A good portion of the time that I was a Fine Arts graduate in the late eighties was spent in the Fine Arts Library. I was not an evening habitué, grabbing a salad at Broadway Market before heading back to work until closing; rather I worked during the day. Work consisted of studying, browsing the open stacks, but also working in the Visual Collections, pulling slides for professors in whose classes I was a teaching assistant, and working on my own presentations.

For me, like many other students of Islamic art, the center of our attention in the Fine Arts Library lay with the dynamic duo/odd couple—name them what you will—of Jeff Spurr, recently retired curator, and Aga Khan bibliographer András Riedlmayer. Together and separately, Jeff and András constituted an inexhaustible font of knowledge of things Islamic—everything from textiles to inscriptions, collectors to obscure bibliographic references in a multitude of languages. Despite their common origin in the omnivorous atmosphere of the University of Chicago, Jeff and András had (and have) very different interests. To the novice graduate student, they constituted a model of encyclopedic knowledge and scholarly generosity and accomplishment to
be aspired to, and part of a true continuum of shared learning that, of course, had its rungs or its pecking order, but there, at least, was quite refreshingly democratic and unstinting, while remaining partisan, prejudicial, remorseless, and on many occasions, very funny.

To be invited on Jeff and András’s morning coffee break at the Coolidge Hall cafeteria, with only the quickness of the walk acknowledging the shortness of time and the strictures and structures of an administrative job, was also a gesture of friendship and tacit (although chatty, too) inclusion in a common pursuit. I am now a scholar/administrator myself, and I think back to those days when it was quite natural for these two friends to be called in to give graduate seminars, consult on scholarly publications, and then return to the tasks of ordering stacks of books, photographs, slides, and the like.

I hope that this sense of community and generosity continues in a library within whose walls these two men constituted role models of hard work, intelligence, generosity, and passion for the Islamic world in all of its manifestations.
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