSW. Her roles as wife, mother, caretaker and social worker have also greatly informed the work students do in the class.

Continued on next page. →

FINDING BALANCE

From top: AtStathi has rediscovered an old hobby she used to love: painting. Through the lessons in the class, AtStathi has a deeper knowing of herself, allowing her to enjoy life more. AtStathi and her teacher, Halpern Rojas, grew close over the course of the class.



and often puts her own needs last, AtStathi's self-assessment revealed a lack of sleep, poor eating habits and few opportunities for meditation. "I didn't realize until I did the self-assessment that I really treated myself badly. I often value doing things for others more than doing them for myself." "I tell my students, 'If you learn nothing else from me, learn that self-care is your professional responsibility. You won't be able to perform your tasks as a social worker without fully embracing self-care,'" explains Professor Halpern Rojas.

RECONNECTING WITH HERSELF

With an internship requiring a two-hour commute by train, AtStathi would rise at 5:30AM and have no time for herself by the end of a long day. With the help of Professor Halpern Rojas, AtStathi worked out a way to taxi to her job making it possible for her to leave for work later. "I felt a lot of guilt for being a slacker," she explains. "But in reality, my whole world had spiraled. Now I get to keep my eyes closed in the morning a little longer. I'm journaling more and bought paint and brushes and began oil painting again, which has been a life-long passion," she continues. "Having Professor Halpern Rojas' constant reminder to care for myself has trained me to recognize when I need time to get back to who I am so I'm not just a social worker, sister, daughter or girlfriend. This has been a huge learning process and one I think will benefit both me as well as my social work clients as I enter the professional world."

HOLISTIC LAWYERING



This Touro Law Center grad is creating the conditions for success.

LIZ JUSTESEN ISN'T SURE HOW SHE GETS IT ALL DONE. "SOMETIMES, I'LL LOOK BACK AT MY CALENDAR AND SEE HOW INSANE MY MONTH LOOKED AND THINK, 'HOW DID I DO THAT?'"

A packed schedule is nothing new for Liz. While most grad students were pursuing one degree, Liz tackled two, graduating Magna Cum Laude from the dual degree program between Touro Law Center and Stony Brook School of Social Welfare in 2006. Thirteen years later, Liz is hard at work combining her two passions, law and social work. Currently she serves as Community Outreach Director of the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County, an organization that represents indigent clients while they navigate the criminal and family courts. In this role, Liz conducts education programs in the community targeting drop-in, recovery, substance abuse treatment centers and public libraries to raise the awareness of both the potential hazards for and rights of those who are at high risk for criminal court involvement or those who have been previously involved in the criminal court system.

HOLISTIC LAWYERING

Having worked for years in family court representing children and their parents and then criminal court for people alleged to have committed crimes, Liz sees an ongoing need for "holistic lawyering," a

practice that focuses on both a client's immediate legal challenges and also broader non-legal ones such as housing, safety, mental and physical health issues, employment, education and licensing barriers. Liz, who often describes herself as "a social worker in a suit," explains the process. "We just don't look at a case, we assess mental and physical health, substance abuse issues, housing, domestic violence and work with social workers to problem-solve and ameliorate the various life and social obstacles that can cause clients to find themselves in and out of the system."

COLLABORATION: SOCIAL WORKERS AND LAWYERS

Five years ago, Liz began overseeing the Social Work Bureau within the Legal Aid Society. In this role, she worked to improve the collaboration between lawyers and social workers. "As we moved toward both helping clients through legal difficulties and also developing a framework where success could happen in their lives, the number of social workers that we had on our staff rose from one to nine." Together with members of the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County and

PAPER TRAIL

Liz Justesen works on all aspects of a client's case with the aim of helping them get out of the system.





A HELPING HAND
Clockwise from top:
Liz meets with her
team on a daily basis
to work together
toward a common
goal. Liz in her office.
Liz works with a new
hire to get him ready
to begin the work of
helping clients.



Continued on next page. →



HOLD THE PHONE

Liz dedicates her days to helping her clients not just in the courtroom, but with their emotional and physical needs as well, making her part lawyer, part social worker.



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other providers, Liz participates in Suffolk County’s endeavor “Access to Justice”— a State pilot program which seeks to make access to court and legal information easier for Suffolk County residents, a model that will then be duplicated throughout the state.

BREAKING BARRIERS PROGRAM

Liz returned to Touro Law Center as the supervising attorney for Breaking Barriers, a Touro Law Center, pro-bono student-run program, based in the Public Advocacy Center. Breaking Barriers law students work with clients to remove obstacles to employment by helping them correct errors on their RAP (Record of Arrests and Prosecutions) sheets and obtain Certificates of Relief from Civil Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct. These court documents remove any automatic statutory

disqualification from jobs or licenses brought on by a criminal conviction.

SOUGHT AFTER RESOURCE

Despite her packed schedule, Liz, who is also married and raising a son, finds the time to chair the Resources sub-committee for the Suffolk County Re-Entry Task Force, which works to improve the lives of parolees re-entering the community. In addition, her work on the Executive Board for the non-profit, New Hour, is making a difference for incarcerated women through the programming and support it provides to them while in custody and as they transition back into the community and re-unite with their families.

Explains Liz, “I have yet to meet a bad person. I meet people who make poor choices and are driven by life circumstances that bring them before the justice system.” ■

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Clockwise from left: Liz speaks to a fellow attorney at the Law Center campus. Each case that Breaking Barriers takes on gets reviewed by Liz. The co-workers enjoy good times together, even while dealing with difficult cases.

ELYAKIM RUBINSTEIN FORMER ISRAELI SUPREME COURT JUSTICE



Justice Elyakim Rubinstein

HEADLINES PROGRAM ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ELYAKIM RUBINSTEIN, retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice, was named Distinguished Professor at Touro Law this year. Rubinstein is a career lawyer and diplomat who served as both Vice President of the Supreme Court and Attorney General of Israel.

Justice Rubinstein led a newly-created Touro Law Center program exploring the Israeli legal system as a symbol of Israel's dedication to promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The program was hosted by the Jewish Law Institute of Touro Law Center and included presentations by Justice Rubinstein in conversation with key communal figures.



“The program addressed the development, over the course of 70 years, of an Israeli legal system that has produced a sophisticated jurisprudence, drawn from the history and wisdom of the Jewish legal tradition,” said Harry Ballan, Dean of Touro Law Center.

In addition to his groundbreaking work in the Israeli legal system, Rubinstein served as peace negotiator under three Israeli prime ministers. Over the course of the year, he held conversations with Judge Michael Mukasey, former Attorney General of the United States and noted criminal defense attorney, Ben Brafman, among others. ■

Higher

A photograph of two men in dark suits and kippahs, both wearing glasses. The man on the left has a grey beard and is holding an open book. The man on the right is smiling and pointing at the book. They are in an indoor setting with a colorful abstract painting in the background.

Learning

AFTER A DECADE OF PLANNING, TOURO INTRODUCES
A PH.D. PROGRAM IN JEWISH STUDIES.



Touro

College Graduate School of Jewish Studies (GSJS) welcomed its first Ph.D. program

candidates in September 2018. In doing so, Touro furthers its commitment to academic excellence in Jewish Studies and ensures that there will be scholars and teachers available to fill future vacancies for Jewish academics in high schools, colleges and graduate schools. The new doctoral program will build upon Touro's highly-regarded master's program in Jewish Studies, and augment Touro's already considerable contributions, through published writings and scholarship, to the collective knowledge of the intellectual, social and political history of the Jewish people in the past millennium.

We sat down with Dean Michael A. Shmidman and Dr. Shnayer Leiman to learn more about the program. GSJS Dean Michael A. Shmidman is both an ordained rabbi and a scholar of Jewish Studies. He holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and an M.A. from Hebrew University in Jewish Philosophy. He has served as Dean of GSJS since 1986, and was appointed to the Victor J. Selmanowitz Chair in Jewish History in 2003. He has been a member of Touro's faculty and administration since 1981, when he was recruited to serve as the first director of the newly established GSJS. He taught at Harvard, the University of Cincinnati and Yeshiva University prior to his appointment at Touro. Medieval Jewish history and Maimonidean studies are the focal points of Dr. Shmidman's research. He has published and lectured extensively, and often serves as a scholar-in-residence at synagogues and Jewish communal institutions. Dr. Shmidman was editor of *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* from 2001 to 2004, and Rabbi of Congregation Keter Torah in Teaneck, New Jersey from 1998-2003.

Dr. Leiman is Distinguished Professor of Jewish History and Literature at GSJS, Professor Emeritus of Jewish History and Literature in the Department of Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College

of the City University of New York and former Dean of the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University. He earned his doctorate from the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and served as Skirball Fellow in Judaic Studies at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Lady Davis Fellow and Visiting Professor of Bible at the Hebrew University, and as Visiting Professor of Jewish History at Harvard University. He has also served as Professor of Jewish History and Literature at Yale University, where he administered graduate and undergraduate programs in Judaic Studies. Dr. Leiman earned his rabbinic ordination from the Mirrer Yeshiva in New York.

What was the impetus behind the development of the program?

Dr. Leiman: Touro wants a role in producing a new group of skilled and talented teachers and scholars who will fill openings for academics in high schools, colleges and graduate schools. We are dedicated to providing the highest level of academic teaching and training for the next generation of scholars who will be on the front lines of teaching at the high school and college level and beyond.

Is there anything occurring in the world today that makes such a program more important or relevant?

L: There are currently not enough Jewish teachers who have the talent to reach high school and college students. We hope to develop scholars who are both experts in their fields as well as charismatic teachers who will inspire high school, as well as college students, to fall in love with Jewish Studies.

Has there been an ongoing need at Touro for such a program?

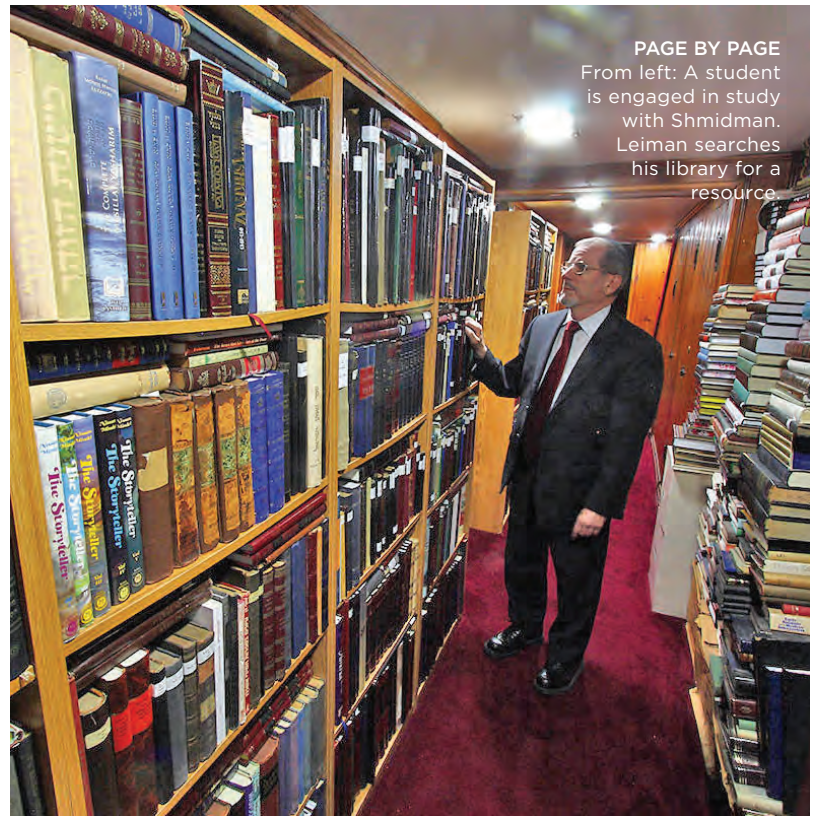
L: Up until this year, if there was a student at Touro who wanted to continue his/her studies beyond the master's level, that student would have to go elsewhere. Now such a scholar has the opportunity to continue studies with the faculty of the Touro GSJS.

WANT TO LEARN MORE? GO TO [GSJS.TOURO.EDU](https://gsjs.touro.edu).





QUICK STUDY
From previous page, clockwise:
Portraits of Dr. Shnayer Leiman and
Dean Michael A. Shmidman. Leiman
and Shmidman each work one-on-one
with a student.



PAGE BY PAGE
From left: A student is engaged in study with Shmidman. Leiman searches his library for a resource

What are the criteria for applying?

L: An applicant must have a master's in Jewish Studies or a related field plus an outstanding master's thesis, as well as scholarly proficiency in Hebrew.

Please describe the program.

Dr. Shmidman: Touro's program will offer a specialization in modern Jewish studies - 16th century to the present day. In future years, this specialization will be supplemented with a concentration in medieval Jewish studies.

L: Similar to the Touro master's program in Jewish Studies, our doctoral program is intensive. It is designed to train people in scholarly methods, critical thinking and writing, and combining these skills with the study of Jewish history, literature and thought.

How do you envision growing the program?

L: We hope to build the program through our reputation for and commitment to academic excellence in Jewish Studies. The Touro master's program attracts students from all over the world because of our name and reputation. GSJS produces serious scholars who combine an academic and scholarly approach with traditional Jewish studies. We are maintaining these high standards with our Ph.D. candidates and, as a result, we are being very selective and careful to accept only the most qualified students. When we produce our first doctorates, we want to have a group of graduates who will have no problem obtaining positions as academics or teachers.

S: More than 1,500 students have graduated from the various branches of GSJS since 1981. Many have assumed positions of leadership in academia, Jewish education and Jewish communal service in the United States, Israel, Europe and Canada. We will grow our new doctoral program on a solid foundation of excellence.

What will a Ph.D. candidate pursue in terms of curriculum and then thesis research and writing?

S: We require 36 credits of advanced course work beyond the master's degree; written and oral comprehensive examinations in the area of specialization and in the cognate field; demonstration of reading proficiency in French or German and any other language deemed relevant to the student's program of study; submission and approval of a dissertation proposal, which includes explanations of what the student proposes to study and why, and what is novel about the approach to this material; and submission approval, and satisfactory oral defense of the doctoral dissertation.

What kinds of candidates are you hoping to attract to the program?

L: Our ideal student is passionate about his or her subject, intellectually alert, fluent in Hebrew as well as a second language such as German, French or Arabic. The candidate must undergo an interview with us, have earned high GRE scores, possess a high-grade point average in prior studies, present a first-rate master's thesis and have received strong support in the form of letters of recommendation.

Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

S: The doctoral program will provide students with opportunities to work with Touro's distinguished graduate faculty in New York, as well as with experts in Holocaust Studies at Touro's Berlin campus and faculty at Touro's New York-based Jewish Law Institute. I am particularly delighted that doctoral students will now have the opportunity and privilege to be mentored by Professor Leiman, our newest addition to the graduate faculty.

I am confident that Touro's doctoral students will contribute significantly to Jewish scholarship, teaching and the quality of education in the Jewish community at large. ■

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