The Illinois Program in Paris was established in 1971 to provide students with the opportunity to get an international education. Beyond improving competence in language, participants in our program acquire fluency firsthand in French culture by interacting with French people and institutions. Paris is known as a world diplomatic center, a dynamic gateway to Europe. Students may go for one semester or for a full academic year. They enroll in the Institut Catholique de Paris, an accredited institution of higher education for French natives. All classes are taught in French by French faculty. IPP also offers more advanced courses. For example, a course on French theater is taught by a faculty member who has also had a career as an actor. As part of the course, the students attend plays and the instructor introduces them to the practical aspects of mounting a production. Another course focuses on a history of Paris and includes outings to view the sites being studied. During their stay, students live with French families or in French dorms located throughout Paris.

Two recent developments in our program reflect our interest in students’ engagement with various disciplines and our desire to enrich the depth of cultural experience of our participants. The first is an initiative to find internships and service-learning opportunities for our students. The internships, some paid and some not, enable students to work for a company immediately or in parallel with their academic program. A student in journalism has done an internship with *Vogue* in Paris and another student, preparing a degree in the teaching of French, is assisting a French high school teacher and gaining valuable insights into different pedagogical practices. We are also developing opportunities for students to do volunteer work during their stay. Some students have been working at a soup kitchen: they first go behind the scenes in order to learn about the mission of the organization and get to know their co-workers, then interact directly with the people being served. Both internships and volunteer jobs make it easier for students to get out of the foreign-student-abroad bubble and engage with the day-to-day realities of French society.

The second development in our Paris program is an opportunity for students to take courses at the Université Paris-Diderot, a major French university offering courses in a broad array of disciplines. Students with the requisite proficiency in French may take courses in their major subject. A student might take the fall semester at the Institut Catholique and then study at Paris-Diderot in the spring. Interest in this opportunity has already been expressed by students in psychology, cell and structural biology, and art history.

Lauren Turk and Caroline Clasby, featured in the pages of this issue, demonstrate the value that IPP brings students. The Department of French is planning a celebration of IPP this spring.
In Transition

Dear friends,

The last years have been a period of transition for the Department of French. Two longtime members of our faculty, Doug Kibbee and Armine Mortimer, retired after distinguished careers, and Larry Schehr’s death has meant the loss of a third eminent colleague. These senior scholars helped to shape the department’s profile. Doug Kibbee’s research program, actively continued in retirement, embraces the history of the French language and of linguistic theories, language legislation, and linguistic human rights. He will be remembered as the first Director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. Armine Mortimer is recognized for her work on narrative analysis, Balzac, and, more recently, literary translation. She served as head of the department. Larry Schehr was a scholar of international stature in the field of 19th and 20th-century French literature and queer and gender studies. Fortunately, the department is attracting faculty who will help us to take the Department into the future. This year we welcome François Proulx (PhD Harvard), a dix-neuviémiste and Proust scholar, and Samir Meghelli (PhD Columbia), a specialist in Franco-American relations, immigration, and decolonization. We are currently conducting a search for a scholar in francophone studies.

On a personal note, this year also marks a transition for me, since I will be stepping down as head at the end of this academic year. I have appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the continued vitality of French studies at Illinois.

I take this opportunity to thank the family of Bruce Mainous, who was a member of our faculty and head of the department, for establishing a fund in his memory that permits us to award scholarships to students participating in our study abroad programs in Arles and Paris. I convey the department’s gratitude to Raymond and Winifred Jennings Kramer for their endowment of a fund that will also support undergraduates who wish to participate in these programs.

It is a pleasure to hear from our alumni and welcome back those of you who return to campus. Please drop by if you are in town. Our welcome mat is always out in 2090 FLB.

Cordially,

Karen Fresco
Department Head
2012 was Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s tricentenary. Rousseau is the third most studied French language author in the world, after Balzac and Proust. One reason is that his work has influenced so many domains and is studied in an unusually large number of disciplines. A considerable number of commemorative occasions of all kinds, from scholarly conferences and colloquia to events for the general public, have taken place all over the world, including Geneva, where Rousseau was born in 1712, China, Iran, Germany, Italy, Russia, and of course France and the U.S. On June 28, Google France even created a special doodle for its home page to honor his 300th birthday: google.com/doodles/jj-rousseaus-300th-birthday

We sat with Professor Laurence Mall, a specialist in 18th-century French literature, to find out more about some of these events and her own contributions to the “year of Rousseau.”

What was your personal involvement in the tricentenary?

Since I have written two books on Rousseau (Origines et retraites dans La Nouvelle Héloïse [1997] and Emile ou les figures de la fiction [2002]), I was invited to participate in a number of scholarly venues.

I first contributed to a volume on Rousseau and sexuality (La Question sexuelle. Interrogation de la sexualité dans l’œuvre et la pensée de Rousseau, ed. Jean-Luc Guichet [2012]). What interested me on this particular topic was to show how the eroticism of female clothing, so powerful in the 18th-century libertine tradition, is equally powerful in Rousseau but is moralized and politicized. Ultimately, only a fairly strict separation between the sexes can control and harness the seductive powers of women’s parure or finery. It is a fairly conservative and puritan position, but it makes sense within the heavily gendered Republican regime Rousseau advocates.

Since your book on Rousseau’s famed treatise on education—Emile—have you had an opportunity to revisit this text?

I have indeed. A few professors from the Universités de Paris II, IV, and VIII had organized a two-year series of seminars on Emile given at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. I was happy to contribute a seminar on the ethics of care, an ethical theory that is very much part of our contemporary debates about the tensions between social justice and compassion, especially among political scientists and theorists of gender. Rousseau, who is routinely invoked in practically all major theories of care, is quite interesting in this regard. On the one hand, he is considered one of the most influential proponents of “gendered” care (parental, conjugal, domestic). On the other, in opposition to major proponents of the philosophy of self-interest so prominent in the 18th century, he is one of the foremost analysts of pity and compassion, and his philosophical view of humanity accentuates its vulnerability—in this perspective, he differs sharply from the tendency to connect care and gender. The talk was published in Eduquer selon la nature. (Seize études sur Emile de Rousseau, ed. Claude Habib [2012]).

I was then asked to write a short piece for Le Magazine littéraire (December 2011), a French literary monthly written for a general audience. Here I mainly emphasized what I think makes Rousseau such a fascinating and relevant writer. The sociopolitical “actualization” of his work is perfectly compatible with an immersion in emotional worlds so extraordinarily intense that they ended up transforming reading practices. The powers of his fiction and his critical strengths reinforce each other in a balancing act that is exceptionally efficient.

Did you participate in any of the events organized in Paris?

Last March I much enjoyed a large international conference jointly organized by the universities Paris Ouest-Nanterre La Défense, Paris7-Diderot and Paris-Sorbonne on Rousseau and spectacle. The range of contributions was astonishing—several papers concentrated on Rousseau’s opera, Le Devin du village, and of course on his most famous text on theater, Lettre à d’Alembert, where he writes prescient analyses of the morally numbing effect of spectacle. Rousseau was also quite interested in the sociological dimension of performance, and he has a lot to say about the strongly visual nature of our psychological, sentimental and imaginative life, an aspect on which I chose to concentrate. My paper will be published in a volume of collected essays from this conference (2013).

Rousseau is well-known for what a critic has called “the first modern autobiography,” his Confessions. Is this an aspect of his work that interests you?

Definitely, since I occasionally teach a course on autobiography and I always include pages from the Confessions in my undergraduate literature survey. As a matter of fact, I very recently wrote an article (continued on page 4)
for an edited volume devoted entirely to The Confessions: Lectures de Rousseau, eds. J. Berchtold, E. Lavezzi and C. Martin (2012). Every reader of the Confessions remembers the pages—so influential for Romantic writers who would follow—on the young Rousseau’s walking through Switzerland and Italy. My article dealt with what is called “paysage d’âme” and the particular figurative and metaphysical connections Rousseau establishes between the human experience of space and life writing.

Are you teaching Rousseau this semester?

In my course on social classes in literature, I have included a couple of classes on Rousseau, of course! We discussed key passages of his Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, a foundational text in historical anthropology and political science. We later read Stendhal’s The Red and the Black. I happened to participate in a conference on Rousseau in Grenoble last October, and I took the opportunity to visit Stendhal’s lovely childhood home, recently restored. Stendhal recognized Rousseau’s influence on him but with his exquisite sense of irony he could not but be repelled by Rousseau’s sentimentalism.

What was the conference in Grenoble about?

Its focus was the concept of authenticity. The goal of the conference was to theorize and problematize the concept, in order to avoid the trap of the “sincere Rousseau” image. I chose to work on two contemporary essayists, novelists, and autobiographers, Annie Ernaux and Pierre Bergounioux. I wanted to demonstrate how at the core of their auto-biographical writing lies the rousseauist tension between two sources of both authenticity and inauthenticity: subjective singularity and the force of the collective. This talk will appear in a volume of essays from the conference (2013).

Did this conclude the “year of Rousseau” for you?

Almost! With a colleague from the University of Florida, Brigitte Weltman-Aron, I co-edited a special bilingual issue of L’Esprit Créateur, a journal based at the University of Minnesota and devoted to French Studies. It is scheduled to appear in December 2012. We gathered a dozen specialists to discuss the importance of Rousseau’s contribution to a field that is currently exploding: the study of emotions. Our contributors explore such issues as the desirability or danger of enthusiasm in pedagogy, the distinction between “good” and “bad” tears, the “natural” or “unnatural” quality of emotional reactions to injustice, the positive or negative power of habituation in romantic relationships, and the political manipulation of aesthetic emotions.

Are there connections between your new book project and Rousseau?

I am currently working on the representation of Parisian everyday life in Louis Sébastien Mercier’s Tableau de Paris. Both the topic and the writer differ in major ways from Rousseau’s much more philosophically oriented work. But who can escape Rousseau’s influence at the end of the 18th century? Mercier, after all, is also the author of De f.-j Rousseau considéré comme l’un des premiers auteurs de la Révolution....

“What Have We Achieved?

A Symposium Marking the 20th Anniversary of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Professor Zsuzanna Fagyal organized this day-long event, held on November 5, 2012, to mark the Council of Europe’s groundbreaking treaty protecting and promoting historically minority languages. Participants included Alexei Kozhemyakov, Head, Charter Office, Council of Europe, who summarized the procedures of application and the achievement of the Charter, taking Alsace as an illustration. Alexandra Jaffe, California State University, Long Beach, focused on the minority language of Corsica in France, a country that has not ratified the Charter. Inigo Urrutia, University of the Basque Country, Bilbao, analyzed the response of EU case law to the tension between national cultural/linguistic goals and the pressure of EU market freedom. Lively interest was evident from attendance by faculty and students across the disciplines. The symposium was co-sponsored by French@Illinois, the European Union Center, the School of Law, the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, and several other units.

Professor Fagyal teaches a course, “Languages and Minorities in Europe,” that draws students from many disciplines.
Recently Published Faculty Books

*En avant!* (McGraw-Hill, 2012) is a first-year French program co-authored by Peter Golato and including contributions by doctoral students Kirby Chazal, Michael Foster, Azeb Haileselassie, and Arnaud Perret. *En avant!* provides clear, concise, and meaningful presentations of essential grammar and vocabulary, creating opportunities for students to use these elements to communicate in French and encouraging them to engage with a broad sampling of authentic French and francophone culture.

*Figurations of France: Literary Nation-Building in Times of Crisis, 1550-1650* (University of Delaware, 2011) by Marcus Keller, explores the often indirect and subtle ways in which key texts of early modern French literature, from Joachim Du Bellay’s *Défense et illustration de la langue française* to Corneille’s *Le Cid*, contribute to the fiction of France as a nation. Taking a fresh look at these and other classics, *Figurations* shows that they not only create the French as an imaginary community but also provide venues for a trenchant critique of this political and cultural construct that underpins the modern nation-state.

*Collections in Context: The Organization of Knowledge and Community in Europe* (Ohio State University Press, 2011), co-edited by Karen Fresco, draws together essays that interrogate questions posed by collections of all sorts—libraries, anthologies, and miscellanies assembled within a single manuscript or printed book, even illustrated ivory boxes. The essays demonstrate that the very act of collecting imposes a relationship among what might be considered disparate elements and simultaneously exposes something about the community that created and used the collection.

*Melancholy Politics: Loss, Mourning, and Memory in Late Modern France* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011) by Jean-Philippe Mathy “sheds a historian’s light on the current controversial politics of national identity in France. Mathy shows that it is best understood in the context of a national ‘depression’—and his reflections on ‘melancholy politics’ give precise meaning to what could otherwise be a vague notion.” Éric Fassin, École normale supérieure, Paris.

We Welcome Two New Faculty Members

**François Proulx** (PhD ’10, Harvard), whose research interests encompass 19th- and 20th-century French literature, gender and sexuality studies, Québec and francophone literatures, literary theory, translation studies, and Marcel Proust. This year, he is teaching courses on Proust, transnational francophone literature, and a general introduction to French literature.

**Samir Meghelli** (PhD ’12, Columbia) holds a joint appointment with the Department of African American Studies. His research interests include postcolonial French studies, youth culture, hip hop, Franco-American relations, race and racism in France, immigration, decolonization, Franco-Maghrebi culture and politics, and the African diaspora in France. This spring he is teaching a course on “Race, Immigration and Urban Cultures in Contemporary France.”

News from our Centre Pluridisciplinaire French@Illinois

Since 1999 the French government has designated the Department of French as one of 18 *centres d’excellence* or *centres pluridisciplinaires* at major research universities in North America. Our center sponsors activities with the goal of enhancing the visibility of France and promoting France-U.S. relations through interdisciplinary teaching programs, research partnerships, and outreach to encourage student interest in France. In recent years we have sponsored a symposium marking the 20th anniversary of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (organized by Professor Zsuzanna Fagyal), co-hosted the exhibition, “Album des Jeunes Architectes et paysagistes—AJAP 2010,” and co-sponsored the visit of Professor Antoine Cazé, professor of American literature at Université de Paris-Diderot, to teach a seminar on translation. This spring, Frédéric Ogée, vice president of international relations at Université de Paris-Diderot, and Christine Musselin and dean of research at Sciences Po, Paris, will come to campus to discuss the future of the French research university. Next fall, our center is co-sponsoring a conference on Existentialism and Post-Colonial Theory (organized by Professor Nancy Blake).
Brian Hunt

I was born in Norwich, a small town in Vermont. When I was 14, I was halfway through reading Proust’s Swann’s Way in a local café when a man who was hiking the Appalachian Trail had stopped to rest and told me he was reading the entire A la recherche du temps perdu along his journey. This revelation instantly connected me to this stranger, a memory that always brings home to me the power of literature and the multiple ways in which we communicate. I went on to study French at the College of Wooster in Ohio. I spent my junior year in Toulouse, where I took classes and received a one-year degree from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques.

In my second year of coursework in French at Illinois, I took a class on spatial theory with Professor Patrick Bray and another on French cinema with Professor Margaret Flinn. These two courses sparked my interest in two subjects I had not considered previously since my interests had been focused on literature. Two years later I was in a class sponsored by the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, “What are Cities?” taught by Dianne Harris, a professor in landscape architecture. The insights from this interdisciplinary course have drawn me to pursue in my doctoral thesis the question of the urban landscape in French literature and culture.

In my dissertation I am using 20th-century French theory, literature, and cinema to examine the urban landscape. I am particularly interested in how fictional human figures utilize, traverse and negotiate nonhuman bodies—specifically commercial and pedestrian transit routes, such as waterways, boulevards, subways, and peripheries—and the built environment. The fictional characters that find themselves within the physical and ideological limits of these mobile zones structure an image of the city from which they are paradoxically excluded. By analyzing novels and films from a range of intellectual movements such as Surrealism, Existentialism, and Post-Humanism, I intend to demonstrate the ways in which French authors and theorists of the 20th century have favored those in-between or marginal zones of the city because of their productive artistic potential.

During my graduate program, I have deeply appreciated the department’s devotion to the graduate students. Faculty members in the Department of French do everything they can to prepare graduate students for the job market. Classes are devoted to professional preparation, as we usually write book reviews, lead class discussion, and give conference-length talks. Moreover, members of the faculty are always present at the French Forum and willing to offer advice.

In 2012 I won the department’s Graduate Essay Prize with my essay on “Navigating France’s Internal Borders in Vigo’s L’Atlante” and was awarded a Summer Departmental Fellowship in order to focus on preparing for my preliminary doctoral examination. I was selected to be a Graduate Study Abroad Assistant and will be teaching on the department’s program in Arles this summer.

In the short term, I hope to finish my dissertation by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year. My long-term goal is to teach at a small liberal arts school like the College of Wooster.

Stéphanie Gaillard

I am from Bordeaux in the southwest of France. I did my undergraduate studies in French linguistics at the University of Bordeaux, where I also earned my master’s degree in teaching French as a foreign and second language.

My passion for teaching non-native French speakers drew me to the United States for additional teaching practice. It is thanks to my Fulbright teaching experience in Iowa that I decided to pursue my studies in French linguistics. What I have gained from teaching in the U.S. is a desire to better understand learning processes and second language pedagogy.

Thanks to my directors, Dr. Davidson and Dr. Tremblay, I realized that I could combine my academic interests in one doctoral project, which could have a real impact on second language research and classroom settings. My dissertation focuses on developing a placement test for French as a second language. The overarching goal of my PhD research is to create a valid, reliable tool that could be used as a complement to the tests already used in second language acquisition and placement.

During my graduate program I have valued the complete support and constant follow-ups from my faculty mentors. This support began during the orientation at the beginning of my first semester and continued with the teaching training for new TAs. The availability and kindness of the faculty in French is one of the biggest strengths of the department. Faculty expertise in diverse areas of French linguistics and their feedback is consistently useful in helping me improve my projects. My professors’ interdisciplinary knowledge has also allowed me to create bridges with other disciplines. Being in the Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education program has enabled me to work with professors outside of the department to strengthen my research possibilities. For example, I am working with a professor who is an expert in testing.

During my program at Illinois, I have obtained the distinction several times for appearing on the on the list of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their students. I received the department’s K. A. Looney Award for Excellence in Teaching (Senior category). In fall 2012, I received the Best Presentation Award at the 14th Midwest Association of Language Testers (MwALT) conference. I have also held a departmental teaching release fellowship that has allowed me to devote myself entirely to my dissertation. I intend to defend my doctoral thesis in August 2014 and start a new academic life in the U.S the following fall semester.
For the eighth year in a row, all of our graduate students have found jobs. They have gone to institutions such as Drew University, Central Michigan University, Old Dominion University, University of Nevada-Reno, Roanoke College, University of Puget Sound, and William Jewell College.

Fellowships and Awards (2011-2013)

The Department’s K. A. Looney Awards for Excellence in Teaching:
Jui Namjoshi (Junior category) 2011
Arnaud Perret (Senior category) 2011
Alessia Zulato (Junior category) 2012
Stéphanie Gaillard (Senior category) 2012
Anne Bénédicte Guillaud-Marlieu (Junior category) 2013
Brian Hunt (Senior category) 2013

The National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship (2011-12) and Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2012-13):
Christopher Carignan
“Oral articulation of French nasal vowels.” Co-directors of research: Zsuzsanna Fagyal (French) and Ryan Schosted (Linguistics)

School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics Dissertation Completion Fellowships:
Arnaud Perret
“Poétique(s) de la révolution: construction d’identité au travers de littératures haïtienne et algérienne.” (2011-12) Co-directors of research: H. Adlai Murdoch (French), Kamal Salhi (U. of Leeds)

Azeb Haileselassie
“Use and Function of the Discourse Marker voilà in Spoken French from a Conversation Analytic Perspective.” (2013-14) Director of research: Andrea Golato

University of Illinois Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship:
Daniel Brant

Connor Sullivan is pursuing a double major in French and linguistics. He spent spring of his junior year participating in our exchange program with the Université-Diderot in Paris.

What drew him to French is the knowledge that a foreign language opens so many doors today: “There are cultures, people, and jobs that just aren’t accessible to those who limit themselves to one language.” Something that his high school French teacher once said has always stuck in his mind: “His goal as a teacher was to make us ‘citizens of the world,’ people with the means to express and involve themselves in a variety of settings. I think that my reasons for studying French are much the same.”

As he is also a linguistics major, French is a great complement to those studies. For example, learning about language acquisition or phonetics, he can frame new material within the context of what he has already experienced in learning French.

He is excited by the opportunities that studying at Sciences Po and living in Paris will offer him next year: “What I really hope to accomplish is to improve my fluency and comprehension of French. My classes here and at high school have been wonderful learning experiences, but I lack the immersive environment that studying abroad in Paris will provide. I look forward to the pressures of speaking French beyond an academic setting and learning to express myself more readily.”

In his program in French at Illinois, Connor has particularly appreciated the opportunity to choose which aspects of the language he wants to study. While the core courses provide the same base for everyone in the French major, the advanced-level courses and the electives that students can choose can greatly affect their learning experience: “Business, literature, and linguistics—a student can choose to incorporate any one of these fields (and many more) into their studies. The flexibility this brings into the college experience is, in my opinion, one of the greatest benefits of the program.”

In the short term, Connor wants to learn as much as possible about the French language while he is still at the U of I. “I enjoy having access to an astounding number of resources and activities that make the learning experience here simply invaluable, and I want to take advantage of them while I can.” Eventually, he intends to internalize the academic and cultural knowledge that he has acquired so that he can draw on it later in the context of whatever career he ends up pursuing.
The Impact of Study Abroad

Two French majors who recently graduated write about the benefits they drew from studying abroad. Caroline Clasby (BA ’12, French and history) participated in the department’s Illinois Program in Paris:

Caroline taught English in a French public school in Tours, France, last year. This year she is back at Illinois completing a master’s in European studies.

“Studying abroad with IPP not only helped me to experience French culture and to improve my French but also gave me the opportunity to do research for my honors history project on the different types of French media aimed towards children during the Third Republic. Through various literary works, advertisements, and posters, I observed how France portrayed her colonies and the colonial inhabitants of Africa. I focused on the images and languages used in these types of media in order to understand the messages that France wanted to send to her children. I found Paris, my home away from home while I was in France, to be extremely beneficial for my project. I was able to visit La Bibliothèque Nationale de France any time I wanted to examine many different primary sources that I would have struggled to consult in the States. I was also able to talk with French teachers who specialized in this field, and my wonderful host family even provided me with some primary sources that had been passed down in their family!” – Caroline Clasby (BA 2012)

Lauren Turk (BA ’10 French, MA ’12 European studies) participated in our exchange program with Sciences Po, Paris, then returned as a master’s student.

“Ever since I began studying French, I have been in love with the idea of going to Paris and experiencing French culture firsthand. I am proud and fortunate to have had the opportunity to study abroad twice through the University. I pursued a master’s in European Union studies with a concentration in economics as a foreign language and was an Area Studies Fellow for advanced French. In 2010-11, I attended the prestigious Institut d’Études Politiques (Sciences Po) in Paris as a master’s student. Studying European affairs in a European environment was priceless, just as living in Paris and speaking French every day ameliorated my French enormously. My classes were composed of people from around the world. I constantly absorbed information and learned both inside and outside the classroom. I prepared a thesis analyzing the political-economic relationship (post-2008) between Turkey and the European Union, an official candidate country to join the EU. This multilayered hot topic remains at the forefront of debate among diplomats, politicians, and academics alike. Outside of my classes, I played the violin in the Sciences Po orchestra, sang in the choir and in bars in Paris. Every day I would walk out of my apartment and smile at the beauty of Paris, feeling lucky to be there and wishing that my stay could continue.”

Lauren has held positions in the University’s Office of Public Engagement and in the Office of Sustainability. She is currently working as a researcher and project consultant for Pull, a design company, and as an event planner for The Baker Group.

News from the Arles Summer Program

This summer the Arles Program will be in its fifth year. Alain Fresco worked to put it in place in order to give students an opportunity to study French intensively for a month, taking third or fourth semester French, French conversation, or French phonetics. Participants all live with host families and experience how a modern French family lives. Excursions in Provence introduce them to the modern port city of Marseille, to Avignon with its focus on theater and photography, or to the Camargue nature reserve. Last year the Department of French awarded the first Mainous Scholarships to Gabriela Elizaldo-Ocasio, Fai Thompson, and Sara Costello.

In the report that she filed upon her return from Arles, Sara wrote: “The biggest benefit I have gained would, of course, be how much my French has improved from staying a month in France. I was on the cusp of fluency, and I think I really needed that push to get more confident in my abilities and more fluid in my thinking. But there are so many more benefits besides that. Without Arles, I would never know the new friends I made, or my new family in France…. I would never have seen 2,000-year-old ruins or touched the Mediterranean, or eaten frog legs or seen where Vincent Van Gogh painted all his beautiful Arles paintings. All the blisters and wind and mean looks from women when I wore shorts…it was worth it. … I had a beautiful trip to Arles, and I thank the French department for giving me the opportunity, through accepting me into the program and granting me the Mainous Scholarship, in order to do so.”

Alumni News

David J. Klein (PhD 1968), senior vice president and financial advisor at RBC Wealth Management, who used to participate in the department’s “French Means Business” day organized by Liz Martin, writes: “While I have been in the business and financial world for the past 30 years, I still think very fondly of the four years I spent on campus and the many associations I made through the French department.”

Julia DiLiberti (PhD 1994) is a professor of the humanities at the College of DuPage. She has spent a year in Benin, West Africa, working with teachers in classrooms and has served as assistant director of a women’s shelter in DuPage County. In 2009-2010 she was selected as the College of DuPage’s All College Outstanding Faculty Mentor.

Leila Ennaili (PhD 2011), an assistant professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at Central Michigan University, participated in an NEH Summer Seminar in Paris studying France’s ghosts at the Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent.

Deirdre Heistad (PhD 2000) came to Urbana to attend the conference “Islam in Europe: Past, Present, Future” (June 21-24, 2010). She brought with her public school teachers from Cedar Valley Schools in Iowa. She now has tenure and is an associate professor of French in the Modern Languages Department at University of Northern Iowa. She has also held a two-year appointment in the Provost’s office, focusing on increasing diversity.

Katy Hudak (BA 2010) graduated from Johns Hopkins University in May 2013 with an MBA in finance and health care. She is heading for Cape Town, South Africa, where she will be working for the next three months for a consulting firm, Kaiser Associated, in their economic development practice. She plans to chronicle this adventure in a blog: katysadventuresinsouthafrica.wordpress.com

Stacy Fifer (PhD 2005) is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of French and Francophone Studies at UIC. She has been teaching all levels of French, including advanced courses in her field, francophone literature and culture. In March 2012, she co-organized with Professor Eyamba Bokamba a conference on “Reclaiming the Destiny of the Congo.”

Jessica Jacobson (MA 2011) has been named a Maître de langues at the Ecole Normale Supérieure-Lyon, where she has been teaching for the last two years. She has enjoyed autonomy in designing her courses, one of which is on U.S./France intercultural perspectives. The students are wonderful, writes Jessica, and the job has been a great professional experience for her.

Molly Melching (AB 1971, MA 1979), founder of TOSTAN, a non-governmental organization working in Senegal and other West African countries to educate people about health and human rights, was featured in a 2011 PBS documentary series, Religion and Ethics. She and her organization were also reported in stories in the New York Times (October 15, 2011, and July 22, 2013). Newsweek named Molly one of the 150 Women Who Shake the World (March 2012) and The Global Journal named TOSTAN one of the Top 100 best NGOs (2012). tostan.org

Fallou Ngom (PhD 2002) was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011 to pursue his work on Ajami, an ancient writing system that renders African languages in a modified Arabic script. Although long ignored by colonial powers and the West, Ajami remains a leading written language of commerce, legal documents, journals, even poetry in several sub-Saharan countries. Fallou is an associate professor at Boston University, where he directs the African Language Program and is training students to read and transcribe Ajami.

Adam Cznikiewicz (BA 2012) has been working in the client services office of AB Mauri Fleischmann, a company that needs bilingual staff because it does substantial business with Canadian customers. He has also been working for U of I professor of architecture Kenny Cupers to obtain author’s rights for the plates in a book on architecture and the suburbs in postwar France. Beginning in January, Adam has an internship in Paris as an assistant juridique with the firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton.

Martha Schniepp (BA French and psychology 2007) got her MA in industrial and labor relations at Cornell and is now a human relations manager for Quest Diagnostics in Los Angeles.

Sammi Wong (BA 2012) is a farm and habitat assistant with AmeriCorps.

Rachel Yelin (BS Integrative Biology, BA French 2012) spent the summer after graduation at the Center for Talen Development as a biology lab prep coordinator. She is currently working at the NorthShore University HealthSytem Cytology Lab in Evanston, Ill.

Liz Martin (PhD 1997) a professor of French at California State University—San Bernardino, received an award in May 2013 from the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) for her project, “French Means Business: A Web Portal for French Majors Pursuing Careers in International Business.”

Wynne Wong (PhD 2000), an associate professor of French at Ohio State University, published a film-based introductory French textbook, Liaisons, with Heinle-Cengage Learning. The film was shot on location in Paris, Montreal, and Quebec City. The movie’s trailer and the film premiere can be viewed here: cengage.com/community/ liaisons
Calina Fofiu (MA 2007) lives in Paris and works as an English and French trainer for a small company that specializes in virtual classroom training. She is taking the CAPES in order to become an English teaching, after which she would like to take the CAPES in Lettres modernes. She is married and has a daughter, Sara.

Beth Blount (MA 2007) is a freelance translator/editor at Blount Translations, LLC, and lives in the greater Denver area. She previously worked at Stoquart S.A. and AG Insurance in Belgium, where she translated from French and Dutch into English.

Mack McConnell (BA French and business 2010) is product manager for QuickBooks Mobile for Android at Intuit. He lives in the San Francisco Bay area.

Carrie Klaus (PhD 2000) is associate professor of French and is now chair of the Modern Languages Department at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind. She returned to campus for homecoming in October 2012 to see the renovated Lincoln Hall and, in particular, the paver which she and her family had inscribed in honor of her grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Ridgely, who graduated from the U of I in 1931 with a major in French (though the alumni records read “general studies”).

Brenna Ross (MA 2007) and Renaud Verdier (MAT 2007) celebrated the birth of their daughter, Lucy Claudia-Mary Verdier, on May 9, 2012. Renaud teaches French at Hinsdale Central High School and Brenna, at Naperville North High School, both in the Chicago area.

Joe Johnson (BA 2012) wrote an honors thesis “Navigations identitaires, destins corporels: Fenye, Yvain, Philomena” under the direction of Karen Fresco and began graduate studies in French at New York University in fall 2012.

Lizzie Black (PhD 2010), Juliette Dade (PhD 2009), and Audrey Evrard (PhD 2011) returned to campus to participate in a conference in memory of Larry Schehr, “Articulations of Difference,” September 13-14, 2012. All three have taken jobs: Lizzie at Old Dominion University in Virginia, Juliette at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, and Audrey at Drew University in New Jersey.

Samira Hassa (PhD 2006) received tenure and was promoted to associate professor at Manhattan College, N.Y., last spring. A sociolinguist, Samira founded the Arabic program at Manhattan College. She has published her doctoral thesis (De La Médina à la Ville Nouvelle: Étude Ethnolinguistique de la Ville de Fes. Paris LINCOM Europa, 2008) and several articles on Arabic-French code-switching and code-mixing. manhattan.edu/faculty/samirahassa

Michele Dieckelman (PhD 2003) has been teaching French at El Camino High School in Oceanside, Calif., for 10 years. She also teaches an evening French class at Palomar College, a local community college. She reports that French is doing well in southern California. She helps organize an annual French Week at her high school, takes her students to the San Diego opera, and brings French students to her campus through a local program, French and American Cultural Exchanges. She sees Liz Martin from time to time.

Sarah Bradley (MA 2011) is teaching at Greenfield Central High School in Indiana, about 20 miles east of Indianapolis. She teaches French I-IV and finds her new job exhausting and exciting.

Emily Felker (BA French and Psychology 2013) wrote an honors thesis “La sensibilité à l’accord dans le traitement de la parole chez les apprenants du français,” directed by Peter Golato, and this year is teaching English in a French public school in Strasbourg.

Samira El Atia (PhD 2003) received early tenure and promotion to associate professor at the University of Alberta in 2012 and won a prize for her research.

Martha Firehock (née Quinlan) (BA 2004) returned to campus in November 2013 to distribute information about Cultural Vistas, for which she serves as director of internship placement services. This nonprofit organization uses internships to encourage connections through career-building international exchanges.

Our Illustrious Alumni

Mark Frobose, “The Language Guy”

As a kid, Mark Frobose didn’t understand grammar and did wretchedly in his high school French classes. And yet, he ended up a successful entrepreneur working in foreign language instruction. The transformative ingredient was traveling abroad. Inspired by a trip to Europe as an Explorer Scout, Mark plunged into the study of French and entered the graduate program at the U of I. He studied abroad at the Université de Grenoble, earning three certificates. After obtaining his MA in French (1979), he developed a language training system, Behind the Wheel®, which became a bestseller on amazon.com. He eventually sold this foreign language audio line in 15 languages to Macmillan Audio. Passionately dedicated to making foreign language learning widely accessible, Mark is developing another business, Fast Language Key, with a recording studio in Champaign.
Edwin Jahiel (1925-2010)

Edwin Jahiel’s career as a professor of French and cinema studies at the University of Illinois spanned 47 years. He was the founding director of the University’s Unit for Cinema Studies. A member of the Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique, which consists of 300 film critics from around the world, he was regularly featured on WILL as a commentator on contemporary cinema, often bringing fresh word from the film festivals that he attended. His work disseminating French culture was recognized by the Palmes académiques. To honor his many contributions, the Unit for Cinema Studies established an annual award that recognizes a research paper in cinema studies written by an undergraduate student.

Bruce Mainous (1914-2010)

Bruce Mainous served as a professor of French and as head of the Department of French. He was the first director of the department’s study abroad program in Rouen, France, and later of the program in Paris. He was president of the Illinois Foreign Language Teachers Association 1966-1968. He received all three levels (Commandeur, Officier, and Chevalier) of the Ordre des palmes académiques, awarded by the French government in recognition of his contributions to the expansion of French culture and to education in French. In his honor his family established a fund to support of students participating in the department’s study abroad programs. The first Mainous Scholarships were awarded in 2013.

Lawrence Schehr (1954-2011)

A scholar of international stature in the field of 19th and 20th-century French literature and queer and gender studies, Larry Schehr joined the Department of French in 2000. His numerous publications include two with the University of Illinois press, French Gay Modernism (2004) and his translation of Willy, The Third Sex (2007). He was the editor-in-chief of the journal Contemporary French Civilization and was named Chevalier de l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques in 2001 by the French government. While at the University of Illinois, he served as associate dean for the humanities in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2003-2006, directing the Mellon grant program during his tenure.

Paul Vieille (1922 – 2010)

Paul Vieille passed away quietly in September 2010 in Paris. His scholarship was wide-ranging, embracing France, Italy, the Maghreb, the Mediterranean, and Iran. His professional career involved two separate tenures at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS): first as a technician in P.H. Chombart de Lauwe’s sociology laboratory in the early ’50s, and second as a director of research from 1975 until his retirement in 1988. From 1975 until 1981, he was affiliated with Grenoble’s Institute for Political Studies (CERAT). He was also director of the ERMI at the Center for Sociological Studies (1981-1985) and of the Chryséis Laboratory at the Institute for Research on Contemporary Societies. He created the first Mediterranean-Caribbean Laboratory at the CNRS, in collaboration with Dany Gisler, Laënnec Hurbon, and others.

He taught in the Department of French at Illinois 1988-2000 with Professor Evelyne Accad and was also closely affiliated with the University’s Center for Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. His work became known to a wider readership thanks in part to Peuples Méditerranéens, a quarterly publication of international and interdisciplinary work in the social sciences, which he founded in 1977 together with a network of some 40 researchers from both shores of the Mediterranean. The University of Illinois library has digitized the entire run of this journal, which is now available online (hathitrust.org).

In recognition of the significant contributions that his scholarship has made, a double tribute to his career is being offered: one in Paris November 29-30, 2013, organized by the CNRS, and another in Urbana, March 19, 2014, organized by his colleagues at the University of Illinois.
Invitation to contribute to the Kibbee fund

The Douglas A. Kibbee Prize was created by colleagues, friends, and students of Professor Doug Kibbee on the occasion of his retirement in December 2010, in honor of his distinguished career and service.

The Kibbee Prize is awarded annually to the recipient of a School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics Dissertation Completion Fellowship whose project is judged outstanding by the School’s Executive Committee.

Gifts to the Kibbee Prize not only recognize excellence among the students in the school but also continue the legacy of a truly great teacher and scholar whose influence will continue at the University of Illinois for many years to come.

Your generosity is sincerely appreciated.

Give to the Department of French Fund:
french.illinois.edu/gift

Give to the Douglas A. Kibbee Prize:
slcl.illinois.edu/connect/giving.html