

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Contents



Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

Jeanne Altmann	1
David Perkins Billington	5
Patricia Fortini Brown	9
William A. P. Childs	11
Perry Raymond Cook	13
Slobodan Ćurčić	15
Arcadio Díaz-Quñones	17
Gerard Charles Dismukes	20
Avinash Kamalakar Dixit	22
Emmet William Gowin	25
Ze'eva Cohen (Ludwig)	27
Janet Marion Martin	29
Anne Marie Treisman	31
Daniel Chee Tsui	35
James Wei	37
Froma I. Zeitlin	39

William A. P. Childs



Born in Washington, D.C. in 1942, and having lived a portion of his youth in the Bahamas, William (Willy) Childs entered Princeton in 1960 and received subsequently his B.A. (1964), M.A. (1968), and Ph.D. (1971) from the University. Unusual for his time, however, he spent his junior year at the Institut Catholique and École du Louvre in Paris to study early church history. In 1964–65, he was in London at the University College and the Institute of Archaeology to learn Greek and immerse himself in ancient Near Eastern art history. A Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst fellowship took him to Munich in 1969, and the city became his home during the last two years of writing his dissertation on Lycian city-reliefs and their Mediterranean traditions. Columbia University hired him as assistant professor in 1971, but three years later Willy returned from New York to his alma mater. For the next 36 years, he taught Greek and ancient Near Eastern art and archaeology of the Iron and Bronze age to generations of Princeton students. He continued the long Princeton tradition of archaeology and art historical studies in the Levant and the eastern Mediterranean of Howard Crosby Butler and Rudolf Brünnow, publishing widely on the arts of Lycia between Greece and Persia, but also the Greek Classic. Willy chaired the department from 1985 to 1988 and served twice as president of the Princeton chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Willy's particular interest in the eastern Mediterranean led him to participate in various excavations during his career: He worked at Xanthos, Turkey, with the Institut français d'Archéologie d'Istanbul and as director of publication research at the Princeton excavation at Morgantina, Sicily. In 1983, the department began excavations under his direction at the small village of Polis Chrysochous on the northwest shore of Cyprus. The main objective of the project was to locate the city that had produced noteworthy and rich tombs that had been sporadically

excavated for over a hundred years by European expeditions and local treasure hunters. Literary sources record two cities in the vicinity: Marion, the seat of an archaic kingdom that was destroyed by Ptolemy I Soter, in 312 B.C., and Arsinoe, founded by Ptolemy II Philadelphos in the 270s. The excavations uncovered an archaic and a classical sanctuary with spectacular finds, large sections of the fourth-century city wall, part of what may be an archaic palace, a large Roman building of Augustan and early imperial date, and two early Christian to Byzantine basilicas.

Willy will continue to work on this site for years to come, but the focus of the dig is now shifting away from fieldwork toward the publication of synthetic studies of the material found during the excavations. Last year, Willy and his staff began preparations for an exhibition that will summarize and crown his long work on Cyprus. The project, titled “City of Gold,” is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2012 in the Princeton University Art Museum.