

ANA's SERGEANT-AT-ARMS EMERITUS, JOHN J. GABARRON, DIES

John J. Gabarron, the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) sergeant-at-arms emeritus, died on Thursday, October 4, 2001, eight days before his 83rd birthday.

"John was a true friend of the hobby," ANA Executive Director Edward C. Rochette says. "He was an unstoppable volunteer, who always found ways to help the organization and the hobby he loved. We all will miss him and all he did for us."

Born in El Paso, Texas, in 1918, Gabarron grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he joined the city's fire department in 1943 and worked his way up through the ranks to inspector, battalion chief, drill master and chief training officer. He retired as chief of the Lincoln Fire Prevention Bureau in 1974, and then served as an independent fire safety consultant and special investigator of arson-related cases.

Gabarron did not enter the numismatic hobby until the late 1940s, when he found a coin shop across the street from Firestone Rubber Co. in Lincoln, where he worked part time. His interest in trading with other collectors led him to co-found the Nebraska Numismatic Association (NNA). He also was the founder of the Lincoln Coin Club in 1951, the year he joined the ANA. Four years later he became a life member.

In 1957 the Gabarron became the ANA's librarian and custodian, maintaining the reference material at his home until 1967, when the Association's home and headquarters building was completed in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 1961 he stepped into the position of ANA sergeant-at-arms, replacing Louis Werner. Gabarron volunteered his services in that position at the Association's conventions every year without fail until his retirement in 1997, when the ANA recognized his more than 50 years of outstanding, dedicated service by conferring upon him the title of sergeant-at-arms emeritus. Throughout his long tenure, he was supported and assisted by his late wife, Byrnadette ("Bernie").

Honored with the ANA's Glenn Smedley Award in 1992, Medal of Merit in 1956, and the Association's highest honor, the Farran Zerbe Memorial Award for Distinguished Service in 1979, Gabarron was appointed a member of the United States Assay Commission in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and was named a Numismatic News Ambassador in 1980. He was a member of the Nebraska Division of the U.S. Bicentennial Commission, and medal chairman of both the Nebraska Centennial Commission and the Arbor Day Centennial Committee. He also helped design the Arbor Day Centennial medal, and was a recipient of the NNA Literary Award for an article entitled "The Life and Money of William Jennings Bryan."

Gabarron is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, JoAnn and Paul Young, of Oradell, New Jersey; his son and daughter-in-law, John and Phyllis Gabarron of Cimarron, New Mexico; a sister-in-law, Shirley Hoy of Wahoo, Nebraska; six grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; six nephews; and two nieces.

The funeral was set for 10 a.m. on Monday, October 8, at Sacred Heart Church. The family requests memorial contributions be sent to Sacred Heart School and the St. Elizabeth Regional Burn Center in Lincoln.

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.