

## **ANTHONY J. SWIATEK RECEIVES ANA's 2002 FARRAN ZERBE AWARD**

Anthony J. Swiatek, this year's recipient of the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) Farran Zerbe Memorial Award for Distinguished Service, is a teacher, a counselor, and a friend to the hobby, science and business of numismatics.

Coins - their collection and the study of their beauty, history and lore - have been his passion since he was 11, when he received a United States Mint proof set and a 1921 Pilgrim Tercentenary commemorative half dollar for Christmas.

Four days after his 61st birthday on July 31, Swiatek, who is general chairman of the ANA's 111th Anniversary Convention in New York City this month, will receive the ANA's highest honor - the Farran Zerbe Memorial Award for Distinguished Service - on Saturday evening, August 3, at the awards banquet.

In one of the many nominations the ANA past president received for the Farran Zerbe Memorial Award, long-time friend and colleague Michael S. "Stan" Turrini states, "With his famous smile, ready laugh, twinkle in his eyes, firm handshake, openness, plus speaking a New Yorker's way to you, 'Mr. Commem' brightens the room, places people at ease and entices those about him, even for the first time, with the enthusiasm and excitement of our hobby and science. He is truly an ambassador of numismatics."

The Brooklyn-born numismatist started out his teaching career in the New York City school system. Holding bachelor's and master's degrees from City College of New York - earned while working days and attending classes at night - Swiatek entered what he thought was to be his first and only profession.

"I always enjoyed helping children and really felt I had that sense of calling," he says. "It was a lot of work, but I liked it; I really cared."

Swiatek was in his late 20s by the time he completed his first college degree and began teaching science. However, after 10 years in front of the classroom full time and extra hours with coins, he decided to give his other love a try. Taking a leave of absence from teaching, he dove completely into numismatics.

While attending college, Swiatek heard of a coin show at the New Yorker Hotel in Manhattan. There he met Julius Turoff and Moe Weinschel, who gave him copies of Coin World and Numismatic News, and began to introduce him to the wonderful world of numismatics.

"I will never forget what they did for me," Swiatek says, his voice filled with sincerity. "They took the time to help me, lead me, teach me."

While at a show in New York in 1971, Swiatek met noted numismatist John Jay Pittman, who sponsored him for membership in the ANA. Two years later, Pittman convinced him to convert to life membership (#1099). Over the ensuing years, other collectors and dealers

guided the young hobbyist, including numismatic legends Abe Kosoff, Sol Kaplan and Lester Merkin, who Swiatek calls his "Numismatic Father."

"He always tried to help me," Swiatek says. "And Margo Russell (then editor of the weekly hobby publication Coin World) took me under her wing. She was a fantastic influence on me; she encouraged me to write for her publication and others. She was my 'Numismatic Mother.'"

After becoming a full-time coin dealer in 1979, Swiatek immersed himself in the hobby as a writer, lecturer and advocate. He pursued commemorative coins, as well as U.S. silver dollars and gold issues. That devotion opened many doors, including the opportunity to testify before the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage regarding commemorative coinage. Swiatek's reputation also led him to participate in many first strike ceremonies, and he has been an invited guest at White House ceremonies.

Today, Swiatek operates Swiatek-Minerva Coins and Jewelry, Ltd. in Manhasset, New York, with his wife, Gloria, and produces a newsletter about the numismatic marketplace, "The Swiatek Report." He is a member of more than 20 coin clubs and organizations around the country and served 10 years on the ANA Board of Governors, including terms as president and vice president.

Ever the teacher, Swiatek frequently volunteers as a speaker and instructor for many of the organizations to which he belongs. At ANA conventions, he always can be found leading a Numismatic Theatre presentation. The perpetual student, he expanded his own knowledge by studying for the ANA's World Series of Numismatics, a mind-challenging game of wits held at the Association's summer conventions. He captained his team - Minerva's Conquerors - to victories in 1992, '93, '95 and '97, and a fifth time in 1998, in "The Tournament of Past Champions."

Outside the classroom and lecture circuit, Swiatek continues his instruction with his writings, receiving the ANA's Heath Literary Award and Wayte and Olga Raymond Memorial Literary Award, as well as several Numismatic Literary Guild awards. He is the author of Commemorative Coins of the United States; co-author of Encyclopedia of United States Silver and Gold Commemorative Coins, 1892-1954; and The Walking Liberty Half Dollar.

Swiatek is a recipient of the ANA's Outstanding Adult Advisor Award, Glenn Smedley Memorial Award and Medal of Merit. He also received the Great Eastern Numismatic Association's first Frank J. Caggiano Literary Award. In 1993 he was named a Numismatic Ambassador by Numismatic News.

Nominator Walter Ostromecki offered his own definition of this year's Farran Zerbe Memorial Award winner. "Anthony Swiatek is the gracious hobbyist of hobbyists; the consummate mentor of mentors; the academic teacher of teachers; and one who never has failed to encourage others on all levels to 'Have more fun with your hobby.'"

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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](http://www.money.org).