

### Fred M. Donner

**Fred M. Donner** spent much of his time this year engaged in teaching and advising an unusually large crop of students. He revised and submitted for publication his paper "From Believers to Muslims," which he had read at a colloquium in London in May 1994, and also completed his entry on "Sayf b. 'Umar," an important early Islamic historian, for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. He continues, slowly, his efforts to complete a monograph on early Islamic historiography. His terms of service on the board of directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, and as president of Middle East Medievalists, both came to an end in December 1994, but he continues on as editor of *Al-'Usur al-Wusta, The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists*, which appears twice annually, and he remains a member of the board of directors of the embryonic American Research Institute in Syria, which is trying, in difficult diplomatic circumstances, to establish a presence in Damascus. As in recent years, Donner enjoyed participating in the workshop on Middle Eastern urbanism, spearheaded mainly by Dr. Paul Wheatley of the Committee on Social Thought and Donald Whitcomb and Tony Wilkinson of the Oriental Institute. In February, he delivered an illustrated lecture tracing the history of Ayla (medieval Aqaba, Jordan) from the first to the eleventh centuries C.E., as part of an Oriental Institute Museum mini-course on "Ayla: Great City on the China Sea." The other participants were Donald Whitcomb (Oriental Institute), Michael Bates (American Numismatic Society), and Irene Bierman (University of California-Los Angeles). In June, he conducted a two-day workshop on aspects of Islamic civilization for faculty at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, who are working to put together a multi-cultural honors humanities core course sequence. To fill out his schedule, he served as coordinator of the lecture series for the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

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