

New College of Florida to Receive Historic Donation of Berlin Wall Segments Honoring Freedom and Defeat of Communism

SARASOTA, FL, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New College of Florida announced the significant donation of segments of the Berlin Wall, one of the most consequential physical symbols of oppression and division in modern history. The generous donation made by philanthropist Dr. Jack Jawitz represents the East German side of the Wall that once divided East and West Berlin and stood as a global emblem of communist tyranny during the Cold War.

New College will recognize the donation throughout the coming year, which began with a press conference and Socratic Stage event on May 5 with Peter Robinson - the author of Ronald Reagan's famous "Tear Down This Wall" speech. NCF will next mark the 39th anniversary of that same speech this June, culminating in a major public event marking the 40th anniversary in 2027. The commemoration will include academic programming, public lectures, and campus dialogue centered on freedom, the lessons of history, and the enduring responsibility to promote and defend free societies.

"These authentic segments of the Berlin Wall are witnesses to the horrors of communism," said New College of Florida President Richard Corcoran. "May the Wall remind us what happens when speech is silenced, dissent is punished, and ideology is enforced by force. New College is honored to steward this history and to ensure it serves as a permanent educational reminder of the triumph of freedom over oppression."

The donated sections are from the East German side of the Berlin Wall. These surfaces were rarely seen or touched during the Cold War, offering students and visitors a uniquely preserved perspective of life behind the Iron Curtain. Rapidly dismantled after the fall of communist rule and German reunification, the segments collectively represent one of the world's largest collections of the remnants of the Berlin Wall.

Dr. Jack Jawitz, the donor of the Wall segments, described the gift as a commitment to historical truth and civic responsibility.

"The Berlin Wall represented a system that feared free thought and controlled human lives through force," Jawitz said. "Placing these original segments at New College ensures that future generations will confront the realities of communism, understand the cost of freedom, and

appreciate the courage it took to dismantle that system.”

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute praised the donation and its educational significance.

“President Reagan understood that freedom is sustained not only by policy, but by moral clarity and courage,” said Richard Schroeder, chief education programming officer of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation. “His words at the Brandenburg Gate gave voice to millions who lived behind the Iron Curtain and helped hasten the collapse of a failed and oppressive ideology. Housing these authentic Berlin Wall segments at New College ensures that this history is not only remembered, but meaningfully taught.”

The donation also underscores New College’s growing national role as a center for rigorous academic inquiry and open dialogue. Through programs such as Cold War Studies and the Markovitz Socratic Stage Series on Free Speech and Civil Discourse, New College has emerged as a leader in fostering debate that is both fearless, civil, grounded in evidence and history with respect for differing viewpoints.

“To study the Cold War is to examine how ideas became weapons and how close the world came to destruction,” said Mitchel Ruzek, Ph.D., a New College historian. “Having these original segments of the Berlin Wall on campus transforms history from abstraction into experience. Students will be able to engage directly with the physical reality of ideological division and apply those lessons to today’s global challenges.”

Gary Powers, Jr., son of CIA U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers and Chairman of The Cold War Museum, emphasized the broader meaning of the gift.

“The Berlin Wall was a concrete manifestation of fear, control, and the suppression of human dignity,” Powers said. “Its collapse marked a decisive defeat of communism’s claim over the human spirit and millions of people. By preserving these eastern segments, New College is creating a living classroom that teaches why freedom matters, and what is lost when it disappears.”

About the Donation:

- Donor: Dr. Jack Jawitz
- Gift: The largest collection of the East German side of the Berlin Wall in the world.
- Historical Significance: Rarely seen sections from behind the Iron Curtain, preserved following German reunification.
- Stewardship: New College of Florida will permanently maintain and display the segments for educational and public purposes.
- Commemoration: Recognition throughout 2026–27, culminating in a major public event marking the 40th anniversary of President Reagan’s 1987 Berlin

Wall speech. In 2029, there will be a celebration coinciding with the 40th Anniversary of the Berlin Wall falling.

As New College prepares to receive and display this historic donation, the institution reaffirmed its mission to educate students not only in knowledge, but in responsibility.

“Freedom is not inherited automatically,” President Corcoran said. “It must be taught, defended, and renewed by each generation. This gift ensures that our students, and the nation, never forget what it took to tear down that wall, and why we must never allow another to rise.”

About New College of Florida:

Founded in 1960, New College of Florida is a top-ranked public liberal arts college and serves as Florida’s Honors College. Recognized for its academic excellence, rigorous inquiry, and commitment to free expression, New College offers more than 50 undergraduate majors, graduate programs in Applied Data Science and Marine Mammal Science, and a growing NAIA athletics program.

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