



The Middle East Librarians Association Presents the 2016 David H. Partington Award to Two Librarians of Middle East Studies at its Annual Meeting, November 16, 2016, in Cambridge, MA.



The Middle East Librarians Association established the Annual David H. Partington Award in 2004 to grant public and tangible recognition to its members who have displayed a high standard of excellence and accomplishments in and contributions to the field of Middle East librarianship, librarianship in general, and the world of scholarship. Traditionally, nominations are solicited from library administrators of libraries where MELA members work.

The 2016 David H. Partington Award Committee (Jonathan Rodgers, University of Michigan, Chair; Eryn Kropf, University of Michigan; and Lior Sternfeld, Pennsylvania State University) decided to bestow the award on two exceptionally worthy nominees, namely **Roberta L. Dougherty**, Yale University, and **David G. Hirsch**, University of California Los Angeles. The committee considered several other deserving nominees as well and settled in favor of two, because not

awarding the prize to one or the other of these two top candidates would have been unjustifiable. Both Robin and David are unquestionably deserving. Their activities as librarians, scholars, and in giving generously to the profession, and especially to the Middle East Librarians Association, for many years has been devoted and is to be admired.

Roberta L. Dougherty has been the Librarian for Middle East Studies at Yale University since 2012. In her long and distinguished career, she has worked at the University of Texas Libraries, the American University in Cairo, the University of Oxford, the Library of Congress, the University of Pennsylvania, the United Arab Emirates University Library, and the University of Michigan Library.

Robin studied at the University of Michigan, where she received the degree of Master of Information and Library Studies (M.I.L.S.) in 1993, and was inducted into *Beta Phi Mu* (the international library & information studies honor society); at Georgetown University, where she obtained the Master of Arts in Arab Studies (M.A.A.S.) degree from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, concentrating in Arabic language and literature in 1988; and at the University of Pennsylvania for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), *cum laude*, in Oriental Studies, with a concentration in Egyptology in 1982.

Robin has been praised as the consummate librarian, with deep background in collection development, public services, and technical services. She commands a breadth of knowledge about librarianship that is increasingly rare. She is also comfortable dealing with manuscript, print, and digital cultures; again, a range in which not all are competent. This versatility is what makes her an outstanding Middle East studies librarian, since the almost impossible expectation is that librarians in the field can “do it all,” even when the nations and cultures represented range so greatly historically and linguistically, and the students and scholars served have such varied interests and needs.

Her devoted service to the Middle East Librarians Association is unmatched and to be admired. She was two times its President (1999-2001 and 2014-2015). Additionally, she has taken an active role in the affairs of the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP).

We look with admiration at Robin as the very model of the scholar-librarian. She believes that librarians must work closely with the scholarly community they serve, both at the home institution and in the professional and scholarly organizations. She has frequently organized or chaired panels or presented papers at Middle East Studies Association annual meetings (at least ten times in the past decade, with another major presentation on the program at the 2016 meeting in November. She has also participated in other scholarly conferences, both domestic and international. Robin’s research focus has been popular arts and culture in the Middle East, particularly Egypt, and she has compiled an impressive record of presentation and publication in this area.

More recently, Robin has become engaged in the history of Oriental studies, as she focused on the scholarly career of Edward E. Salisbury, professor at Yale, library benefactor, and founder of the American Oriental Society. She has presented (or will present) papers and exhibit talks on Salisbury at MELCOM in Leiden, at the opening reception for the Salisbury 175th anniversary exhibit at Yale, and soon at MESA.

We, the David H. Partington Award Committee, with the membership of the Middle East Librarians Association hereby commend you Roberta L. Dougherty and bestow on you an honor you well-deserve, the 2016 Partington Award. Congratulations!

David G. Hirsch has been the University of California Los Angeles Librarian for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, simultaneously with Judaica and Armenian Studies, Central Asian Studies and South Asian Studies since 1989. Before coming to UCLA, David’s distinguished career path included work, while on leave from UCLA, at the Abu Dhabi National Library, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2009–2011); Department of Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, UCLA (2002–2008, 2011– as Adjunct Assistant Professor); Zayed Central Library, United Arab Emirates University (1999–2000); Firestone Library, Princeton University (1987–1989 where he worked with Joan Biella); Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago (1984–1986, where he worked with his mentor, Bruce Craig, another Partington Awardee). Along the way, David has presented lectures and workshops for the Department of State in the UAE, Oman, Senegal, and Mali. He has presented papers at several MELCOM meetings, most recently in Leiden. Additionally, he has lectured and translated during two workshop programs for Iraqi Librarians in al-Ain, UAE, and Amman, Jordan in 2005 and 2006 as part of an NEH grant funded program.

David studied at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (BA, 1975–1980); University of Chicago (1984-1986, MA, and MLS 1990; *beta phi mu* 1990); Università degli Studi di Venezia, Italy (Summer 1995); University of California, Los Angeles (Summer Uzbek language and culture program, 1990); and

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Turkey (Turkish language training program, Summer 1986). For David, the Center for Arabic Study Abroad played a very important part in his early training and career, where he spent 1980–1981 and 1981-1982 at CASA II.

During his notable career, David has worked at a level of astoundingly diverse responsibility, which is rather unusual for one librarian in a research university of such size and distinction as characterize UCLA. As we know, however, David is no ordinary librarian. Indeed, he has excelled in handling each area in this complex portfolio of responsibility.

His linguistic proficiency is not limited to the primary languages of the Middle East, Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew, but also extends to several others, as is well known and frequently demonstrated before us at international meetings and other settings where such proficiency is enviable and useful. Along with language expertise, David is able to exploit his facility with an array of cultures, in the Middle East and elsewhere. All these skills have provided him with access to people, places, and organizations around the world, a circumstance that enables networking, in-depth collection development, and international cooperation.

David's collection development voyages have taken him far afield internationally and have resulted in great successes in locating, thanks to his broad network of contacts, and acquiring, for UCLA and MEMP, unusual, unique, and valuable research materials, some of which ordinary librarians would not have considered. Through his reports at MELA and elsewhere, we are well aware of his many and frequent travels abroad, whether specifically for acquisitions or to board meetings of The Islamic Manuscripts Association, for example, to a conference or privately on vacation. His frequent travels provide crucial opportunities to seek out and acquire interesting materials, including scarce items that would be of interest to collections beyond the social sciences and humanities focus, such as UCLA's Biomedical Special Collections, Arts, Music, and East Asian libraries.

David G. Hirsch has served the profession, and in particular the Middle East Librarians Association, faithfully and admirably for his entire career. He was President of MELA two times (2011-2012 and 2001-2003), and Vice-President/Program Chair (2010–2011 and 1996–1997). His service extends more broadly to the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP) and the Islamic Manuscripts Association, among several other organizations. He has contributed to the MELA annual meeting program numerous times.

Among the honors and recognition bestowed on David G. Hirsch are the Dorothy Schroeder Award of the Association of Jewish Libraries of Southern California, in recognition of excellent service to the profession of Judaica librarianship, and the Librarians Association of the University of California-Los Angeles (LAUC-LA) 2013 Librarian of the Year Award. He has won numerous research grants and has published his work in reputable professional and academic journals, including in MELA Notes.

We, the David H. Partington Award Committee, with the membership of the Middle East Librarians Association hereby commend you David G. Hirsch and bestow on you an honor you well-deserve, the 2016 Partington Award. Congratulations!