

# INTRODUCTION

**JANET · H · JOHNSON**  
**DIRECTOR**

**T**he *Oriental Institute Annual Report* is our opportunity to gather for our members accounts of what is going on in the Oriental Institute, the range of questions with which our faculty  
 ●●●●● and staff are currently wrestling, the directions of current research in the wide field of ancient Near Eastern studies. Each year builds on the past while branching out in new directions. Long-time members of the Oriental Institute will have a chance to make a couple of “new friends” as they read through this year’s report and they will recognize many “old friends” as well. But one “old friend” is very sadly lacking.

Klaus Baer first came to the Oriental Institute almost 40 years ago as a young graduate student who had already begun teaching himself Egyptian hieroglyphs. He has been a mainstay of the teaching faculty since he returned to Chicago from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1965. He loved teaching and was constantly preparing teaching aids for his classes. Although he was very demanding, of his students as of himself, and although he felt it his duty to warn students of the realities of attempting a career in a field like Egyptology, his students soon realized that he cared deeply about them and was merely challenging them to become the best that they could be. His students and former students constitute one of his valuable legacies. He was a warm and giving man who encouraged and assisted people not only as a teacher but in his private life as well. He loved solving Egyptological puzzles and read grammar books (of European, African, American Indian, and Asian languages) as “light reading.” He was a perfectionist in his own research (whether grammatical, such as his research and teaching grammars of Coptic, or historical, such as his minutely reasoned and argued chronology of Egyptian history) and his scholarship has rightly been described by his long-time friend and colleague Ed Wente as “elegant.” Klaus was a font of information for students and colleagues alike, frequently being consulted not only by Oriental Institute colleagues but by members of the wider University community because of

the broad scope of his knowledge and interests. He served as Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from 1972–75 and as President of the American Research Center in Egypt from 1981–84. During this time he made regular trips to Egypt and stimulated the work of students and colleagues from across the United States and Canada with his direct and indirect assistance. Klaus also contributed greatly to the more public functions of the Oriental Institute. He was a regular and popular lecturer in the Docent training program and a favorite of the Docents, who knew that they would get an informed and interesting answer to any question that they might ask him. His death of heart failure on May 14, 1987, has left a large hole in the Oriental Institute and in the lives of all who regularly frequent it.

It is to Klaus that this issue of the *Oriental Institute Annual Report* is dedicated, with great respect and affection.

• Klaus Baer 1930–1987

