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AEN FACULTY LEADERS HONORED WITH 2025 SHINE A LIGHT ON ANTISEMITISM CIVIC COURAGE AWARDS
The awards celebrate distinguished AEN faculty members for combating antisemitism and strengthening campus communities

WASHINGTON, DC (January 6, 2026) – The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) today announced that three of its distinguished faculty leaders – Dr. Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr, Dr. Amy K. Milligan, and Dr. Miri Bar-Halpern – have been named winners of the [2025 Shine A Light on Antisemitism Civic Courage Awards](#), an annual recognition spotlighting individuals who've demonstrated exceptional courage in standing up to antisemitism.

“At AEN, we are proud to celebrate these three extraordinary faculty members whose scholarship, creativity, and moral courage are lighting the way for campuses across the country,” **said Miriam Elman, Executive Director of AEN.** “Drs. Martin-Kerr, Milligan, and Bar-Halpern exemplify how faculty leadership can strengthen Jewish life, confront antisemitism, and promote open, inclusive discourse in higher education. Their work embodies AEN’s mission, and we are honored to support and uplift their efforts as they create lasting impact on their campuses and beyond.”

The 2025 Shine A Light on Antisemitism Civic Courage Award, presented by The Jewish Education Project, honors individuals who take action against antisemitism and towards countering hate across nine categories, including Middle School Educators, High School Educators, High School Students, University Students, Influencers, Gamers, University Administrators, Campus Jewish Professionals, and Community Upstanders. Award recipients will have made a thoughtful and lasting impact in their communities, regardless of size.

Each of this year’s AEN-affiliated honorees has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to strengthening Jewish life on campus and in their local communities – advancing AEN’s mission to support faculty in combating antisemitism, promoting academic freedom, and elevating high-quality education about Jewish history and Israel.

Dr. Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr, a professor in the University of Minnesota School of Education, is transforming teacher preparation by enhancing Jewish inclusion and addressing antisemitism. After attending The George Washington University Fellowship and Summer Institute on Antisemitism and Jewish-Inclusion in Educational Settings, a program seed-funded through a three-year AEN Antisemitism Education Initiative grant, Dr. Martin-Kerr recognized the need to tackle the quiet complicity surrounding antisemitism. With support from an AEN microgrant, she revamped her course materials to include comprehensive education on antisemitism and Jewish identity, established a faculty/student talk series, and presented her work at professional academic association conferences. Beyond the classroom, she mentors new educators, sharing insights on the importance of allyship. Dr. Martin-Kerr's upcoming co-authored publication, "Evaluating Jewish Children's Literature: A Toolkit for Elementary Educators," will equip teachers with practical resources to integrate Jewish narratives and combat antisemitism. Her work reflects a resolute commitment to combating hate and bigotry and promoting inclusivity in educational settings.

Dr. Amy Milligan, a leading Jewish scholar and community builder at Old Dominion University (ODU), holds the Batten Endowed Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and Women's Studies, directs both the Institute for Jewish Studies and Interfaith Understanding and ODU Hillel, and founded the campus Jewish Caucus. She currently serves as the Chair of AEN's Section for Faculty Members in Jewish and Israel Studies. Despite facing antisemitic incidents, social media harassment, and professional marginalization, she continues to advocate for Jewish and other students and speak out forcefully against antisemitism and anti-Israel bias. Dr. Milligan translates her academic work, including seminal studies about Jews of the American South, into meaningful community engagement through initiatives like "The Nosh: Taking a Bite Out of Hard Conversations," interfaith collaborations with Regent University, and specialized training with Resetting the Table and the FBI Citizens Academy. Her AEN-supported "Am Yisrael CHAI Café" provides a vital refuge and point of connection for Jewish students, reflecting her unwavering commitment to fostering dialogue and inclusion on campus and within the broader academic community.

Dr. Miri Bar-Halpern is the Director of Trauma Training and Services at Parents for Peace and an AEN Faculty Fellow. Following the October 7th Hamas attack, she founded the Israeli Immigrant Support Network in Massachusetts, which provides essential clinical support, educational resources, and community services to Israeli immigrants and the broader Jewish community. Her commitment also reaches into the legislative arena, where Dr. Bar-Halpern testified before the Massachusetts State House to help shape recommendations to support Jewish K-12 students. She develops training programs for schools, universities, hospitals, and law enforcement, equipping leaders to recognize antisemitism as a mental health concern and a precursor to radicalization. In addition, Dr. Bar-Halpern co-hosts an AEN-supported podcast, *Our Stories Matter*. Her work continues to make impactful strides in fostering understanding and support across diverse faith communities.

AEN engages, educates, and empowers its faculty members on nearly 350 U.S. campuses to combat antisemitism, promote academic freedom, and advance education about Israel. Its

[Faculty Against Antisemitism Movement](#) (FAAM), launched after October 7th, has galvanized AEN faculty members, as well as other academics who choose to get involved, to stand against antisemitism, the denigration of Jewish identity, and anti-Israel bias on their campuses and to collectively urge university leaders to take appropriate action. More than 40 faculty resource groups on campuses nationwide are now being supported and networked through FAAM and 25,000 professors across the country have become active in FAAM over the last year.

AEN faculty members at UPenn, UCLA, Yale, Harvard, Stanford, Dartmouth, UC Berkeley, the University of Cincinnati, and MIT have also organized faculty solidarity and educational missions to Israel. By networking faculty and sharing materials and best practices, AEN hopes to empower many more of these faculty resource groups and missions to form across the country.

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AEN is a national organization that mobilizes networks of university faculty and administrators to counter antisemitism, oppose the denigration of Jewish and Zionist identities, promote academic freedom, and advance education about Israel. More at <https://academicengagement.org/> and <https://www.facultyagainstantisemitism.org/>.