

PRESS RELEASE – 12/27/06

**FRUMKIN AND RICHTER HONORED BY COHON MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION**

The Rabbi Samuel S. and A. Irma Cohon Memorial Foundation has named Glenn Richter of New York City, and Simon Frumkin of Studio City, California as co-recipients of the 2006 Cohon Award for achievement benefiting Klal Yisroel, the total Jewish people.

These two men, working independently at opposite ends of the country, were leaders in the Soviet Jewry movement which rescued Jews from oppression, imprisonment and mortal danger at the hands of the Soviet government. Their activism helped alert the free world to the plight of individual Refuseniks and the Jewish population as a whole. Their efforts helped pass the Jackson-Vanik amendment which brought the trade policy of the United States to bear on the issue and facilitated opening doors of the Soviet Union for those who desperately needed to escape. More than a million beneficiaries of their dedication now live in freedom in Israel and the United States.

Glenn Richter created and led the Student Struggle for Soviet Jews. With a tiny budget, Glenn dedicated his life to the cause, most of the time with no pay. Organizing demonstrations, meeting with political figures, pushing Jewish federations to speak up about the issue absorbed Richter for a quarter century. He and his organization put American Jews in touch with Refuseniks, sparked the bar/bat mitzvah twinning program and mounted a campaign on behalf of Natan Sharansky and other imprisoned Refuseniks, the Prisoners of Zion. Only when the urgent goal of rescue was largely achieved did he “put the organization in cold storage,” he said. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, he turned to education efforts for Jews in the former USSR, and those needing help in the

United States and Israel. He is now working with Rabbi Avi Weiss and others to defend Jewish identity even in places like Auschwitz.. His is truly *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrificing idealism.

Simon “Si” Frumkin, born in the Soviet Union, survived Dachau, where he lost his father just days before the American Army liberated the camp. A teenage refugee, he went to South America, then the United States where he built a business, raised a family in Southern California, but never forgot his people or roots. When he saw the opportunity to help Soviet Jewry he burned a Russian flag on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall, and organized and led the Southern California Council for Soviet Jewry. Fluent in Russian, he was a strong force in the campaign to contact and encourage Refuseniks while energizing American Jews to their cause. His Candlelight Walks for Soviet Jewry and other public demonstrations brought young California Jews flocking to join him. The success shamed Federations into taking real action on the cause. Like Richter, Frumkin wrapped up his rescue activity when he felt the time had come. He too continues to champion Jewish causes with his current newsletter “Grafitti For Intellectuals”, his columns in various publications, his website www.sifrumkin.com, and holds a public Seder and other events for Russian Jews of Los Angeles, filling a vital role as unofficial leader and spokesman.

Rabbi Samuel M. Cohon, president of the Cohon Memorial Foundation, said, “Rescue begins with saving lives. It must continue with the process of saving and strengthening spirits. My grandparents in whose memory this award is dedicated knew this and acted on it. The men we honor this year achieved great results in the field of rescue. They set a fine example which we hope will inspire others.” Further information on the Cohon Memorial Foundation is available on the website www.cohonaward.com.