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**MS-920: Sy Syms Papers, 1944-2012.**

Series A: Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1949-2012, undated.

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Yeshiva University, 1986-1990, undated.

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# Metropolitan Diary

Ron Alexander

## DEAR Diary:

As an accounting senior in Yeshiva University's Sy Syms School of Business, I was well aware that interviewing for a job in the midst of depressions and/or recessions meant that I had a few tough months ahead of me. Still, I never imagined that things could get as degrading as they did one afternoon a few weeks ago.

After an interview with one of the Big Six accounting firms I boarded an A train for the return trip downtown. I had on my navy blue power suit, my Avia power sneakers and my Clinique power lipstick.

Twenty minutes into the ride a man sitting across from me — the one with a Polaroid camera around his neck — began snapping pictures of me. When I awoke that morning I was prepared to deal with the effects of cyclical industries on the firm; I was not prepared to deal with the effects of liquor on a man with a Polaroid. But wait: the most degrading moment was still to come. At the Columbus Circle stop I saw my photographer actually selling a picture of me to another passenger for \$2.

I know now that if things don't work out with accounting I can always go into modeling.

BATSHEVA E. SEIF

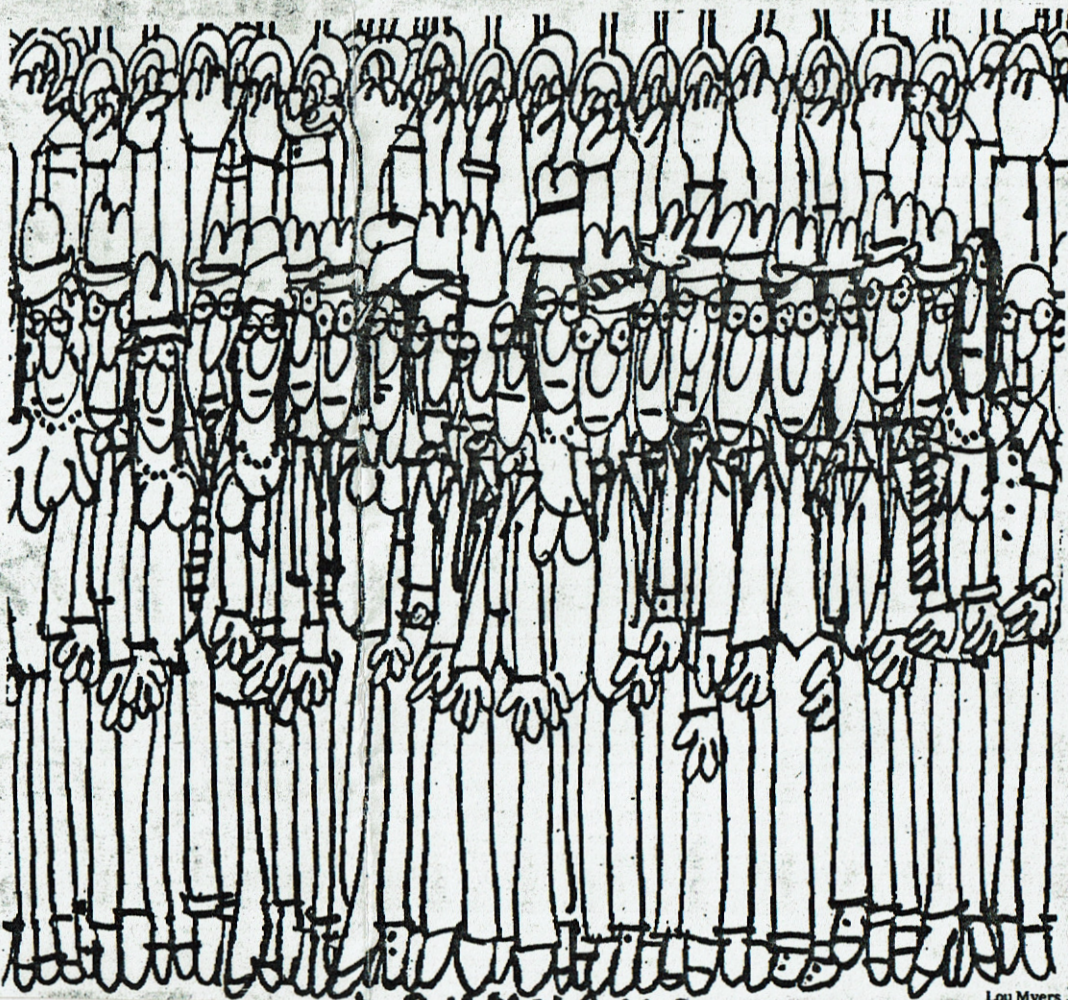
## Dear Diary:

I understand the MTA has been instructing subway conductors to announce any train delays. The other day I had a prime example of that courtesy.

The Brooklyn-bound Seventh Avenue IRT was stopped, doors open, at Wall Street for a short while when an announcement came over the public address system: "Will the people standing at the front of the station please move back so that we can see the signal... especially the guy in the blue shirt picking his nose."

MILTON KAPLAN

## Sketchbook

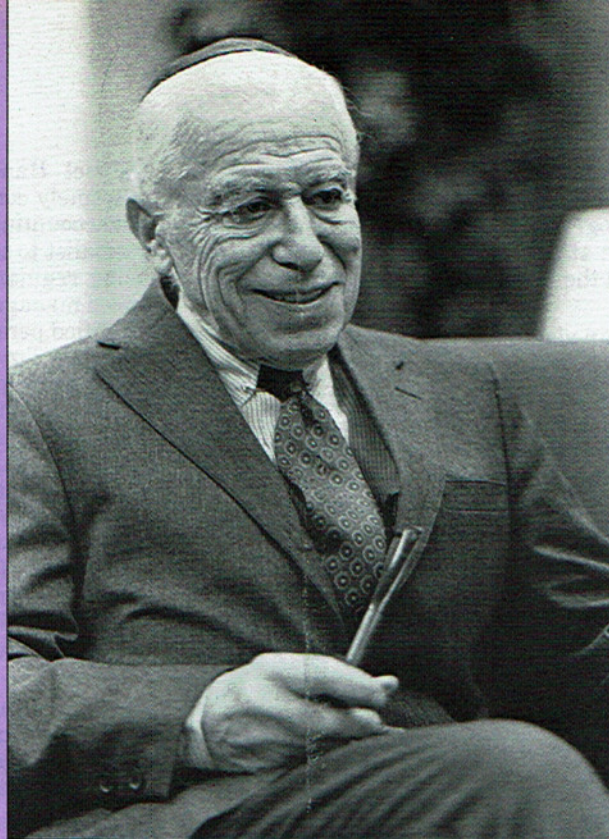


WEDNESDAY NIGHT

The night ahrrunt nushes past the day

Lou Myers

## FOCUS ON SSSB:



# An Interview with Dean Michael Schiff

"I think we've begun  
to attract a higher quality  
student because of the  
more demanding and  
challenging curriculum."

**T**he Sy Syms School of Business, established in 1987, is the youngest member of the University family. *Alumni Review* asked Dean Michael Schiff for his perspective on the School's development to date.

*Dr. Michael Schiff was named founding dean of the Sy Syms School of Business in 1987, following an extensive career as an accountant and educator. He had been associated with NYU's Graduate School of Business for nearly 40 years, serving as the Vincent C. Ross Professor of Accounting Research and Director of the Ross Institute of Accounting, as well as chairman of the Accounting Department at NYU's Graduate School of Business.*

*Dr. Schiff received his B.B.A. and M.B.A. from City College, and a Ph.D. in economics from NYU. He has been a Certified Public Accountant in New York State since 1939. For eight years he was a member of the New York State Board for Public Accounting and served as chairman of the Board's Education Committee.*

*His distinguished career has included visiting lectureships at Harvard, Columbia, Northwestern,*

*and Pennsylvania State universities, and at the University of Tel Aviv. He has been a consultant to major corporations including U.S. Steel, Union Carbide, and General Electric.*

*Actively involved in writing and research, Dr. Schiff has authored (or co-authored) numerous books. He also has written nearly 100 articles for technical and professional journals.*

**As founding dean of the School of Business, you left a well-established and accomplished career at NYU to accept the deanship of this newly formed school. What attracted you to take on this rather formidable task?**

After reviewing the program at YU, and knowing about the other undergraduate schools in the greater New York area, I knew what the environment was and that there was room for a high quality undergraduate school of business. And that aroused my interest—the ability to start from scratch and build something. I had done similar things at NYU, such as developing and operating the Ross Institute of Accounting Research—the Master of Science in Accounting Program, and here was a chance to do it once again. I was

*continued*

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friendly."

attracted by an environment that would enhance the development of a very unique undergraduate business program, and the challenge of offering the program at two locations—at the Main Center for men and the Midtown Campus for women.

### What is your vision for the School?

I've set a goal of making this the best undergraduate school of business in the New York area within five years. I think it has the potential. It has a first-rate student body. It is the only program in the country which, on top of the regular business curriculum, has a required Jewish studies segment. That's what makes it special, but is also a complication which increases the challenge.



*The "Big Eight" Forum is among the many popular SSSB placement activities that promote contact between students and professionals from the business community.*

### How far has the School of Business come towards achieving that goal? What remains to be accomplished?

When I recall starting here, I remember coming into this office and all it had was some old furniture. The only equipment I found was one paper clip on my desk. So it really was starting from ground zero. There was an existing accounting program in place, along with some other business courses in the Economics Department, but there were no defined programs in other business disciplines. In one year we've instituted brand new curricula in four major areas: accounting, finance, management information systems, and marketing. We have made major changes in the faculty and continue to hire, focusing on full-time people who are excellent teachers and very good researchers, who also have contacts with the business community—the three components necessary for first-rate faculty. I think we've begun to attract a higher quality student because of the more demanding and challenging curriculum. The courses are analytical and all involve the use of computers, so it is a very modern curriculum.

### How will the new faculty members contribute to the growth of the School?

We are building a faculty with some very competent people. This year we hired Dr. Ken Grossberg, an experienced businessman who speaks Japanese fluently. He lived and worked in Japan for Citibank. He'll bring a certain flavor to his teaching of marketing and management. We also have a visiting professor from Tel Aviv, Dr.

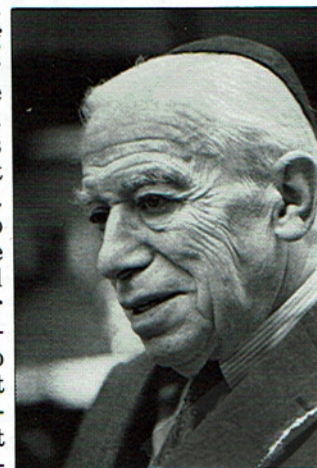
Gabriel Handler, as professor of statistics, an extremely competent teacher and researcher. For the accounting program, I brought in a superb tax specialist to teach taxation. In addition, instead of using regular faculty people, we have an experienced manager from Peat Marwick and a similarly qualified person from Coopers & Lybrand teaching auditing. I'm also extremely proud of the fact that in the Spring we shall have the first Ira and Doris Kukin Distinguished Visiting Professor, Franco Modigliani, who is a Nobel Laureate in economics. It's a real coup to have a Nobel Laureate interested in coming to teach at an undergraduate school. It's the kind of exposure that I plan for our students.

Last year we added three full-time members to the faculty—Dr. Joshua Honigwachs, associate professor of business law; Dr. Joshua Krausz, associate professor of finance; and Dr. Rudolf Frisch, professor of management information systems.

### How does the type of education offered at the School of Business fit into the overall philosophy of education at YU and meet the changing demands of the business world?

The model for the undergraduate business degree at YU has three segments. First, a program in Jewish studies identical to the regular required program for YC and SCW students. Second, a series of liberal arts courses making up one-half the total of 128 credits, and the other half of the program composed of business courses. The mix of liberal arts and business courses is in accordance with programs at the better undergraduate schools of business. In fact, the uniqueness of the program—a combination of Jewish studies, traditional liberal arts, and business courses—was one of the major attractions that brought me here. Trying to pull it all off and do it well is indeed a major challenge and I am convinced that it is achievable. The fact is that it is currently in place and functioning.

The program was designed so that the advanced courses are taken in the senior year. Students coming here register first as freshmen at either Yeshiva or Stern College, and at the end of the freshman year they elect to join the School of Business. All the liberal arts courses are taken at the liberal arts school. In their first two years they all take the same required courses, whatever their major. So although they opt to come to Sy Syms at the end of their freshman year, they do not have to pick a specialty until the end of their sophomore year. By then they've been exposed to some of the courses and have a feel for what the alternatives are. They begin to take courses in their major in the junior year, but the bulk of specialized courses are taken in the senior year. This structure is by design. It has advantages to the students in that as they progress, they are offered more options—they're not commit-



ted until they're juniors and by then they should know where they're going.

Business is far more internationalized now than it ever was. As a result we've incorporated courses in international business, international finance, and international marketing as part of the requirements for the degree. The focus is on analytical rather than descriptive courses.

### What are the most popular programs?

As of the moment the most popular is accounting. But there's substantial increased interest in marketing, finance, and management information systems. We have full-blown programs in those areas now, which we did not have before.

### Outside of the classroom, what activities are students involved in?

Activities fall into two categories: those related to employment, and those related to enhancement of a feeling of "belonging" to the Sy Syms School of Business. Each year we offer a series of Dean's Forums, where invited speakers address the student body. Last year we had Philip Chenok, President of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and Sy Syms, the distinguished business executive for whom the school is named. This year we will have four forums. Dr. Grossberg will speak at one and Dr. Modigliani will speak at another. We will have two others for which speakers will be designated.

Two student organizations, the Accounting Society and the Business Society, provide a range of social activities and technical meetings. This is in addition to a Student Council/Association for the School. So, we have the elements in place to build a student identity within the School.

Also, since it's not a large school, the atmosphere is very informal and friendly. Students come to the Dean's office without an appointment. They frequently come by to see me or [Assistant Dean] Ira Jaskoll. We intend to maintain this informal, friendly environment; a luxury possible only at a relatively small school.

### Last June's first graduating class was fully placed in jobs after graduation, many with prestigious firms. To what do you attribute their success?

Most were placed with distinguished "Big Eight" accounting firms—something like 28 out of 40. I visited a number of major accounting firms and others during the Summer of 1987 to get a feel for their view of YU graduates, and it was very impressive. In fact, in one firm I got the feeling I was talking to a representative of our public relations department! They were very, very complimentary about the nature of our student body—they are bright [students] and they are highly motivated.

### How have recruiters responded to the program?

Quite positively. Assistant Dean Ira Jaskoll manages the placement program and he has done an outstanding job in attracting new firms.

We not only place Sy Syms graduates, but also Yeshiva College and Stern College students, and



Assistant Dean Ira Jaskoll in conference with a student.

have even placed some alumni, who were interested in making changes.

### You use the word "unique" quite often when discussing the School and your plans for its development. What distinguishes it from other undergraduate business schools?

It is a unique program because nowhere else in the country do you have a required module of Jewish studies as part of the program at a business school. Looking at it another way, one can consider Jewish studies as part of the liberal arts segment of the program and as a result our students are getting a much heavier emphasis of liberal arts courses than at any other business school. Educators and the business community keep repeating that the weakness of most business programs is inadequacy of liberal arts preparation. This is the important product differentiation offered at SSSB. The Jewish studies programs train students in analytical skills, ethics, and disciplined thinking; training that is so important to professional growth. Without the Jewish studies component, you would have just another business school and why another one? Were it not for this uniqueness of the SSSB program, I doubt I would have been attracted to YU.

### Your School has been part of the YU community for one year now. In looking back, has that first year gone according to expectations?

The beginning of any new enterprise brings with it some frustration, and we have had our share. But I think we have taken some giant steps forward. Having been through the process before, elsewhere, I am extremely pleased with where we are now. Essentially the great challenge for next year is completing the staffing. All else is in place and operating. And it's all been possible because of a major, successful fundraising campaign to acquire the resources necessary to achieve excellence.

### Which is where the Board of Directors becomes involved. What role has it played in facilitating the School's growth?

Besides ensuring its financial viability, the board members have been extremely involved in seeing that word gets around about the existence of the School and its many activities. [Board] meetings are well attended and there is tremendous interest in the School's development.

We have come a long way in one year. It has been gratifying and I have had some fun. ■

"I've set a goal of making this the best undergraduate school of business in the New York area within five years. I think it has the potential. It has a first-rate student body."

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# STUDENT LIFE / ON CAMPUS

## First Burns Scholars Named at SSSB

Jacob Burns Merit Scholarships, established through a new gift from the chairman of Cardozo School of Law's (CSL) Board of Directors, provide financial assistance to outstanding Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) students. The first annual grants of \$5,000 each have been awarded to three juniors at the School—Evan Bart of Silver Spring, Md., Gad Dishy of Brooklyn, and Sheryl Strauch of Miami Beach—announced Dr. Michael Schiff, SSSB dean.

The Scholars Program will make annual awards to undergraduates based on high academic achievement, community leadership, and a commitment to combine a major in business with Judaic studies. The awards can be renewed up to \$20,000 if recipients maintain standards of academic excellence. The Program was established by the Jacob Burns Foundation as a tribute to Mr. Burns, who is also an SSSB Director and YU Trustee. Jacob Burns scholarships are also awarded to students at CSL, which now includes the Jacob Burns Institute for Advanced Legal Studies.

## Berg Scholarship Winners Chosen

Two first-year CSL students have been awarded David Berg and Family Scholarships, Prof. Monroe E. Price, CSL dean, announced. The scholarships, which carry grants of \$12,000 (\$4,000 per year), are given to two outstanding pre-law students from undergraduate divisions of YU, who enter CSL. Ariella Schreiber of Staten Island, a 1988 graduate of Stern College for Women (SCW) and of Tonya Soloveitchik YU High School for Girls, and Gerald Zeitchik of Brooklyn, a 1988 Yeshiva College (YC) graduate, were this year's recipients.

## More Specifically...

Scientific research conducted by YC and SCW students and faculty is the focus of *Abstracts '88*, a publication of Sigma Delta Rho, the Honors Science Research Society. Marc Sheiner, a YC senior from West Hempstead, N.Y., is the journal's editor-in-chief; Dr. Carl Feit, Dr. Joseph and Rachel Ades Professor of Pre-Health Sciences, is faculty advisor to Sigma Delta Rho.

## Holocaust Seminar Yields Publication

The publication by YU's Holocaust Studies Program of a working paper, "The Polish *Kehile* Elections of 1936: A Revolution Re-Examined," by Dr. Robert Moses Shapiro, is the first product of the Institute on Research and Teaching of the Holocaust, led at YU by Dr. Lucjan Dobroszycki, Eli and Diana Zborowski Professor of Holocaust Studies. Sponsored by the Zborowski Chair, the Institute has to date comprised intensive two-week seminars in the Summers of 1986 and 1987. Dr. Shapiro, assistant professor of history and Yiddish at the Baltimore Hebrew University, was one of some 20 scholars who took part in last year's Institute. The Holocaust Studies Program is directed by Dr. Jeffrey S. Gurock, academic assistant to Pres. Lamm and Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History. The Program's activities

include the recent publication of *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland During the Holocaust*; it plans to publish works of others who participated in the program.

## Training Jewish Leaders for Europe

In an effort to ease the shortage of trained professional leaders for the European Jewish community, the Doron Foundation for Education and Welfare in Tel Aviv is financing a leadership training program at YU with a seed grant of \$120,000.

"There is a severe shortage of trained people—both professional and lay leaders—in the European Jewish community prepared to take the reins," Pres. Lamm said. "If something is not done today, the European Jewish community will have no leadership tomorrow. We have a chance to seize the future and prepare a generation of rabbis, teachers, organization heads. This grant from the Doron Foundation is a major step in correcting this dilemma."

Pres. Lamm also noted that YU will reach out to communities in Europe and in South America. Young people of high school and college age, and those in Semikhah programs, will be accepted into the program. Beginning in the 1989-90 academic year with \$15,000 scholarships to two students, the program is expected to expand in subsequent years.

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## Remembrance

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, YU offered two memorial programs featuring presentations by Rabbi Manfred Fulda '52Y.B.R., associate professor of Talmud, and Rabbi Shlomo Kahn '52R, rabbi of Cong. Beth Hillel and Beth Israel, NYC, both of whom were eyewitnesses to the infamous night of Nazi terror in Germany. Rabbi Fulda, who was featured in the nationally-broadcast public television documentary program, "More Than Broken Glass," and whose recollections and reflections will be included in David A. Adler's *We Remember the Holocaust* (Henry Holt & Co.), spoke at the Midtown Center's Koch Auditorium. Rabbi Kahn addressed a gathering at the Main Center's Lamport Auditorium.



*Dr. Michael Schiff, left, founding Dean of Yeshiva University's new Sy Syms School of Business, meets with Mr. Syms, Chairman of the Board of Syms Corp. and Member of the University's Board of Trustees. A resident of Teaneck, NJ, Dr. Schiff is a former professor at the Graduate School of Business of New York University. The Sy Syms School of Business was established at Yeshiva University in response to growing student interest in finance, management, and economics.*



## For retailer Sy Syms, Yeshiva's new school of business is his best reward

By ANDREA LUCAS

IT MAY SEEM like a big step from selling "educated consumers" to educating the business leaders of tomorrow, but for businessman Sy Syms, the move is a natural progression. Syms, known as much for his distinctive radio and TV spots as for the chain of clothing stores they advertise, is the namesake of Yeshiva University's brand-new School of Business, an honor he sees as one of the "greatest accomplishments" of his life.

Opening in September of 1987 with an expected enrollment of some 400 undergraduates, the Sy Syms School of Business will initially offer courses leading to a bachelor of science degree with specializations in accounting, banking, finance, securities and information systems. Corporate management and administration and marketing and merchandising—Syms' own

areas of expertise—will be added as majors in the next few years. Somewhere down the road are plans for graduate programs.

Syms' involvement with Yeshiva began, he recalls, about four years ago. "When I first became associated with Yeshiva I was surprised and shocked that there was no school of business. Especially since many Jews were forced into entrepreneurialism when they came to this country, it seemed like such a natural thing. From that first day, when I felt 'My God, how come it's not there?' until now, some four years later, this has been very special to me and to other lay leaders at the university.

Eighteen business leaders, including Syms, have been named founders of the School of Business. Among them, they have contributed and raised more than \$12 million so far, and academic chairs have been endowed in accounting, banking and finance, business

law and economics.

Why another school of business in what many see as an already crowded field? Increasing student demand is the bottom line, Syms says. Until now, the university's primary emphasis had been in the sciences. Economics courses were available, but only in a minor way. Introduction of an accounting major six years ago proved very popular and many of Yeshiva's students have been asking for an expanded business curriculum. A number of prospective students who liked Yeshiva eventually went elsewhere because of the lack of a business school.

There's also a feeling that the time is right in the business world, Syms notes, for Yeshiva's special synthesis of ethical values and academic excellence. Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year as the only university in North America under Jewish auspices, Yeshiva has traditionally integrated

*Continued on page 23*



Sy Syms' latest project is the business school named for him at Yeshiva University.

# Sy Syms endows Yeshiva school

*Continued from page 10*

Jewish philosophical and cultural studies into its general curricula. Combined with its well-known level of academic achievement, "We feel strongly that in 10 years we will be graduating future corporation heads," says Syms.

Ironically, Syms himself did not go to business school. He majored in radio broadcasting and production and worked for a short time as a play-by-play sportscaster. "I probably would have been that much better off if I'd had an education in business management," Syms reflects. "Certainly it's still possible to make it in business without the formal background, but there's no question that the sort of foundation that the school will provide is vitally important." As proof that nothing is wasted, however, Syms wound up using his own broadcast background many years later to star in his own ads.

Sounding like a proud papa, Syms insists, "There is a difference between Yeshiva and other schools: The students here are incredibly dedicated and motivated. When they go in for a curriculum they really mean business and treat it as if they were working. Out of 29

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## Syms makes frequent visits to the campus to meet with students

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accounting majors who graduated last June—and the school has only been graduating accounting majors for six years—22 were immediately hired by the Big Eight of Accounting firms."

Syms' excitement about the student body is reflected in his degree of involvement with the school. Along with serving as chairman of the Board of Trustees' Development Committee, he's a major contributor to the university in general and the new program in particular.

Syms is not limiting his role to fundraising however. He has made frequent visits to the campus, meeting with students and guest-lecturing on marketing, and has recruited a number of business-community leaders as lecturers.

Herbert Schiff, former dean of the New York University School of Business has been named dean of the Syms School. "We're very happy with that appointment, and feel he will be able to expand on an excellent faculty," says Syms.

Along with what Syms characterizes as outstanding theoreticians as faculty, equal emphasis will be placed on practical expertise. The extensive use of computer technology and applications will be integral to the school's program, as will research and development. Through study of ethical, social and political influences, as well as organization theory, behavior and interpersonal communication, the program will also focus on linkages between the individual businessperson and the larger community.

The school, which has been approved by the State of New York, will be located on the university's main campus at Amsterdam Ave. and 185th St. in Washington Heights.

# Yeshiva U. to Open School of Business in Fall

Yeshiva University, responding to growing student interest in finance, marketing and economics, will open an undergraduate school of business next fall.

The new school — to be named the Syms School of Business — was made possible by \$12 million in gifts from Mr. Syms, the clothing retailer, and other business executives. The university is seeking to raise a total of \$20 million for the new school, according to the university's president, Dr. Norman Lamm.

Mr. Syms is chairman and chief operating officer of the Syms Corporation, which includes a chain of retail

clothing stores in the eastern United States.

"An increasing number of our students want a professionally oriented business education," Dr. Lamm said. "We are opening the new school to meet student needs."

## Bachelor of Science Degree

The new school will be formally announced at Yeshiva's Centennial Hanukkah Dinner next Sunday at the Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Under the new program, students at Yeshiva College — the university's undergraduate liberal arts school for men in Washington Heights — and the

Stern College for Women in midtown Manhattan will be able to choose from a number of courses of study, including accounting, information systems, finance, management and marketing.

Graduates of the school — which has headquarters at the university's Belfer Hall, 2495 Amsterdam Avenue at 184th Street — will earn a Bachelor of Science degree. Academic screening committees are interviewing candidates for dean.

The announcement of the school comes as the university completes a six-year effort to raise \$100 million in its Century Campaign, begun in 1979, when the institution was in financial

distress.

While the university has graduate schools in medicine, law, social work, psychology and Jewish studies, officials cited "new areas of interest" among Yeshiva's 1,700 undergraduates in business, economics, accounting and computers, which prompted the founding of the new school.

"An innovative component will be the integration of modern information systems into the curriculum," Dr. Egon Brenner, executive vice president, said. "Wherever appropriate, computers and the subject matter will be interwoven."

More than a quarter of last year's graduating students were accounting, economics and computer science majors, according to the office of the registrar.

"Our business and computer classes are filled to capacity," Dr. Brenner said. "The business school is a viable framework for offering students a concentration of courses in these areas."

Four chairs in excess of \$3.5 million have been endowed, and 18 individuals have each contributed a minimum of \$100,000 in founding the project, David H. Zysman, vice president for development, said.

Speakers at the dinner will include the retiring House Speaker, Thomas P. O'Neill, Democrat of Massachusetts, and the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Paul A. Volcker, who will be presented with an honorary degree at a convocation before the dinner.

**REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!**