



## National Muslim Jewish Advisory Council Launches Louisville Affiliate

December 8, 2019 – Louisville – The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council (MJAC), a national coalition, convened today at the Muhammed Ali Center to launch the Louisville MJAC.

“We are honored to be the home for the newest regional Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. This work has never been more important. People of good faith have to stand together and speak out,” said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. “We have been working in our community to create social muscle. It is essential to the health of our city, and from time to time it will be called upon to respond to acts of hatred. When you don’t respond to hate it gets stronger.”

MJAC is a civil society coalition co-convened by American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) in 2016. The national MJAC brings together 46 civil society, religious, and business leaders from across the U.S. to advocate for domestic policy issues of common concern. MJAC stands at the forefront of confronting hatred against religious minorities and through its advocacy has made strides stemming the rise in hate.

“It’s appropriate that the launch of the Louisville MJAC takes place at the Muhammad Ali center. Ali had the courage to dream and the confidence to turn dreams into reality,” said Dr. Ari Gordon, AJC’s U.S. Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations. “The national Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council is not an interfaith endeavor. It is Muslims and Jews coming together to better this country for all. Ali’s values of defiance, persistence and, above all, heart are key ingredients for our success.”

Louisville is the 11<sup>th</sup> regional MJAC. The other ten, in Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., represent a network of hundreds of Muslim and Jewish leaders committed to working together for the good of both communities and the country.

“I can’t think of a better place to have the 11<sup>th</sup> MJAC chapter. Louisville is a beacon of hope and inspiration to the rest of the world,” said Lonnie Ali, widow of Muhammed Ali, and honorary chair of the Louisville MJAC. “I look forward to being an active member of the Council. This is the work my husband would want me to do.”

The national co-chairs, Stanley Bergman, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Henry Schein, Inc, and Farooq Kathwari, Chairman, President and CEO of Ethan Allen, addressed the launch event. The Louisville MJAC co-chairs, Dr. Muhammad Babar and Becky Ruby Swansburg, also addressed the audience.

The Louisville MJAC builds on growing connections between Muslims and Jews in the area and formalizes the relationship, connecting the two communities to others across the U.S. to engage in joint advocacy. The national MJAC enables the local activities to become part of a broader movement of Muslims and Jews working together to strengthen the social fabric of America and its democracy.