

## IN MEMORIAM

The OI lost two invaluable professors, two irreplaceable Life Members of the Advisory Council, an extraordinary director of development, and two more beloved volunteers during the 2020–21 academic year. All of us at the OI gratefully honor and admire them for their many years of exceptional service and support, and we dearly miss them.

**ROBERTO CEPEDA (1955–2020)**

Oriental Institute docent and assistant librarian Roberto Cepeda broke our hearts with his rapid decline and demise. This vibrant, dynamic man came to the OI once or twice weekly for five years since joining our community. Always in a good mood and with a great sense of humor, he brightened every room he entered. His deep desire and love of learning led him to spend countless hours reading about the new subjects in which he became interested, and his distinctive handwriting filled notebook after notebook. A natural coach and mentor, Roberto helped many new docents learn the ropes and become tour guides.

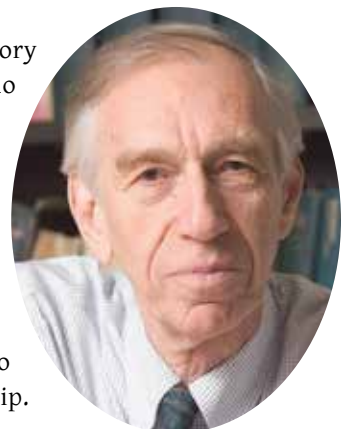
**MARGARET EMERSON FOORMAN (1949–2020)**

Margaret Foorman, a Life Member of the OI Advisory Council, where she had served since 1995, passed away on September 14, 2020. Margaret left us in the fall after a lengthy battle with illness. Never one to let declining health get in her way, Margaret showed up for every tour and event, as well as spending countless hours curating and managing the OI's docent library. Her attitude and behavior were an inspiration. The library was a sacred position for Margaret, as she took over the responsibilities from Deb Aliber, who she respected and revered. Margaret was both the most approachable, classy and compassionate person around. Personal, thoughtful, hand-written notes were her specialty. She gave tours in 3 different languages. This multifaceted woman never ceased to surprise, and amaze and boy did she love sharing her excitement and enthusiasm for the OI with others.

**NORMAN GOLB (1928–2020)**

Norman Golb, Ludwig Rosenberger Professor Emeritus of Jewish History and Civilization, passed away on December 29, 2020. Prof. Golb, who studied here from 1948–50, joined the faculty of the OI in 1963. A prolific scholar, he is best known for his groundbreaking work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as for his scholarship on Judaism in late antiquity and the Jews in the Arab and European worlds during the Middle Ages. Among his many awards and honors were two Guggenheim fellowships and an honorary doctorate from the University of Rouen.

Prof. Golb retired in 2015 after a career of no fewer than fifty-two years at our University. He had an unshaken belief in pure scholarship.



## IN MEMORIAM

In the many meetings of both NELC and the OI, he always stood firm on the issues of scholarly rigor and the purity of scholarship. A staunch defender the unique status of the OI as a pure research institution, Prof. Golb used his powerful and unique voice to remind us of the qualities and principles that make the University of Chicago what it is.

**JILL CARLOTTA MAHER (1933–2020)**

Jill Carlotta Maher, a Life Member of the Advisory Council and its Executive Board, the first recipient of the James Henry Breasted medallion, a longtime supporter and volunteer of the Oriental Institute, passed away on December 15, 2020. There is not enough space to list all she did and meant to the OI. Carlotta was a part of the first docent group to be trained in 1966. She successfully completed her docent training and eventually took over leadership of the program serving as Volunteer Manager. After several years she moved on from this position, but she never stopped being involved as an advisor, counselor and guiding beacon of the OI's volunteer program, making her the longest serving active volunteer at the OI. Carlotta joyfully participated in OI expeditions in Iraq and Egypt, and in 1985 created a development program from scratch for Chicago House in Luxor that saved it from closing and that she oversaw until her death. Kind, smart, glamorous, and fearless, Carlotta was and always will be the very heart and soul of the OI.

**ROBERT K. RITNER (1953–2021)**

Robert K. Ritner, Rowe Professor of Egyptology, passed away on July 25, 2021. Prof. Ritner came to the OI as a graduate student in 1976, received his PhD with honors from the University of Chicago in 1987, and taught continuously in NELC from 1996–2021.

A trailblazer in Egyptology, he made revolutionary contributions that have forever changed the way we study and understand ancient Egyptian religion, magic, and medicine. He was an extraordinarily prodigious scholar, whose work helped redefine general approaches to research on magic, introduce the concepts of emic/etic to Egyptology, reveal the extensive roots of Western biases toward ancient Egypt, and communicate such results to the public.

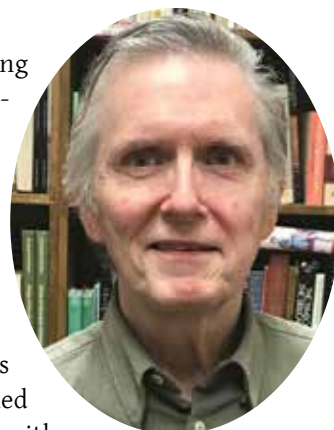
Unlike with most academics, Prof. Ritner's work was well-received beyond the ivory tower, and he shepherded an entire community of budding Egyptophiles by leading tours to Egypt (more than a dozen between 1980 and 2008), through extensive public lecturing, and as a permanent fixture in the OI's docent-training program. He was renowned for his ability to lecture extemporaneously on any topic for hours on end. Students will remember him for his talent of merging academic rigor with humor, fun, and the thrill of discovery.

Throughout his career, Prof. Ritner was a scholar's scholar. He emphasized mastery of the fundamentals above all else. As a continuous presence since 1976, he influenced every facet of the OI, and his legacy will continue to shape Egyptology for decades to come.



**GEORGE THOMSON (1951–2020)**

After retiring in 2017, George Thomson immediately began volunteering in the Research Archives of the OI. Through his dedicated, regular, weekly commitment, he helped with many special projects. Polite and soft-spoken, George could often be found wearing T-shirts bearing ancient Egyptian designs.

**WALTER (WALLY) VERDOOREN (1961–2021)\***

Wally Verdooren, the OI's director of development, passed away after a short battle with cancer on August 26, 2021. A development and external relations professional for more than thirty years, Wally joined



the OI in March of 2018 and quickly won us over with his infectious smile and perpetual good cheer. He was part of the leadership group for the University of Chicago Humanities and the Arts teams and a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council. In addition to spending his professional career in the nonprofit sector serving others, Wally was also actively involved in his local communities as a board member and volunteer leader in a variety of organizations offering arts, education, faith-based, and justice-related programming. Wally's dedication to the OI and to our community was obvious to everybody, and many of those who came into contact with him described Wally as the ideal

development person, somebody for whom fundraising was first and foremost about developing relationships. Wally was all about "sharing," one of his favorite words. He has left a big gap in the OI, as well as in our hearts, and is sorely missed.