

Dr. Banchik is also a past president of the Collectors Club and serves on its board of Governors; Mr. Maselis is the immediate past president of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, and currently the president of the Club de Monte-Carlo.

Traditionally, the Lichtenstein award is formally given at a springtime dinner in New York, but due to the continuing global pandemic, plans for a dinner this year have not yet been finalized.

Last year's dinner honoring the 2020 recipient, John Barwis, was canceled, along with many other philatelic gatherings around the world. Like many collectors, Dr. Banchik exhibited a tendency toward accumulation at an early age. Perhaps it started in elementary school with some really interesting U.S. President "stamps" that were printed on each tiny student milk carton. Obviously, the teacher was not a collector – young Mark's carefully stashed (and possibly slightly smelly) hoard disappeared from inside his classroom desk one dark and stormy day.

Banchik has been fortunate to have had many role models to shape his philatelic outlook over the years. Besides his parents, Seymour and Barbara, who were prominent in the philatelic community, many well known philatelists have been family friends – some were also customers at the family's luncheonette. Organizations such as the Collectors Club, the Philatelic Foundation and the American Philatelic Society were practically an extension of home. Becoming a serious collector without belonging to these groups was inconceivable, so Banchik gradually immersed himself in organized philately, eventually taking on leadership roles. Collecting was a household affair, with family trips to BALPEX, at the Maryland State Fair and Inner Harbor, and other stamp shows.

Banchik's collecting 'bug' was never far from the surface, and it reemerged after a period of living and studying in Mexico. Upon his return to New York in the early 1980's, Banchik began concentrating on Mexico. His landlord and neighbors in Mexico had had first-hand experiences with the U.S. interventions and revolutionary-era events around 1914; this inspired Banchik's 1914-era exhibit, which was followed by collections centered on earlier events and the U.S. Westward Expansion.

Jim Mazepa encouraged Mark to embrace classic Mexican philately, introducing him to groups outside Manhattan, such as the Mexico-Elmhurst Philatelic Society International (MEPSI), devoted to the postal history of Mexico. Banchik became increasingly active with MEPSI and rose to becoming president and chairman. One highlight of Banchik's collecting life revolved around a major sale of key Mexican material in New York about 1995. Banchik hosted several out-of-town MEPSI members at his home in Great Neck, N.Y. He invited more than 40 people over for dinner but 'forgot' to let his wife, Lillian, in on the plan! Luckily, both the Long Island Rail Road and a local restaurant came to the rescue.

Banchik's past and present philatelic leadership responsibilities have included the Collectors Club board of governors (treasurer, vice president, president); the A.P.S. (Board of Vice Presidents, expert, member of the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges); the American Philatelic Congress (president); the American Air Mail Society (president); MEPSI (president, chairman, fill-in editor). He is also a fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and a member of the Club de Monte-Carlo.

Banchik is a multiple U.S. Grand Award recipient, international exhibitor, philatelic judge, and international jury trainer. Participating in many local, national, and international exhibitions has allowed him to see how the best and brightest succeed in making our hobby a little better.

Volunteering, mentoring, and giving back are one way Banchik hopes to give recognition to the many who have helped guide him in the past. His fervent wish is to repay those who helped him by building the framework that will allow future collectors and philatelic leaders to thrive.