



RICHARD “RICK” B. WITSCHONKE (1945-2015)

It is with great sadness that we learn of the death on February 24th 2015 after a long illness of Richard B. Witschonke. A collector and scholar, he made his own special mark in the numismatic community with his friendship, generosity and enthusiasm.

“Rick” was born in Washington, D.C. in 1945, and having gained a BA in English at the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and had the good fortune not to be picked in the draft lottery for the Vietnam War, he went on to study at Harvard Business School, graduating in 1972 with an MBA. This was followed by a highly successful career in technology consulting.

His interests in coin collecting had started at an early age, and even as a teenager he had focussed his interest on coins of the Roman Republic, going on to assemble what was surely one of the most comprehensive collections of Republican coinage worldwide. An important landmark in his development as a numismatist was meeting Charles Hersh in 1969, for whom he was to later sponsor a Festschrift. Himself the author of many scholarly articles, Rick was widely respected among collectors, scholars, dealers and curators alike, and many prominent figures in the numismatic community enjoyed his friendship. It was ever his goal to bridge the sad and ever-widening gap between the different communities.

He had already joined the American Numismatic Society in the late 1960s, and in 1999 was elected a member of the Society’s governing Council and served one term as an ANS trustee. Following his retirement, he joined the curatorial staff on an honorary basis in 2003, first as a curatorial assistant, then as a curatorial associate. Together with Peter van Alfen he organised the famous Summer Seminars at the ANS, and the help and encouragement he gave to the students was typical of the generous but quiet support he provided to scholars and projects over the years.

Rick enjoyed life, his wine cellar rivalled his coin collection and his fall garden parties were famous. His friendship will be missed by many, and our thoughts go out to his companion of many years, Heidi, and his sons.

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