2018 David H. Partington Award

András J. Riedlmayer

The David H. Partington Award Committee has bestowed the 2018 Partington Award on an exceptionally worthy nominee, András J. Riedlmayer. The committee (Jonathan Rodgers, University of Michigan, Chair; Evyn Kropf, University of Michigan; and Lior Sternfeld, Pennsylvania State University) considered several other deserving nominees as well but agreed in favor of András, our esteemed colleague and long-time friend. András is unquestionably deserving. His unequaled efforts for many years as librarian, scholar, editor, and in giving generously to the profession and to the much wider expanse of preservation, conservation, and in defense of and rescue of unique, critical, and irreplaceable information resources, and of course in behalf of the Middle East Librarians Association, have been devoted and are to be much admired.

András J. Riedlmayer has been the Bibliographer at the Documentation Center of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University since 1985. In his long and distinguished career, he has worked, previous to his career at the Harvard Library, as an instructor in Harvard’s Slavic Languages and Literatures, as a Research Fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, and as an Instructor in History at Boston College, Tufts University, Harvard University, and as Lecturer in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. He is a member of the Board of Directors of The Islamic Manuscript Association and recently lectured at the Islamic Paleography and Codicology Workshop, organized by the Institute for Islamic Studies, McGill University. He completed his academic and professional training at the University of Chicago (B.A., History, 1969), University of Pennsylvania (Intensive summer language program in modern Turkish, 1969), University of Tehran (Intensive summer language program in Persian, 1970), Princeton University (M.A., Near Eastern Studies, 1972, Cand. Phil. ABD), and Simmons College (M.S., Library and Information Science, 1988).

András served as Secretary-Treasurer of MELA 1993–1996 and as Member-at-Large 2009–2010.
With his unrivaled expertise as a Middle East historian, he has meticulously developed the library collection in Harvard’s Fine Arts Library, which has become North America’s largest and most comprehensive collection of research materials on the art, architecture, urbanism, archaeology and visual cultures of the Islamic world.

András is a renowned scholar of Ottoman Studies, as well as a skilled writer and editor. He has been a trusted collaborator in the production of Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World, a journal of essays on art and architectural history published regularly by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University. Given his superb linguistic skills, including Turkish, Persian and Arabic, he has played an instrumental role in the journal’s editorial and proofreading processes as Consulting Editor. András was the director of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association 2006–2008 and has served on the boards of many prestigious associations and journals. He has distinguished himself as a leading cultural heritage historian on the Ottoman-era Balkans, most particularly concerning the destruction of cultural monuments and resources in Bosnia and Kosovo during wartime and the ethnic cleansing of the later part of the twentieth century. He led extensive on-site research studies and provided crucial testimony as an expert witness on cultural destruction for the prosecution in the war crimes trials of many leading figures from the 1992–95 Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo conflicts. His research and testimony created a compelling and permanent record which will forever mark the cultural history of the region. On this topic, he published two important articles in MELA Notes on the destruction of libraries and archives in Bosnia and Herzegovina: “Killing Memory: The Targeting of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, No. 61 (Fall 1994) and “Libraries Are Not for Burning: International Librarianship and the Recovery of the Destroyed Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, No. 63 (Spring 1996).

In addition to these accomplishments, András has served as an invaluable resource and magnanimous counsel to scores of colleagues, students, and visiting scholars at Harvard University over the years. His impact and capacity in this area cannot be accurately calculated.

We, the David H. Partington Award Committee, with the membership of the Middle East Librarians Association hereby commend you András J. Riedlmayer and bestow on you an honor you well-deserve, the 2018 Partington Award. Congratulations!