

## Donald Oster

A dear friend of the Oriental Institute, Donald Oster, AB 1950, passed away in January 2012. It was a 1981 expedition to Egypt that sparked a lifelong interest in that country and Mr. Oster's subsequent decision to fund a life-income gift for the Oriental Institute. The trip, which was sponsored by the Oriental Institute, included visits to major temples and tombs throughout Egypt. At Luxor, Mr. Oster visited Chicago House, where Oriental Institute students, faculty, and staff are working on the Epigraphic Survey. Using a method developed by James Henry Breasted, the Epigraphic Survey documents inscriptions and relief scenes on the major monuments at Luxor for publication. The excursion introduced Mr. Oster to the Oriental Institute's work in the region and underscored the importance of maintaining the University of Chicago's research facilities at Luxor.

As his enthusiasm grew, Mr. Oster became a generous financial supporter of the Oriental Institute and took at least a dozen trips to Egypt, each time stopping at Chicago House to check on the progress of the University's research.



Mr. Oster's career in information systems with Mobil Oil provided him the luxury to travel all over the world, including stints at the company's offices in France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Hong Kong. He eventually settled down in London. Another set of the benefits Mr. Oster received from his time with Mobil was an annual award of stock options, the value of which rose considerably after his retirement. As the market value of those shares appreciated, so too did the amount of capital gains tax Mr. Oster would have had to pay if the shares were sold. After considering several options, Mr. Oster decided to combine his financial and charitable goals by using the appreciated securities to fund a charitable remainder unitrust to benefit the Oriental Institute. The unitrust allowed Mr. Oster to accomplish several objectives: he was able to sell off his shares at a particularly favorable time, with no tax cost and some tax benefit; receive income for his retirement at a rate that was considerably higher than his shares were paying; and have the knowledge that his gift would benefit Oriental Institute in the future. The Oriental Institute is grateful to Donald Oster and the many donors who plan thoughtful future gifts to foster the research, discovery, and preservation of Near Eastern civilizations.

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