

Farhat J. Ziadeh**1917–2016**

Farhat Jacob Ziadeh, founder and first chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization at the University of Washington, and a distinguished scholar in the field of Islamic law, writer, teacher, and administrator, died on 8 June 2016 at the age of ninety-nine. Ziadeh was born on 8 April 1917 in Ramallah, Palestine where he received his early education. After graduating from the American University of Beirut in 1937, he studied law at the University of London, receiving an LL.B. degree in 1940. For the next eight years he worked as a lawyer and Arabic instructor in the United States, England, and Palestine. In 1948, he joined the Princeton University faculty as a lecturer in Arabic. The following year he married Suad Salem, who, like himself, was also from Ramallah. They raised five daughters: Shireen, Susan, Rhonda, Deena, and Reema. In 1950, Ziadeh began working with the Voice of America in New York as the editor of the Arabic desk. Since this was a full-time job, he could continue as a lecturer at Princeton only on a part-time basis. In 1954, however, Princeton offered him an assistant professorship, which he accepted. At Princeton, Ziadeh collaborated with the late R. Bayly Winder to write *An Introduction to Modern Arabic* (1957). It was during this period also that Ziadeh began to work on his translation of Ṣubḥī Maḥmaṣānī's *Falsafat al-Tashrī' fī al-Islām* under the title, *Mahmassani's Philosophy of Jurisprudence in Islam* (1961).

A turning point in Ziadeh's career came in 1966 when he was invited by the University of Washington to come to Seattle to develop and head a new program in Near Eastern studies. In 1975, as a result of Ziadeh's success in developing the new Near Eastern program, the University was awarded a Federal grant for the establishment of a Near Eastern Center in what is now known as the Jackson School of International Studies. Ziadeh was appointed director of the Center and continued to serve in that capacity and as chairman of the Department as well, until 1982, when he reached the age of sixty-five, the mandatory retirement age for chairmen and directors. The next year, however, Ziadeh took yet another administrative job, that of Director of the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) in Cairo, Egypt. Years later at the MESA annual meeting in 2006, Ziadeh was honored with a lifetime achievement award from CASA for his notable achievements as director of that organization.

Throughout his academic career Ziadeh served on numerous boards and committees and was elected to a number of offices. From 1975 to 1976, he served as president of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic. He was elected president of the Western Branch of the American Oriental Society for the year 1973/1974. From 1969 to 1971 he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association and elected its president for the 1979/1980 academic year. He was on the advisory board of the Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt, and on the editorial boards of the Arab Law Quarterly and the Arab Studies Quarterly.

In 1987, his last year at the University before his retirement at the age of seventy, Ziadeh was named Solomon Katz Distinguished Lecturer in the Humanities. His lecture, entitled “Integrity (‘*Adālah*) in Classical Islamic Law,” was delivered on the evening of 14 May 1987 as the first of a series of papers read at an Islamic law conference organized in his honor on the occasion of his retirement from the University. The papers were subsequently published by the University of Washington Press in a volume entitled *Islamic Law and Jurisprudence: Studies in Honor of Farhat J. Ziadeh* (1990).

Even in retirement Ziadeh remained active in the field of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. He continued to write articles and reviews in the field of Islamic law and from time to time taught a course to fill a departmental need. In 2001, the Farhat J. Ziadeh Endowed Fund was established to support a series of annual lectures in Arab and Islamic studies. The inaugural lecture in the series, on Gibran Kahlil Gibran, was delivered by Professor Irfan Shahid of Georgetown University in April of 2002.

Ziadeh made a point of regularly attending the annual MESA meetings, and at the 1997 meeting in San Francisco he was presented with MESA’s Mentoring Award “in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the education and training of others in Middle East studies.” Later, at the 2012 annual meeting in Denver, he was elected one of the ten honorary fellows of MESA.

Farhat Ziadeh is survived by his wife Suad and daughters Shireen, Susan, Rhonda, Deena, and Reema. ✂

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