

Campaign underway for chair in Jewish studies

January 26, 2015 8:45 AM Mary Sparacello
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The Tel Aviv skyline glows. The Israeli Society Endowed Fund in the Tulane School of Liberal Arts has been established to create a Modern Israeli Society Chair in Jewish Studies. (Photo by Gilad Avidan)

Eric West, a 1986 Tulane University alumnus, and his wife, Natalie, are enthusiastic about training the next generation of leaders about Israel's vital importance to the U.S. and the world. They firmly believe Tulane is the right place to reach those young leaders.

Because of their dedication to combating anti-Israel bias and sharing Israel's story from an objective point of view, the Wests are leading a substantial effort to establish a Modern Israeli Society Chair in [Jewish Studies](#).

“It is essential to teach about modern Israel from a 360-degree perspective,” said Eric West.

The Wests have made a seed gift by creating the Israeli Society Endowed Fund in the School of Liberal Arts. Activities and expenses supported by this fund may include support for courses, films, curriculum development and a Jewish studies speaker series.

“Israel is a complicated topic. It provokes a wide range of extreme feelings,” Eric West said. “By having this type of class, Tulane can train students to take a leadership role in shaping future policy.”

The couple hopes that Tulane alumni will be inspired to get more involved with Tulane and become passionate about the importance of creating an Israeli Society Chair.

The Wests' efforts to establish the chair in Jewish Studies are coming at a time when the department is flourishing. The Jewish studies program was established at Tulane in 1982 and in 2012 became a full-fledged [department](#) within the School of Liberal Arts.

In 2013, the Jewish Studies Department moved into a house at [7031 Freret St.](#), with professors' offices, a seminar room and a library. The department's courses are consistently popular among Jewish and non-Jewish students.

“The university is on a roll,” said Eric West, a member of the School of Liberal Arts Dean's Advisory Council. “It's doing great things.”

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