

The Middle East Librarians Association Presents the 2016 David H. Partington Award to Yale Middle East Librarian



December 1, 2016

The Yale University Library was delighted to learn that the *Middle East Librarians Association* (MELA) awarded the Annual David H. Partington Award to Yale Middle East librarian, Roberta (Robin) Dougherty, as well as to David G. Hirsch, of the University of California, Los Angeles.

MELA 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 (Yale '77 and head of the Yale Library's Near East Collection from 1983-1987), University of Michigan, Chair; Evyn Kropf, Librarian for Near Eastern and Religious Studies & Curator, Islamic Manuscripts Collection, University of Michigan Library; and Lior Sternfeld, Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies, Penn State) commented that Robin and David's activities as librarians, scholars, and their generous long-term commitment to MELA and the wider library profession, 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.

She 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.

Robin’s service to MELA is unmatched and to be admired. She was two times its President (1999-2001 and 2014-2015). She has also taken an active role in the affairs of the Middle East Materials/Microfilm Project (MEMP). She is the model of the scholar-librarian, believing that librarians must work closely with the scholarly community they serve. She has frequently organized or chaired panels, presented papers, and 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.

Source

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