Who Was Lucy Ellis?
And Other Particulars about the FLB

Considering that most alumni of the French Department "did time" in the Foreign Languages Building, we're guessing you had some sort of relationship to the building, whether warm and cozy or just a place to leave as soon as classes were over. But did you ever wonder about the building itself, its history, its parts, its location? How about its peculiarities?

For instance, UIUC design guidelines of April 1969 listed on the university's web site single out our building for its unique style: "The main quadrangle is an example where the aspects of shared building size, location, and alignment around the quadrangle space exert a unifying influence in spite of significant differences in color, texture, and building shape. The Foreign Languages Building, however, has a strongly divergent shape (narrow base, broad top) and texture (overall grain of detail, window, and solid area) and becomes a disharmonious element." In fact, if FLB harmonizes with another building not too far away, it would be the Music Building between Oregon and Nevada streets.

Then there is the architecture professor who teaches Arch 210, Robert Ousterhout, with his own particular way of singling out our building. The term paper assignment in this course calls for "the analysis of a building" or other urban space "that you regard as an example of good architecture." But, Professor Ousterhout specifies, the following are unacceptable topics: "your family home, anything designed by a member of your family, a fraternity or sorority house, and the Foreign Languages Building."

More than once we've heard about criticisms. One of our colleagues opines that the architect probably went into hiding; another architecture professor of times past regularly used the FLB for his Architectural Criticism course; we've also heard it rumored about that the building was to have been called The Tower of Babel, until saner heads prevailed. Another colleague had this to say: "The architect worked for the State... He deserves to remain anonymous, given all the problems we have had."

Then there are the urban legends. Christopher Quinn, assistant librarian at the Ricker Architecture and Art Library, writes: "I'm sure you're familiar with the old urban legends about the building. Something about it being built to house computers that could withstand a nuclear attack?" Well, no, we can't say we are familiar with that interesting legend, but we concede it might have been a plausible plan in the sixties. A bit of research did turn up a 1998 Daily Illini article under the headline "FLB's blastproof design nothing more than myth." Others say a short-wave antenna was installed on the roof and that a cinema was to go in the basement, but plans were too far along to accommodate it. Some of us also fondly remember a French Department faculty member, since departed, who used to suggest that the atrium could profitably be turned into a swimming pool. Professor Fred Jenkins recalls that "the atrium in the middle was supposed to have a café so that all FL students could sit around chatting in their respective FLs. I don't think we even came close on this one." We have indeed wondered what the architect thought the atrium was for, but we always assumed it was something like access to classrooms. (We'd love to hear your suggestions, but we'll stop short of holding a contest.)

The French Department moved into FLB in 1971 from Lincoln Hall's second floor, where the department and most of the faculty offices were located. Interestingly, the teaching assistants were far away in a building, since torn down, on California Street in Urbana. Both of those places had windows that opened, even in classrooms. April Walsh comments: "I actually missed the classrooms in Lincoln Hall where you could open the windows and smell spring. Descending to the basement of the new Foreign Languages Building did not seem so inviting..." The so-called "inverted rectangular pyramid" shape was the solution proposed by Chicago architects Holabird and Root to shoehorn a large amount of space into the available location. Interestingly, one may see a similar building

—see page 2
FRENCH LECTURERS VISIT CAMPUS

During the past academic year, visitors from France enriched the intellectual life of the department and the campus at large, thanks to the support of the French Cultural Services continue to provide for our France-Illinois interdisciplinary center. Eric Fassin, a sociologist from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, whose work is a topic of attention on both sides of the Atlantic, gave two lectures on the recent debates on issues of gender and sexuality in France. Frédéric Martel, a cultural attaché in Boston, also visited campus in November and gave two lectures on public debates and the role of the intellectuals in contemporary France.

IN TRANSITION

Jean-Philippe Mathy

This has been a transition year for the Department of French. Three longtime members of our faculty, Evelyne Accad, Edwin Jahiel, and Emile Talbot have retired after very distinguished careers. Edwin Jahiel is an internationally renowned film critic and the founder of the Unit for Cinema, which became a model for other such programs in the United States. Both Evelyne Accad and Emile Talbot contributed over the years to the strength and reputation of our Francophone Studies program, the former in the area of the literatures of the Maghreb and Mashrek and the latter in Quebec Studies. They excelled in other areas as well. Professor Accad is an accomplished novelist and songwriter, and Professor Talbot an eminent Stendhal specialist. Although retired, they both will continue their association with the department, in one capacity or another. Emile Talbot is teaching an undergraduate course on Quebecois literature this semester and will offer a course as well in the spring of 2006.

Established senior faculty, because of their contribution to a department’s reputation, are indeed irreplaceable, as the work of each of them offers a unique accomplishment in teaching, scholarship, and service. Fortunately, the Department of French has in recent years been very successful in hiring highly competent junior colleagues who will help us remain one of the best programs in French Studies in the nation. This year, we were able to attract to Champaign-Urbana two promising young scholars, Margaret Flinn (PhD, Harvard University) in film studies and Marcus Keller (PhD, University of California-Irvine) in early modern French literature and culture. Given the quality of our junior faculty in the areas of literature, linguistics, and second-language acquisition, it is with confidence that I look at the future of our department.

On a personal note, this year also marks a transition for me, since I will be stepping down as department head at the end of the academic year. I enjoyed my tenure as executive officer and am grateful for having had the opportunity to contribute, in association with our faculty, staff, and graduate students, to the vitality and continued excellence of French Studies at Illinois.
Illinois Graduate To Be Heard on Radio France

Yelena Matusevich (PhD 1998) was taken completely by surprise last November when a group of French explorers, journalists, and radio reporters descended upon her office at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. The visitors were on an around-the-world trip sponsored by Renault automobile, interviewing French people living abroad. In Fairbanks they sought the help of the French community for accommodations and car maintenance. When Matusevich's students heard French spoken in the popular local café, Gulliver's, they introduced themselves to the visitors and talked enthusiastically about their teacher and their classes. And they spoke such good French that the crew wanted to know more.

"When they found out that I was a Russian teaching French in Alaska with such results, the reporters decided that I was a 'very exotic case indeed' and asked permission to come to campus, to meet me, sit in classes, and join our French Film Club," Matusevich wrote. They learned that French at the University of Alaska was an endangered species until Matusevich took on the challenge of restoring it to health. Because of low enrollments, the program was in danger of being shut down, and several discouraged professors had left. Matusevich says, "I accepted the challenge, because it was my only chance to ever make it in academia." In five years at Fairbanks, she has completely redesigned the French program and enrollments have increased almost forty percent. She established a French Film Club, created several new courses, won Best Teacher and Outstanding Advisor awards, and was tenured after three years. With her students, she performed Ionesco's _La Cantatrice chauve_ and Anouilh's _Humulus le muet_ in French.

She was interviewed by Philippe Lansac of Radio France. "He asked me about my past, my relationship to France and French culture, my publications, my biography, my work at C.N.R.S., my art exhibits (one of them was at Gulliver's) and the [French] program, of course. I talked about Russians' unanswered passionate love for France, which, in return, often portrays my country so unfairly (especially lately), for French culture, cinema, literature, and poetry they know so well." Matusevich also mentioned her deep gratitude to her dissertation advisor at UIUC, Professor Jean-Philippe Mathy.

The interview will air on Radio France in July.

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MATHIEWS AVENUE

The same year the university was founded, in 1867, Milton W. Mathews moved to Urbana and became a lawyer, at age twenty-one. In 1888, he was elected to the State Senate, where he was known not only for his tact and sagacity but also for "his vigor and eloquence in argument." To those of us teaching foreign languages in the FLB, vigor and eloquence seem like appropriate characteristics to emulate. Shortly after Mr. Mathews died at age forty-six, in 1892, the city changed what had been Somers Street north of Springfield Avenue and Nelson Avenue south of it to Mathews Avenue in honor of the late senator.

And if there are any good FLB stories you would like to share, please email us at french@uiuc.edu.
Martha Quinlan: Sharing With Others

Growing up in Mahomet, about twelve miles from Urbana, Martha Quinlan never once imagined she would stay here to do her undergraduate degree. "When you grow up in this area," she says, "the university is right under your nose"—and for the "townies" there is a stigma attached to attending UIUC. It was this desire to leave the Champaign-Urbana area that motivated her to do well in French in high school. French gave her the means to find out more about other people and cultures.

Quinlan, recipient of the Charlotte McMillian Scholarship this year, will graduate in May with a double major in French and International Studies. But what led her to UIUC after believing for so long that it was important to get away to do her undergraduate studies? Quinlan explains that after high school she took one year off to go to Brussels to work for the Baha'i Faith. During this year abroad she served as the National Youth Coordinator and worked for the Baha'i's maison d'édition. Her principal duties concerned Belgian youth from both the Flemish-speaking and the French-speaking regions, involving them in activities where they used theater, music, and dance to learn about social issues.

This year abroad after high school was the best choice she ever made, Quinlan says. On the one hand, she fell in love with the multicultural atmosphere of a large, bustling European city. On the other hand, she grew to appreciate the hometown that she had left behind and the University of Illinois. Her assessment of this shift is refreshingly candid. "When you travel to a new place, you leave part of your heart at home and while you are away you think of all the good things you had while you were there, but did not fully appreciate." Returning to Mahomet, she saw central Illinois differently, and, realizing that the Champaign-Urbana campus had much to offer, she began her undergraduate studies at UIUC.

And she has another good reason to stay in the local area. She is the oldest of four daughters and is very close to her three sisters, who like her are learning French. Quinlan's decision to study French rather than Spanish was probably influenced by the French teacher at Mahomet-Seymour High School, Katy Duepen. This teacher's enthusiasm for her subject and the energy she put into creating travel opportunities for her students definitely had a positive influence on Martha Quinlan and her sisters.

In addition to excelling in all of her courses, Quinlan has been a very active undergraduate. She is a salsa dancing aficionado and also holds down a part-time job in a local shoe store. She participated in the French Department's study abroad program in Paris and also traveled to Niger during the summer of 2001 for the Baha'i in the capital city Niamey. There, she worked with youth to promote education about social issues using performing arts. Living in Niger was extremely challenging. It was difficult to be a young girl in a Muslim country, negotiating with constraints and at the same time seen as the typical American. Quinlan says, "I struggled a lot with trying to understand what was culturally acceptable for me to do in Niger inside the bounds of my personal goals for the trip (learn a lot, experience the most, and share everything I could)."

Quinlan would like to use what she's learned from her double major in French and International Studies to promote human rights and social issues. She sees herself fitting in to either a non-governmental organization or a human rights organization. She also is enthusiastic about the idea of facilitating artistic expression to this end. Martha Quinlan says that in addition to the ability to speak another language, her French studies have given her a heightened critical sense and have vastly improved her writing skills in English as well as French. She also admits that she could not have learned French without going abroad. "The twelve months in Belgium were where I really learned how to speak", progress came slowly, and then all of a sudden things came together. "I hope every French major has the chance to live abroad!" Quinlan concludes.
Graduate Profile

Samira Hassa: From the Medina to the Midwest

The Medina in Fes, Morocco, is a few miles but worlds apart from the Ville Nouvelle. Narrow streets packed with shops form an intricate labyrinth in the Medina; the broad, straight avenues of the Ville Nouvelle are lined with modern stores and apartment buildings. Samira Hassa, a graduate student in the French linguistics program, is studying the linguistic manifestations of these distinct worlds.

Moroccan Arabic blends with Berber in the one, with French in the other, and also in the mix are classical Arabic (the language of the Qur'an) and international Arabic, the language of mass media throughout the Arab world. Through a series of interviews conducted during two trips back to her native city, Hassa has gathered materials to describe the linguistic choices made by inhabitants of the two parts of the city.

Curiosity about such mixtures of languages comes naturally to Hassa, who has one French and one Moroccan grandfather. She attended French schools in an Arab country, and then studied Arab students' attitudes towards French at a French university (Montpellier). On a whim she decided to spend a year on an exchange at an American university, and landed at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. There one of her professors guided her to the University of Illinois for her doctoral work. "I followed my intuitions," recounts Hassa, "I have not mapped out my life in advance."

At UIUC, her intuitions led her to try something different every semester, challenging herself to gain breadth. She has taught six different courses in six semesters, has coordinated three courses, and has worked as a research assistant with Professor Zsuzsanna Fagyal. This summer Hassa will develop a new course from scratch on legal French and the French legal system in collaboration with Professor Douglas Kibbee, and she will teach a course on-line on French lexicology.

The variety of her background and her teaching is matched by the variety of her research interests. This spring she presented two papers at the prestigious conference on 20th-Century French Studies, held this year at Florida State University (and last year at UIUC).

In one talk Hassa describes the differences between place names in the Medina and the Ville Nouvelle, linking these to the histories and the current demographics of the two neighborhoods. In the other, she and fellow graduate student Christopher Stewart explore the world of rap music and the linguistic choices made by French rappers. Standard French, popular French, English, African-American English, Arabic, Creoles, and Pwérwise are among the many options, and, as Hassa and Stewart demonstrate, the choices are not random.

Such presentations are no longer a matter of trepidation for Samira Hassa, who is now a veteran of academic conferences. Last year she spoke at a conference on French phonetics in Nancy, France, and another on sociolinguistic variation in Raleigh, North Carolina. This activity is strongly encouraged by the department, which has always found funds to support graduate students as they take these first steps in their professional careers. (See our article under "Les Nouvelles" for more news about conference papers.)

Combining her life as a student with teaching and research is what Samira Hassa appreciates the most about the American university system.
FACULTY PROFILE

Douglas Kibbee

When those of us with an interest in the French language find ourselves contemplating the history of the French grammatical tradition, our thoughts naturally turn to... England. Right? Well, perhaps not, but this is where Professor Douglas Kibbee would advise us to start—in thirteenth-century England to be exact.

Doug Kibbee's career as a Professor of French and historian of the French language took root during the 1970s when he was a graduate student at Indiana University. Like many linguistics students of that era, he was drawn to the work of Noam Chomsky, but Chomsky's polemical style of argumentation led him to suspect that there might be weaknesses in his theories and to wonder what alternatives were available to linguistics. Answers began to come during a graduate course on the history of the French language with the eminent philologist Samuel Rosenberg. Rosenberg assigned to each student an in-depth study of a sixteenth-century grammar, and it was this experience that opened Kibbee's eyes to what grammatical texts from earlier eras might teach us. He later went on to write his PhD thesis with Professor Rosenberg on the establishment of the French grammatical tradition which, he points out, began in England in the thirteenth century.

Much of Kibbee's research has focused on the history of the French grammatical tradition, on how and why the rules of language that we call grammar emerged over time within a linguistically diverse geographical area. He is interested in all periods of French history, from the Roman occupation of Gaul to the Revolution (when only one fourth of the population spoke French), the emergence of prescriptive grammars in the nineteenth century, and the recent controversy about the borrowing of English words provoked by the *loi Toubon*. He began to study language legislation and linguistic rights during a sabbatical year in Nantes, France, in the early 1990s, during the debates surrounding the *loi Toubon*. Kibbee discovered that there are similar attempts to legislate language use in this country. Most people have heard debates on Spanish and immigrant languages, but less public court rulings are actually shaping American language use. Non-standard varieties of English, "political correctness," and freedom of speech are examples.

In 1996 Kibbee organized an international Language Legislation and Linguistic Rights conference on the campus of the UIUC. This event brought together scholars from all over the world whose interests included such issues as the English-only movement in the United States, the Slovak-only movement in the new nation of Slovakia, and the evolution of sign-language communities in Brazil. The proceedings of this conference were published in a volume entitled *Language Legislation and Linguistic Rights* (1998).

Kibbee's course on the history of the French language provides a solid foundation for graduate students' research careers. Kibbee has also developed a successful two-semester sequence in techniques of translation. These three courses are regularly offered online, thus opening them up to people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take a course on the UIUC campus. This spring, Kibbee is teaching an honors course entitled Language and the Law in which students are made to confront language issues present in American society as well as their own unacknowledged prejudices with regard to forms of English that are different from their own.

Kibbee is also a leader in the use of technology in research. He is part of an international consortium to post full text of all editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* online (www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicoes/). He was also the leader of a team that founded the Kolb-Proust Archive at the library of the University of Illinois, a hyperlinked guide to Marcel Proust and his era (www.library.uiuc.edu/kolbp).

As a scholar in history and linguistics, Kibbee is more comfortable in the French department than he would be in a linguistics department, where he would not be as free to criticize contemporary American linguistic theory. He disagrees that linguistic science should be purely descriptive rather than prescriptive, because descriptive linguistics ignores a significant aspect of language use. History clearly tells us that humans have always been prescriptive. After all, Kibbee says, we correct our children and people in conversation, not to mention colleagues' papers. What interests Kibbee is to find out how such behavior on the part of individuals and institutions has influenced linguistic theory. Ironically, Kibbee's work as a historian
Les Nouvelles

GRAD STUDENTS DELIVER PAPERS AT CONFERENCES

We are proud of three students who gave papers at "Diversity and Difference in France and the Francophone World," the annual 20th-21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, April 1-3, 2004, in Tallahassee. Samira Hassa, "De l’Avenue de France au Boulevard Hassan II: 50 ans de transformation dans les dénominations de l’espace urbain de Fes (Maroc)"; Jessica SERTLING MILLER, "Value of the participle and at Québec about "Critique des savoirs sous l’Ancien Régime"; Geneviève M. Pelletier at the American Association of Applied Linguistics about Canada’s Bill 101; and Jessica Miller at the Linguistic Symposium on the Romance Languages about "Phonetic Cues to Common and Special Cases of Laison."

ACCAD AND KUNTZ IN CONFEERENCE AT KRANNERT ART MUSEUM

Professors Evelyne ACCAD and Jane KUNTZ took part in "Beyond East and West: Transnational Art Today," a conference held February 6 and 7 in conjunction with the exhibition "Beyond East and West: Seven Transnational Artists" at KAM January 23-April 4, curated by David O’Brien and David Prochaska, displaying works by artists from the region stretching from Egypt to Pakistan who have lived most of their lives in Europe or the U.S. Kuntz spoke about "Hashid Korauchi, the Algerian Exception." ACCAD introduced another speaker.

BIRTHS

Professor Zsuzsanna FAGYAL-LE MENTEC had her second son, Cedrik, on January 28, 2004, and graduate student ETERI SHVETS had a girl, Clara Nadine, her second child, on April 11. She obtained her PhD in December.

ALUMNI NEWS

The Chicago Tribune of November 30, 2003, listed, in its “Readers’ Guide” page, the recently published translation by Karen L. Marker of Anu Gavaldà’s short stories, Je voudrais que quelqu’un m’attende quelque part. Marker was a student in the French Department, earning a BA in English and in Architectural Studies in 1994. I Wish Someone Were Waiting for Me Somewhere was published by Penguin Putnam (Riverhead Books) in December 2003. As Marker tells it in a recent email, a friend lent her Gavaldà’s book and she liked it so much that she wrote the editor in Paris. Riverhead Books invited her to translate the collection. Marker is working on an MA in French at Northern Illinois University, concentrating on literary translation.

Kibbee, cont’d

and a linguist has been more favorably received in France than in the United States. But his intellectual position on linguistic theory by no means prevents him from participating in important linguistics forums. In fact, he is presently organizing the International Conference on the History of Linguistics, which will be held on the UIUC campus in September 2005. This major event, which will bring together scholars from every continent, illustrates Kibbee’s position as a key player in the field of linguistics and the enormous respect his work enjoys around the world.
Walsh Wins Palmes Académiques

Alumna April K. Walsh, longtime friend of the French Department, was named a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques in 2002 for her dedicated service to the American Association of Teachers of French and to the profession. Her degrees from the University of Illinois are in French teaching (BAT 1970, MAT 1972) and Expanded French Studies (MA 1979). Walsh learned French as a first-year student in 1965 and fondly remembers her teaching assistant, Jim Mall, as one of her best teachers. She has worked at AATF National Headquarters for more than thirty years, including some of the many years when the AATF was hosted by the U of I under the presidency of Professors Francis Nachtmann and Fred Jenkins (from 1989 to 1997). The organization noted her contributions in her thirtieth year, 1999. Walsh also served in the French Department office as administrative assistant from 1993 to 1997, as many alumni will remember. When the AATF headquarters were moved to Southern Illinois University, April Walsh left Urbana to continue her service to the association, in which she is a life member. As she tells us, "The French Department at U of I formed me and gave me a rich foundation on which to build my life devoted to things French. For this and for all the friends that I made there, I will be toujours très reconnaissante!"