Ron Dermer, Israel’s ambassador to the United States since July 2013 and son of an IU alumnus, spoke in Indianapolis as part of IUPUI’s two-year-long Common Theme Project, “Find Your Voice and Hear My Voice: Creating Civil Conversation.” Associate Vice President of International Affairs Gil Latz described that project as a comprehensive effort dedicated to airing a “broad spectrum of ideas of importance to our community and the world.” Dermer is coauthor, with the Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, of *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror*, which makes a passionate argument for the principles of democracy, which allow dissenting voices to be heard without punishment and so provide the only route to the well-being of societies.

Ambassador Dermer spoke of the partnership of the United States and Israel and its role in securing peace in the Middle East. He spoke of Israel as a small country with global technology power and cutting-edge expertise in water management, medicine, and agriculture. He addressed the Middle East conflict and, in a vigorous question-and-answer period, articulated Israeli perspectives on the complexities of “two peoples who have to find a way to share the land together.” He closed by exhorting his listeners, “All I ask from people in this audience, from any audience, is learn the truth, to learn the truth for yourself.”

This was Dermer’s first visit to a college campus since becoming ambassador—altogether fitting, he said, because he has been a Hoosier fan since he was a child and heard loud noises coming from the room where his father, in 1976, was watching a certain basketball game on television. The ambassador demonstrated his allegiance by citing names and events familiar to Hoosier fans. And the university responded by presenting him with a photo of his father, an IU Bloomington graduate in marketing (1951), who cofounded the Bloomington chapter of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.