

ROBERT E. LAMB SELECTED 2016 ATA DISTINGUISHED TOPICAL PHILATELIST

Career diplomat and organizational leader in philately, Robert E. Lamb of State College, Pennsylvania, has been selected as 2016 American Topical Association (ATA) Distinguished Philatelist, according to DTP committee chair Donald W. Smith. The award will be presented to Bob Lamb at the ATA Annual Meeting at 1 p.m. on June 3, 2016, in Room 1E06 of the Javits Center during World Stamp Show NY2016 in New York City.

Bob Lamb started collecting stamps in the fifth grade, and by the time he was in high school, he was an enthusiastic collector. In 1962, he graduated with a BA degree from the University of Pennsylvania. His collecting interests grew over the course of a 32-year career in the United States Foreign Service. He served as United States Assistant Secretary of State for Administration from 1983 to 1985 and then as Assistant Secretary of State of Diplomatic Security from 1987 to 1989. Bob moved into the area of organized philately as a member of the American Philatelic Society's Board of Vice Presidents in 1989. However, he had to resign the APS position when appointed U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus from 1990 to 1993.

Bob retired from the Foreign Service in 1994 and became the executive director of the American Philatelic Society in State College, Pennsylvania. In 2000, under Bob's leadership the society moved into a new \$14 million facility in the historical 19th century Match Factory in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. After retiring from the APS in 2006, Bob serves as a volunteer to operate the "What's in Your Attic?" booth at stamp shows, including the NTSS. This program helps people who have inherited collections to learn their value and make decisions about what to do with the collections. For collectors who want to pursue the hobby, Bob gives advice on proper storage and care of the stamps. For those who want to dispose of their collections, Bob helps them find dealers who may want to buy them or organizations to which they might donate.

Bob has long recognized the growing importance of topical collecting and joined the American Topical Association in 1997. After retiring from the APS, Bob was elected to the ATA Board of Directors. He was immediately appointed as chair of the ATA Fundraising Team where he organized ATA's first official fundraising program. Under his leadership this program has helped the ATA transition successfully into position of greater financial strength.

Bob spearheaded ATA's efforts to create an internet sales service and TopicalsOnLine.com went live in May 2013 with 3,000 listings. Today it has nearly 25,000 listings and is becoming a new income source for ATA. Almost as important to the organization is the fact that this activity gives members an inexpensive way to buy and sell stamps for their collections.

Bob's topical specialty is maps on stamps; he finds it a fascinating way to observe the ways countries use maps on their postage stamps to promote their foreign policy as well as their domestic political objectives. He has visited 179 stamp-issuing entities both as a collector and as an "ambassador" of ATA.

Bob and his wife Lucille have three children and eight grandchildren. He continues to hope that one of their grandchildren will be bitten by the philatelic bug.

The ATA Distinguished Topical Philatelist Award was established in 1952 by ATA founder Jerome Husak to recognize notable service in topical philately. This award has been presented in the past 65 years to 130 topical philatelists including residents of Canada, Great Britain, and Italy. The current selection committee, chaired by Donald W. Smith, consists of Donald Beuthel, Jack H. Green, George Griffenhagen, Dorothy C Smith, Dalene Thomas and Mark Winnegrad.