

## Journal of American Studies of Turkey

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### In Remembrance:

Professor Robert J. Bertholf



November 5, 1940 - February 19, 2016

On behalf of the board and the members of the American Studies Association of Turkey I am saddened to announce the passing of Professor Robert Bertholf at his home in Austin, Texas on February 19, 2016. Professor Bertholf began his academic career at Bowdoin College where he earned his BA before moving on to University of Oregon where he received his PhD. From 1968 through 1979, Professor Bertholf taught at Kent State University where he edited the little magazine *Credences*, as well as organizing lectures by some of America's greatest modern poets including Robert Creeley (with whom he would reunite at the University at Buffalo), Joanne Kyger, Robert Duncan, and Allen Ginsberg. In 1979 Professor Bertholf moved on to the University at Buffalo where he became Curator of the Poetry and Rare Books collection, a center for the preservation of 20<sup>th</sup> century modern poetry since its founding by Charles D. Abbott in 1939 when he was director of the

University Libraries. Professor Bertholf continued to expand the collection, strengthening its focus on mid-century writing as keeping up with contemporary movements of poetry. While at the University of Buffalo he published analytic work on Robert Duncan, as well as editing a number of collections of the poetry, correspondence, and prose of Duncan and other postwar poets.

In 1994 Professor Bertholf left the Poetry Collection at the University at Buffalo for a year to take up a Fulbright Lectureship at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. He taught modern American poetry at the university. His involvement with Hacettepe University would continue well beyond the friendships and academic connections he forged that year. In later years he was on the editorial board of the *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* and in 2007 he returned to Ankara to present at the ASAT conference that year, agreeing to edit an issue of *JAST* about his friend and colleague Robert Creeley for 2008.

On a personal note, I met Professor Bertholf at the 2007 ASAT conference. At the time I was a doctoral student at the University at Buffalo's History Department working on a dissertation on the Beat Generation and American culture and had begun working in Turkey as a Lecturer the year before. I had made extensive use of the Poetry Collection and had been informed by the current Director of his rigorous work on its mid-century components from which I had benefited greatly. At the conference I approached him in a very long line of people who were greeting him, welcoming him back to Turkey, or congratulating him on the success of his talk that day. When I finally got to the front of the line, I explained who I was and thanked him for his work on one of the strongest repositories of modern poetry in the United States. He smiled and asked me which part of the collection I had enjoyed the most and I answered the little magazines that formed the heart of the mid-century poetry movements. He leaned closer and said, it is my favorite too. I wish I had known Professor Bertholf when we were both at the University of Buffalo, but having met him in a place we had both come to love and to have let him know that his hard work and passion for American poetry was helping students scholars even though he was no longer there was certainly a high point for me.

Gordon J.R. Marshall,  
Editor, *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*