

# AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Contact: Caroline Rossy  
Membership & Public Relations Coordinator  
Tel: 215-389-1776, Fax: 215-389-7701  
Email: [crossy@americanswedish.org](mailto:crossy@americanswedish.org)



-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

## ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ASHER NAIM TO RECEIVE WALLENBERG HUMANITARIAN AWARD AT AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM EVENT

**The American Swedish Historical Museum will present the Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award to Israeli Ambassador Asher Naim on Saturday, October 24, 2009 at a reception in his honor held at the museum in Philadelphia.** The award is presented to an individual, individuals or organization who has demonstrated a commitment to humanitarianism through acts which achieve a significant contribution to alleviate human suffering or injustice, involved sacrifices or risks and are performed without expectation of reward or recognition. **The award presentation and reception begin at 7 pm, for further information, or to register for the event please contact the American Swedish Historical Museum at 215-389-1776.**



Asher Naim, while serving as Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia in 1991, helped realize Operation Solomon, the daring rescue of thousands of Beta Israel (the indigenous Jews of Ethiopia) from persecution during that country's civil war. The Beta Israel were trapped between the rebel and government forces and in danger of slaughter unless they could be snatched from the violence overwhelming their country. Ambassador Naim played a crucial role in negotiating the airlift of over 14,000 immigrants from Addis Ababa to Jerusalem, utilizing 35 planes over the course of 25 hours.

Following the Operation, Ambassador Naim received "the Most Distinguished Civil Servant Award" for the year 1991 from the President and Prime Minister of Israel. He continues his humanitarian work today through a non-profit organization which provides educational opportunities for Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

Born in Libya, Asher Naim immigrated to Palestine with his family in 1944 and subsequently fought in the war for Israeli independence. He worked in Israel's Foreign Ministry from 1956 to 1999, during which he was the Israeli Consul General in Philadelphia from 1976 to 1981. Over the course of his career, Ambassador Naim's work often reflected his interest in helping his fellow man and helping people better their lives. The American Swedish Historical Museum is proud to present the Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award to Ambassador Naim.

This year the Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Award Presentation and Reception is planned as part of a 4-day celebration of Swedish America co-hosted by the Swedish Colonial Society and the Swedish Council of America, including a Sunday luncheon at the Union League and Scandinavian concert given

by the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia at Perelman Theater. The full program of events is available at <http://www.swedishcouncil.org/conference.aspx>

The Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award is dedicated to the memory of the courageous Swedish diplomat who worked to save thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Second World War. A businessman given diplomatic status by the Swedish government, Wallenberg was sent to Budapest in the middle of the Hungarian Holocaust to contribute to Sweden's on-going efforts to protect Jews there. He provided tremendous energy to the battle to save Jews, and used his diplomatic status with great bravery, imagination, and a profound sense of humanitarianism. His efforts, which took place in coordination with other neutral diplomats, directly saved the lives of many, and contributed to the survival of tens of thousands of Jews. By all accounts, he provided hope to those who knew of his efforts, and his deeds and memory are honored and commemorated around the world. Tragically, despite his great success in saving thousands of others, Wallenberg himself was arrested and imprisoned by Russian forces in 1945 and he never returned to Sweden.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in scenic Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia near the Sports Complex. More information about the museum, its exhibitions and programs, is available at [www.americanswedish.org](http://www.americanswedish.org)

###