

Dealer Rewarded for Recovering Stolen Coins

California coin dealer Ronald Kurtz was recognized today by the American Numismatic Association (ANA) for his help in the recovery of ancient Roman and Byzantine coins stolen last June.

At a brief ceremony at the Long Beach Coin and Collectibles Expo, ANA President H. Robert Campbell and other members of the Board of Governors presented Kurtz with a certificate of appreciation and a check for \$1,000 from the Association's reward fund.

Quick thinking by Kurtz, an ANA life member and owner of the Whittier Coin Company, and his colleague, Dave Henderson, resulted in the recovery of 99 percent of the coins stolen in June 1999. The theft occurred at the home office of the Rev. William J. Fulco, a professor of archaeology at Loyola Marymount University.

With information Kurtz and Henderson provided, Los Angeles police apprehended Robert Young, 37, a former employee of the Jesuit priest. Young pleaded guilty to burglary in February and was sentenced to five years in prison.

The coins were brought to Whittier Coin Company by another Southern California coin dealer because of Kurtz' familiarity with such pieces. Recalling a newspaper article he had seen weeks before, Kurtz became suspicious of the coins' origin and called the local police. They referred him to the Los Angeles Police Department, where detectives were familiar with the burglary in the Westchester area of the city.

"It didn't look like a collection you or I would put together," Kurtz says of the \$75,000 to \$500,000 worth of ancient Roman and Byzantine coins that came into his shop last year. "We examined 700 to 800 coins. The more we looked at the labels on them, the more the coins' categorization made us suspicious."

Fulco, an ANA member who uses the coins in his classes, says that when he discovered the break-in, the door to the closet containing his safe had been broken in half and the safe pried open with a crowbar. After reporting the crime to police, the priest thought he would never again see the coins.

"The police first thought it might be one of my students or colleagues, but I just couldn't imagine any of them doing such a thing," Fulco says. "Just when the police were about to begin questioning my students, we got the call from Whittier Coin Company."

Says Los Angeles Police Detective Dan Shultz, "I was pleasantly surprised to be able to recover these coins for Dr. Fulco. Had it not been for the expertise of the coin dealers and their honesty, we probably never would have recovered any of the coins."

"The police were great to work with," Fulco says. "And Ron Kurtz deserves a reward for his part in recovering the coins."

The ANA Board of Governors agreed with Fulco's assessment of Kurtz and voted to give the professional numismatist a \$1,000 reward for his efforts.

Established many years ago, the ANA Reward Fund is intended to acknowledge those who help in the arrest and conviction of those who commit crimes against ANA members. To learn more, contact the ANA Executive Office at 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719/632-2646; fax 719/634-4085; or E-mail ana@money.org.

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.