

Carl W.A. Carlson, Past ANA Historian and Numismatic Researcher, Dies

Former American Numismatic Association (ANA) historian, numismatic researcher, cataloger and writer Carl W.A. Carlson died on February 12, 2002, in a hospice in Lee, Massachusetts. He was 59 years old. Diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease 10 years ago, he succumbed to pneumonia.

For several decades, Carlson was one of the numismatic world's premier researchers, according to colleague and friend David T. Alexander. A contributor to R.W. Julian's important reference *Medals of the United States Mint: the First Century, 1792-1892*, published in 1977, Carlson served as ANA historian from 1987 to 1991 and co-edited the ANA Centennial Anthology with Michael J. Hodder. Carlson also was a contributor to the ANA's monthly journal, *The Numismatist*, and was the recipient of several George Heath Literary Awards, including a 1982 first place award.

"On a personal level, Mr. Carlson was famous for his profound knowledge of the entire numismatic field, his multi-faceted sense of humor, unceasing helpfulness to fellow researchers and co-workers, and willingness to participate in such events as the annual Numismatic Literary Guild (NLG) Bash," Alexander states. "His death will be mourned by a multitude of friends and leaves a void that will not be filled."

A 1963 graduate of Middlebury College in Vermont, Carlson received his master's degree in classics in 1965 from the University of Illinois and pursued advanced studies at the doctoral level at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Following his graduate studies, Carlson served with the U.S. Army Security Agency, where he was a specialist in cryptography.

Pursuing his lifelong attraction to numismatics, Carlson served as curator of the Garrett Family Collection for four years when it was housed at Evergreen House at The Johns Hopkins University. He next served as cataloger for Paramount International Coin Corporation before coming to New York, where he joined the newly organized Numismatic and Antiquarian Service Corporation of America (NASCA) as director of research. His work on NASCA's April 1981 Kessler-Spangenberg Collection catalog was a landmark, according to Alexander.

Carlson later joined other numismatists in Herbert I. Melnick, Inc., and was lead cataloger for Stack's for nearly 10 years before illness forced his retirement. His work on the Picker, Roper and Oechsner auction catalogs for Stack's was especially noteworthy, Alexander says.

An early member of the Token and Medal Society (TAMS), Carlson was a frequent speaker at its symposiums at ANA conventions. He also was a familiar figure at the New York-based American Numismatic Society, where he did much of the in-depth research that was his specialty.

According to Alexander, Carlson used what he called "research cataloging" to reactivate several areas of American numismatics that had been dormant for many years, including

Colonial and early American coinage, and U.S. Mint medals. To memorialize his pioneering role, the newly organized Medal Collectors of America (MCA) named its premier award for Carlson, making presentations to John W. Adams in 1999, Joseph H. Levine in 2000 and R.W. Julian in 2001.

Carlson is survived by his wife, Pat; and daughters, Valerie, Melinda and Larissa.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.