

Jere L. Bacharach

(October 18, 1938–April 9, 2023)



Photo courtesy of I. Abdulfattah

If you knew Jere Bacharach, you knew he had opinions; opinions he shared widely and often, with humor, and sincerity. And with a career spanning over six decades, no one can deny that he had something to impart.

Jere was born in New York and grew up on Long Island. He received his BA from Trinity College (CT), his MA from Harvard University, and his PhD from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor with a focus on medieval Islamic history and culture. In 1968, he joined the faculty of the University of Washington, Seattle, an institution where he spent his entire adult career, retiring as the Stanley D. Golub Professor Emeritus in 2005. Jere taught courses in modern Middle East history and medieval Middle East history. His primary academic interests were medieval Islamic history, art, and architecture, and especially numismatics. He was social and outgoing, and not hesitant to be enthusiastic about his work and the work of others. He relished mentoring his students, and one colleague noted he was “exceptional in demonstrating how to work with students as individuals.” After his retirement, Jere and his wife Barbara, split their time between Seattle and Cairo, spending half a year in each city among his many friends and colleagues.

Over his career, he published almost forty book and hundreds of articles and reviews. He became especially proficient in the field of Islamic numismatics, and he cataloged many collections throughout the world to make them accessible to scholars. Of special importance was his work with the American Numismatics Society and colleague Sherif Anwar to produce the Dar el-Kutub digital publication database of the numismatic collection of the Egyptian National Library.

He was committed to service in his field. He served as the Chair of the History Department at the University of Washington from 1987 to 1992 and as Director of that institution's Jackson School of International Studies from 1995 to 2001. He endowed a Chair in the College of Arts and Sciences at the UW, and the Jere L. Bacharach Fund in their Middle East Center.

Jere has a long and deep association with ARCE, initially, in 1964–1965 as an ARCE dissertation fellow from the University of Michigan. He held subsequent fellowships in 1971–1972, 1992–1993, 2000–2001, and 2008–2009, many of them for his research on medieval coinage. Typically, Jere didn't only benefit from ARCE; he gave back. He served as the Interim Director of ARCE in 2002–2003; Treasurer from 1979–1987 and 2003–2004, and as an ARCE Board Member from 1978–1987. With seemingly boundless energy and ideas, he was central to other academic organizations, including serving as the President of The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) from 1999–2000, as the President of the Middle East Medievalists 1997–2000 and again in 2003–2006, and as a board member of The American Numismatic Association for decades.

Jere received many awards for his academic achievements and service. Among them, the Middle East Medievalists awarded him their first Lifetime Achievement Award, and MESA created the Jere L. Bacharach Service Award in 2005, and in 2015, he was given their Mentoring Award citing "his extraordinary service to MESA, many of her sister societies, and the field overall." Oxford University named him the Samir Shama Fellow in Islamic Numismatics and Epigraphy in 2004 and again in 2005.

Jere epitomized what it means to be a scholar and mentor. He supported Egyptian graduate students at Cairo University to help them access the AUC Library; he bought books for Egyptian scholars; he generously recommended opportunities for junior scholars abroad; he wrote thoughtful letters of recommendation, and he made engaging scholars from Egypt by undertaking co-authored articles a priority.

In later life, Jere, with his wife Barbara Fudge, loved to travel, eventually visiting 175 countries, including Antarctica and Easter Island.

Jere was always interested, curious, supportive, encouraging, and a great listener with a wonderful sense of humor who made so many contributions to his field, colleagues, and students.

Djodi Deutsch
Cairo