Career Panel – Women Trailblazers

- **Nora Ephron (1941-2012)**

A New York-born screenwriter, director, producer, author and journalist. While working in the mail room at *Newsweek* in 1962, she was one of the women employees who filed a sexual discrimination lawsuit against the magazine for refusing to hire women reporters. She later received widespread acclaim for her screenplay for the romantic comedy *When Harry Met Sally*, which earned Ephron an Academy Award nomination. She both wrote and directed her second film, *Sleepless in Seattle*. She directed and produced many more films and plays and published a number of books. She left behind a legacy of writing that artfully combined romantic and comic content with feminist messages.

- **Esther Azhari Moyal (1873-1948)**

An author, translator, journalist and women's rights activist born in Beirut, Lebanon. She worked in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Ottoman Palestine, was the secretary of the Syrian Women's Association and published articles on the status of women. She attended non-religious schools, taught at the Scottish Church mission, and was later the principal of a school for Muslim girls in Beirut. Moyal founded the magazine *al-Aila* (The Family), which featured stories on the status of women in the Middle East. After emigrating to Ottoman Palestine, she and her husband started a magazine called *Sawt al-Uthmaniyyah* (The Voice of Ottomanism).

- **Grace Aguilar (1816-1847)**

A London-born author and poet, whose lineage is traced to Jews who escaped from Portugal during the Inquisition. As a young girl, she published poetry books and novels, including some which highlighted the importance of the mother figure in the family. Her books were translated into a number of languages and caught the eye of various critics. At the age of 29, she published *The Women of Israel*, a book dealing with prominent Jewish women throughout the generations. Many of her works were published posthumously.

- **Brigida Alexander (1911-1995)**

A German-born actress, director and translator. After the Nazis came to power in 1933, she fled to Paris and eventually made her way to Mexico. It was there that she embarked on an acting career, portraying mostly French women. Alexander directed a telenovela that aired in 1952 and was broadcast for three years, making her the first woman in the world to produce and direct a television series. She also wrote monographs, plays and screenplays for movies and television.

- **Bella Abzug (1920-1998)**

A New York-born feminist leader and attorney, civil rights activist and member of the U.S. Congress. Called "Battling Bella," Abzug was known for her wide-brimmed hats that became her trademark. She was a leader of second-wave feminism in the United States and was also a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War. She was a co-founder of Women Strike for Peace and the National Women's Political Caucus. Her campaign slogan in the Democratic Party primary election - "This woman's place is in the House – the House of Representatives" – later became a feminist catchphrase.

- **Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923)**

A stage actress born in Paris, France, whose mother was of Jewish-Dutch descent. Bernhardt was also an early film actress and one of the first to have her voice recorded. She appeared in some of the most popular theater productions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After starring on stages in Europe in productions of the Comédie-Francaise, she left the troupe and opened a theater of her own. She is considered one of the greatest stage actresses in modern times.

- **Berthe Bénichou-Aboulker (1886-1942)**

An author, poet and playwright born in French Algeria and the first woman to have a literary work published in her country. She attended French schools in Algeria and took a keen interest in music, writing and painting. Bénichou-Aboulker published short stories in a number of Jewish and non-Jewish monthlies and magazines and also wrote plays and poetry books. In many of them, she paid homage to strong and independent women who are not intimidated by the dictates of society.

- **Ruth Bader Ginsburg (b. 1933)**

A New York-born Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. She initially attended Harvard Law School but completed her degree at Columbia Law School where, in 1972, she was the first woman to become a tenured faculty member. Bader Ginsburg was a leader in the struggle for gender equality in the workplace. In 1980, she was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. She was later appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1993. She was the second woman—and the first Jewish woman—ever to serve as a Supreme Court justice.

- **Adina Bar Shalom (b. 1945)**

A social activist, recipient of the Israel Prize and one of the most influential women in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel. A Jerusalem native and the eldest daughter of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Bar Shalom was sent to a vocational high school to become a seamstress, after which she opened a bridal shop. In 2000, she founded the Jerusalem Haredi College, creating a revolution that enabled thousands of ultra-Orthodox women and men to acquire an academic education and integrate into the Israeli job market. Bar Shalom started a forum that promotes a dialog between religious and secular Jews, she has encouraged

ultra-Orthodox men to serve in the Israel Defense Forces, and opposes the exclusion of women.

- **Rosa Ginossar (Ginzberg) (1890-1979)**

The first woman lawyer in Mandatory Palestine and a president of WIZO-Women's International Zionist Organization. Born in Gomel, Russia, she left home at the age of 16 and went to Odessa where she attended a secondary school. She began studying law in Paris in 1908 and after graduating in 1913, she moved to London. Following the establishment of WIZO, Ginossar became the first honorary secretary of the organization. After emigrating to Mandatory Palestine, she fought for the right to work as a practicing attorney and opened her own law firm in Jerusalem in 1931. Two decades later, she was elected chairperson of WIZO and then president of the organization in 1963. She was a strong proponent of the right of women to be elected to public office.

- **Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858-1942)**

The founder of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in the United States and its chairperson and president. She was a proponent of children's rights and supported extending aid to immigrants, and in particular female immigrants. She was instrumental in establishing the first juvenile court in Chicago and was closely affiliated with the Illinois Industrial School for Girls. Solomon served on the board of Associated Jewish Charities, the Chicago Civic Federation, and the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs. She contributed to creating alliances between women from different streams of Judaism.

- **Erica Jong (b. 1942)**

An American author, poet and satirist who became a symbol of the women's liberation movement. In her books, she challenges the prevailing representation of female sexuality. In her sensational novel, *Fear of Flying* (1973), which is regarded as a cultural milestone, Jong wrote about topics that were considered taboo, while employing great candor and humor and describing unbridled female sexuality. In her last book, *Fear of Dying* (2015), she puts the spotlight on the sexuality of older women.

- **Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014)**

A South African-born author, human rights activist and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Booker Prize. Her first story was published when she was 15 years old. In the 1960's and 1970's, Gordimer taught at various universities in the United States. Her novels focus on the effects of apartheid on South Africa and on the strained relations between whites and blacks. Some of her books were banned by the apartheid regime. In 1980, she was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Gisèle Ben-Dor (b. 1955)

American Israeli orchestra conductor. Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, she began playing the piano at age 4 and conducting at 12. After studying music in Israel she traveled to the US and graduated from the Yale School of Music. Made her debut with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, and was Resident Conductor of the Houston Symphony. She is Conductor Emerita of the Boston Pro-Arte Chamber Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra. Ben-Dor led the New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the BBC Orchestra, and many other major international orchestras worldwide, sharing the stage with Leonard Bernstein at the Tanglewood and the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festivals. She champions Latin-American composers, promoting the continent's music in world premiere recordings, performances and festivals.

- **Rahel Goitein Straus (1880-1963)**

A Zionist activist, feminist and one of the founders of AKIM, an organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of children with intellectual disabilities. Born in Germany, she was the first female medical student at the University of Heidelberg and one of the first women physicians in Germany. She earned her doctorate in Munich, where she worked as a gynecologist from 1907 to 1933. Straus emigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1933 and settled in Jerusalem. She continued to work as a physician, in addition to being active in various organizations, including a vocational center for girls, WIZO and the Association of University Women.

- **Yolande Harmer (1913-1959)**

An Egyptian-born journalist, who while working for the *Palestine Post* established contacts in high places in Egypt's leadership. In 1945, she was recruited as a spy by a representative of the Jewish Agency and managed to obtain the military plans of an Arab volunteer army during Israel's War of Independence. Harmer was arrested on suspicion of spying, but was released and moved to Paris. She returned to Egypt in 1949, emigrated to Israel two years later and joined the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- **Naomi R. Wolf (b. 1962)**

A political correspondent, journalist and prominent voice of third-wave feminism. Born in San Francisco, she has authored several bestsellers, including her best-known book *The Beauty Myth*, in which she attacks the exploitation of women by the fashion and cosmetic industries. Wolf maintains that women are at a historical turning point and suggests

replacing victim feminism with power feminism. As a progressive liberal, she was active in the presidential campaigns of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. In *The End of America: Letter of Warning to the Young Patriot*, she warns about the rise of fascism in the United States.

- **Gisèle Halimi (b. 1927)**

- **Regina Jonas (1902-1944)**

A German-born rabbi and academic. She studied at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies) in Berlin and worked as a teacher. Although some male rabbis refused to ordain her, she persisted in her efforts until becoming the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi. Relying on the Old Testament, the Talmud and Jewish law, she demonstrated the Jewish legal justification that a woman can in fact be a rabbi. During the 1930's, Jonas worked as a rabbi and delivered sermons in various communities in Germany. She also found historical precedents in which women ruled on matters of Jewish law. During World War II, she was deported to Auschwitz, where she was murdered.

- **Janet Yellen (b. 1946)**

An American-born economist, the former Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the first woman to ever hold that post. She completed her undergraduate studies at Brown University and earned her PhD in economics from Yale University. In 2004, after serving on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, Yellen was appointed president and chief executive officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. In 2014, she was appointed Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. She has lectured at leading universities in the United States and in other places around the world.

- **Helena Kagan (1889-1978)**

A native of Uzbekistan, a social activist, the first pediatrician in Israel, and one of the heads of WIZO. At the age of 16, she went to Switzerland to study piano and later enrolled in medical school. Upon completion of her medical studies at the age of 21, she went on to specialize in pediatrics. After coming to Ottoman Palestine, Kagan worked as a physician and trained Jewish and Arab nurses. She was head of the pediatrics department at Meir Rothschild Hospital and founded pre- and post- natal clinics as well as the pediatrics department at Bikur Holim Hospital, which she also headed.

- **Estée Lauder (1908-2004)**

A US-born businesswoman and the founder of Estée Lauder Companies. As a young girl, she worked in her family's hardware store selling building materials and tools. She started Estée Lauder Companies in 1946, which became one of the leading manufacturers of cosmetics and beauty products in the world. In 1998, she was the only woman selected for Time magazine's list of the 20 most influential business geniuses of the 20th century. Lauder

received the French government's Insignia of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor and the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom.

- **Wanda Landowska (1879-1959)**

A pianist and harpsichordist who was born in Warsaw in Russian Poland. She began playing piano at the age of four, but later decided to devote herself to Baroque music and the harpsichord, an instrument that few took interest in at the time. In 1933, she was the first to make a harpsichord recording of the Goldberg Variations by Johann Sebastian Bach, which was also the second recording of the work ever made. Landowska wrote books on music theory and established the École de Musique Ancienne at Paris in 1925.

- **Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)**

A US-born poet, author and translator who began writing poetry at the age of 11. She helped Jewish immigrants from Russia acclimate to the United States. Inspired by her work with them, she wrote the sonnet *The New Colossus*, sections of which appear on the Statue of Liberty. Lazarus was a pioneer of American Zionism and advanced the Zionist idea in a number of her writings, including *An Epistle to the Hebrews*.

- **Alice Miller (b. 1972)**

A pilot and aerospace engineer who was born in South Africa and emigrated to Israel at the age of six. She studied civil aviation and aeronautics and asked to participate in a pilot training course of the Israel Defense Forces. After her request was denied, Miller petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court and her petition was granted. In the end, she did not qualify for the course, but her petition paved the way for women to fill positions in the army that they were previously barred from, especially those of a volunteer-combat nature. In 2015, Miller lit a torch at the opening ceremony of Israel's Independence Day.

- **Ruchama Marton (b. 1937)**

A psychotherapist and psychiatrist, feminist, columnist, social activist and peace activist and the founder of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel. A native of Jerusalem, Marton founded Physicians for Human Rights-Israel in 1988, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing medical care to the Palestinian population and to underprivileged communities in Israel's periphery. She also played a key role in establishing community mental health clinics and has published articles dealing with women's rights and human rights violations, in addition to psychological analyses of Israeli society.

- **Ada Maimon (Fishman) (1893-1973)**

A socialist politician and educator, observant Jew, one of the first feminists in Israel and the first woman to represent the Mapai party in the Knesset. Born in Serbia, her roots can be traced back to Maimonides. She came to Ottoman Palestine in 1912 and worked as a teacher in the agricultural colonies. Maimon later established a farm run by women, which under her

leadership became the Ayanot Agricultural School. She was a co-founder of the Women Workers Movement and the Hapoel Hatzair party and a prominent chronicler of the women's labor and feminist movements in Israel's pre-State years.

- **Lilian Helen Montagu (1873-1963)**

A British-born social worker and magistrate in the London juvenile courts. She was raised as an Orthodox Jew and later became a leader of Liberal Judaism in Britain, which was associated with Reform Judaism. She held a leadership position in the West Central Liberal Jewish Congregation and was instrumental in forming the Jewish Religious Union. She also conceived the idea of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and briefly served as its president. Montagu was the first woman to fill that position and the only woman to fill it in the 20th century. She believed that all Jews who have any sense of a religious commitment should foster the religious life of the Jewish community in Britain, regardless of the stream they belong to. In her various writings, she advanced a liberal Jewish worldview.

- **Louise Nevelson (1899-1988)**

A Ukrainian-born sculptor and painter who as a young child emigrated to the United States together with her family. She studied different types of art and had her first solo exhibition in 1941. She was one of the first women to make large-scale sculptures in a period when that art form was perceived as being 'masculine.' Consequently, Nevelson is considered one of the founders of feminist art. However, she never saw herself as an avowed feminist, but rather as an artist who is a woman.

- **Barbra Streisand (b. 1942)**

An American-born singer, author, screenwriter, actress, producer and film director. She is one of the few women to have won all the major awards for multiple categories of performing arts. Streisand was the first woman to write, direct and produce a film in which she also starred—*Yentl*—for which she won the Golden Globe. In 2015, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

- **Gloria Steinem (b. 1934)**

A journalist, political activist and the leading spokeswoman of the American feminist movement in the late 1960's. In 1969, she published a seminal article in *New York magazine*, in which she called for women's liberation and linked feminism with black emancipation in the United States. Steinem co-founded Ms., a liberal feminist magazine, researched American society and wrote about controversial topics, while motivating other feminists to take center stage as well. In 2005, together with Jane Fonda and Robin Morgan, she founded the Women's Media Center, whose aim is to raise the visibility and standing of women in the media. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2013.

- **Henrietta Szold (1860-1945)**

A founder of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, and Youth Aliyah. Born in the United States, she was the first Jewish woman from her community to attend a regular high school and the first woman to take courses at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Conservative movement's rabbinical school. She worked as a teacher for many years and also organized night classes in her home for newly-arrived Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. During the years she lived in Mandatory Palestine, Szold helped to improve the quality of education, healthcare and social services in the country and was also a member of Brit Shalom, an organization dedicated to Jewish-Arab cooperation. She was instrumental in establishing social services agencies and laid the foundations for Israel's welfare state. Mother's Day in Israel (now called Family Day) is celebrated on the anniversary of her death.

- **Anna Freud (1895-1982)**

A psychoanalyst born in Vienna, Austria (which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). She was the daughter of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, and a pioneer of child psychoanalysis. Her groundbreaking research was conducted in London, which she emigrated to before the Second World War. One of the major contributions Freud made to psychoanalysis was the understanding that various defense mechanisms characterize all human beings, and not only those diagnosed as having a mental illness. That insight also led her to redefine the aim of psychoanalytic therapy so it would enable patients to make prudent and conscious use of their defense mechanisms.

- **Flora Sassoon (1859-1936)**

Indian-born businesswoman and philanthropist known for her management of the sprawling Sassoon trading network across India, China and Hong Kong, and England following the death of her husband. The first woman to preside over the Annual Speech Day at Jews' College in London Her maternal great-grandfather was the Iraqi-born David Sassoon, who began the family business trading in opium and cotton. Flora Sassoon spoke seven languages, philanthropically supported the development of a cholera vaccine,. She published articles on history and on Jewish law and customs in a number of periodicals and extended assistance to Jewish immigrants who came to England.

- **Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (1927-2013)**

A German-born author and screenwriter. In 1939, she and her family immigrated to Britain. She moved to India in 1951, where she published a number of novels. She took up residence in the United States in 1975 and was awarded the Booker Prize that same year. In the 1960's, she also wrote screenplays, which earned her two Academy Awards. Jhabvala is the only person to ever win both awards.

- **Melanie Klein (1882-1960)**

A psychoanalyst born in Vienna, Austria (which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). A pioneer of developmental psychology, she posited that children can be psychoanalyzed and that their inner world can be understood through their play. Klein expanded on Freudian theories and underscored the importance of the infant-mother relationship. She also studied the effect of the bond that infants form with their father and mother figures on the relationships they have later in life.

- **Hélène Cazès-Bénatar (1898-1979)**

A lawyer and Zionist activist born in Tangiers, Morocco. She attended the Alliance/KIAH-Kol Israel Haverim elementary school and a high school for girls. After graduating, she went on to study law. She was the president of the KIAH alumni association in Morocco, the founder and first president of the WIZO branch in Casablanca, and a volunteer with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Red Cross in Morocco. During the Second World War, Cazès-Bénatar extended vital aid to both Jewish and non-Jewish refugees and organized the Foreign Refugee Assistance Committee. Following the war, she became a member of the Conseil National du FSJU (United Jewish Social Fund) in France.

- **Ester Rachel Kamińska (1870-1925)**

A stage actress born in the village of Porozow in the Pale of Settlement. After performing in Warsaw, she had leading roles in a traveling theater established by her husband, Avrom Yitskhok Kamiński. The couple eventually settled in Warsaw and opened a theater that put on Yiddish plays. Kamińska also appeared on stages across Europe, won acclaim for her performances, and was known as the mother of Yiddish theater. The Jewish Theatre in Warsaw is named after Kamińska and her daughter Ida.

- **Agnes Keleti (b. 1921)**

A Hungarian-born Olympic gymnast, who at the age of 16 was Hungary's gymnastics champion. She won her first Olympic medal in 1952. In 1956, at the age of 35, she took part in the Melbourne Olympics, where she won four gold medals and two silver medals, making her the oldest gymnast to ever win an Olympic gold medal. In total, Keleti won ten Olympic medals and is considered one of the greatest gymnasts of all time.

- **Malika Kalontarova (b. 1950)**

An ethnic dancer from a Bukharan family in Tajikistan. After studying dance, she devoted her career to the traditional dances of the eastern republics of the Soviet Union. She appeared on stages across Asia and had parts in a number of Indian films. She was named People's Artist of the USSR, becoming the only Tajik woman to ever receive that title. Many believe that Kalontarova created a revolution in the art of ethnic dance. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, she emigrated to the United States, where she opened a dance school.

- **Judith Resnik (1949-1989)**

An American-born astronaut. As a young girl, she excelled in math and earned a PhD in electrical engineering in 1977. During that same period, she worked as a biomedical engineer. In 1978, she was accepted to NASA's training program. She was the second American female astronaut and the first Jewish female astronaut. In 1984, she participated in the Discovery space shuttle mission, in which she operated a robotic arm. In 1986, on her second space mission, she was killed when the Challenger space shuttle exploded after its launch.

- **Helena Rubinstein (1872-1965)**

A cosmetics manufacturer born in Kraków in Austrian-ruled Poland. She immigrated to Australia in 1896, where she began selling cosmetic products to women. A few years later, she started one of the first cosmetics companies in the world. She moved to London and from there to Paris, where she established a financial empire based on her products. In 1928, she sold her American business to Lehman Brothers for $7.3 million. After the start of the Great Depression, she bought back her shares for less than $1 million, providing additional proof of her business acumen.

- **Alma Rosé (1906-1944)**

A violinist and conductor born in Vienna, Austria ((which at the time was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). At the age of 26, she established the women's orchestra Die Wiener Walzermädeln (The Waltzing Girls of Vienna) and toured with them throughout Europe. After Austria was annexed to Germany, she fled to London. However, while in the Netherlands for concerts, the Nazis occupied the country. Rosé tried to escape but was caught and deported to Auschwitz. While in the camp, she led a women's orchestra until her death in April 1944.

- **Irena Szewińska (1946-2018)**

A Russian-born sprinter and Olympic champion who moved to Poland with her family at the age of one. Over a period of nearly two decades, she won numerous Olympic medals and international competitions. Szewińska is the only athlete thus far to have broken world records in the 100-meter, 200-meter and 400-meter events at the same time. She set over 35 records in running and long jump and, in total, won 25 Olympic medals, of which 12 were gold medals.

- **Sarah Schenirer (1883-1935)**

An educator and teacher born in Kraków, Poland. She was raised in a Chassidic family and received a general and Jewish education. She fled to Vienna during the First World War, where she was introduced to the ideas of the Enlightenment and secularization. After returning to Kraków, Schenirer founded the Bais Yaakov school in 1917, which soon became a network of schools and supplementary education for Orthodox girls. Apart from her work in education, she also wrote plays and stories for children and youth.