

Awards Reception

His Excellency Pierre Vimont

Ambassador of France

presents

La Renaissance Française Medals

to

Honorees in the United States



Thursday, April 1, 2010

Residence of the Ambassador of France to the United States

2221 Kalomara Road, NW

Washington, DC

History of La Renaissance Française

La Renaissance Française was founded in 1916 as a private cultural organization by French president Raymond Poincaré in anticipation of the allied victory in World War I. Its original mission was to facilitate a return to French language and culture in the regions of Alsace and Moselle after years of German domination. As this objective was accomplished between the two world wars, the association was recognized as a public benefit non-profit organization benefiting from the patronage of the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense, and Education. It broadened its mission to include the promotion of French culture generally, as a cradle of humanism and respect for all beliefs and nationalities.

In the 1980s the organization extended its reach to include all French-speaking countries. Accordingly, delegations were formed in countries recognizing French as an official language such as Switzerland and Belgium, along with Argentina, Canada and Romania. Today, under the presidency of Préfet Antoine Guerrier de Dumast, the organization combines chapters in France with those in francophone countries and regions. La Renaissance Française has recently established a delegation in the United States and has formed or is in the process of forming delegations in China, Italy, Lebanon, Madagascar and Morocco.

His Excellency Pierre Vimont, Ambassador of France to the United States, serves as *Président d'Honneur* for the Delegation in the United States. In 2009, Simone Veil, former *Ministre d'Etat*, past President of the European Parliament and current member of the *Académie française*, agreed to serve as *Présidente d'Honneur* of La Renaissance Française.

Founding in the United States

On October 9, 2009, the United States Delegation of La Renaissance Française held its first official meeting at La Maison Française at New York University, courtesy of Professor Tom Bishop.

Program

Arrival of Guests and Honorees

Welcome remarks – Ambassador Pierre Vimont

La Renaissance Française ~ Denis Fadda, Vice President, Paris
President, Delegation in Italy

Delegation in the United States – Jane Robert, President

*La Renaissance Française extends a warm welcome
to members of the Congressional French Caucus*

Medals presented by His Excellency Pierre Vimont Ambassador of France to the United States

Honorees selected by the Delegation in the United States

Médaille d’Or de la Renaissance Française

Amory Houghton – Corning, New York
Rebecca Valette – Newton, Massachusetts

Médaille d’Or du Rayonnement Culturel

Hugh Macdonald – St. Louis, Missouri

Médaille d’Or de Solidarité et Valeur

Lance Armstrong – Austin, Texas

Médaille d’Or du Mérite Francophone

Adam Steg – New Orleans, Louisiana

Honoree selected by the Delegation in Italy

Médaille d’Or du Mérite Francophone

Robert L. Miller - New York, New York



Amory Houghton, Jr.

La Médaille d'Or de la Renaissance Française

This medal recognizes persons who have rendered eminent and exceptional service in areas supported by this institution. Eligibility depends on previous awards bestowed by France.



Amo Houghton, 83, has served as a United States Representative from the State of New York, 29th Congressional District. Mr. Houghton was a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, chaired the Oversight Subcommittee and was a member of the Trade Subcommittee. He was also a member of the International Relations Committee, vice chairman of its Subcommittee on Africa, and was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the Congressional Delegate to the 58th General Assembly of the United Nations.

Mr. Houghton is the founder of the John Quincy Adams Society and is also a founding member of the Republican Main Street Partnership. Mr. Houghton was also co-chairman of the Washington-based Faith and Politics Institute. The only former CEO of a Fortune 500 corporation to serve in the House, Mr. Houghton joined Corning Glass Works (now Corning Incorporated) in 1951 after graduating from Harvard University and serving as a Marine during World War II.

Reflecting the legacy of his father, who had been Ambassador to France, Congressman Houghton led other elected representatives in the United States in establishing the Congressional French Caucus which continues to support French-American friendship today. He has been recognized with France's highest award – *La Légion d'Honneur*.

Rebecca M. Valette

La Médaille d'Or de la Renaissance Française

This medal recognizes persons who have rendered eminent and exceptional service in areas supported by this institution. Eligibility depends on previous awards bestowed by France.



Rebecca M. Valette is Professor Emeritus of Romance Languages at Boston College. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Colorado and was granted an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Mount Holyoke College. In the course of her career, Dr. Valette has served as national president of the American Association of Teachers of French, president of the Alliance Française of Boston, and vice president of the Federation of Alliances Françaises, USA.

A specialist in foreign language methodology, she has written and lectured extensively in this field. With her husband, she has authored several series of highly successful programs for the teaching of French in American secondary schools and universities.

In recognition of her work in promoting French language and Francophone culture in the United States, the French Government has named her *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* and *Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Mérite*. Last fall she received the Saint Boniface Haiti Foundation Humanitarian Award for her support of the Fond des Blancs community in Haiti.





Hugh Macdonald

La Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel

This medal recognizes people who have rendered distinguished service in French literature, language, fine arts, science and technology and the promotion of the French cultural patrimony.



Hugh Macdonald is Avis H. Blewett Professor of Music at Washington University in St. Louis. Before coming to the U.S. in 1987, he taught at the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Glasgow. He has also taught at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He was general editor of the 26 volumes of Berlioz's music, the *New Berlioz Edition*, a series completed in 2006, and has published editions of Alkan, Lalo, and Chabrier. He organized the world première of Lalo's opera *Fiesque* at the 2006 Montpellier Festival.

He is a contributing editor of the eight volumes of the *Berlioz Correspondance générale*, completed in 2002. He has published books on Scriabin and Berlioz, and a collection of essays entitled *Beethoven's Century* appeared in May 2008. He is currently working on a catalogue of the works of Georges Bizet. He is a regular pre-concert speaker for the St. Louis, Cleveland, and Boston Symphony Orchestras, and has provided singing translations of opera for companies in London, Leeds, Glasgow, Los Angeles, and St. Louis.

Professor Macdonald enjoys a widespread reputation for his expertise and his willingness to help others find and enjoy the richness of French music.

Lance Armstrong

La Médaille d'Or de Solidarité et Valeur

This medal honors persons who have devoted themselves to public service, or to social works of a charitable, philanthropic, civic or sporting nature, intended to improve the quality of life.



Lance Armstrong, 38, is one of the world's most visible sports personalities. The Texas native was the world cycling champion at age 21 before he was diagnosed, in October 1996, with testicular cancer that spread to his lungs and brain. After doctors saved his life, he founded his eponymous cancer foundation, now known as LiveStrong.

Mr. Armstrong made an amazing comeback to professional cycling and won a record seven Tours de France, 1999-2005. He retired from the sport following his seventh Tour victory, but after a four-year absence returned to the Tour in 2009 and placed third. He is competing in the world's greatest bike race for the 13th time this year.

Mr. Armstrong's remarkable accomplishments in this French icon of sporting events sparked an interest in countless Americans to follow the event at home on television or in France year after year, and to participate in active cycling trips to the most remote areas of the French countryside.

The far-reaching effects of Mr. Armstrong's foundation have been measured by cancer victims of all ages who attest that LiveStrong has improved the quality of their life while serving its mission through advocacy, public health and research.

Honoree Lance Armstrong regrets that he is unable to be present due to a prior racing commitment in Europe. He sends his sincere appreciation to La Renaissance Française Delegation in the United States. Mr. Armstrong will receive his medal at a later date.

Photo courtesy of Graham Watson





Adam A. Steg

Médaille d'Or du Mérite Francophone

This medal recognizes those who devote themselves to the development or tightening of linguistic or cultural ties between France and other countries sharing the French language, or to the development of French language and culture in their country.



Adam Steg was born and raised in New Orleans, with artist/educator parents. As a child, he lived in Europe and Mexico and studied in New York, Strasbourg and Paris. Working as audiovisual attaché since 1979, he has endeavored to use new technologies to celebrate the cultures of Louisiana and the francophone world. His popular internet service frenchmedia.org and his workshops train teachers and students how to access websites offering thousands of authentic documents available free or at low cost.

Remarkably generous with his time and expertise, since 1979 Mr. Steg has responded to requests to present at meetings of all kinds or simply to help a colleague (in any city) solve a technical problem. Maintaining a long-term commitment to education in the field of technology and media, Mr. Steg has become the reliable source for supporting the appreciation of French language and cultures through media and technology in the United States.

His honors include being decorated as *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* by the French Ministry of Education, and being named lifetime member of the American Association of Teachers of French.

Robert L. Miller

Médaille d'Or du Mérite Francophone

This medal recognizes those who devote themselves to the development or tightening of linguistic or cultural ties between France and other countries sharing the French language, or to the development of French language and culture in their country.



Robert L. Miller attended the Collège Stanislas and the University at Nanterre, where he obtained a *Licence* in history. He has an M.A. from Middlebury College and has pursued doctoral studies at New York University. He is the founder of Enigma Books and an editor and translator from French into English of J.B. Duroselle, *France and the Nazi Threat (La Décadence 1932-1939)*; Georges Poisson, *Hitler's Gift to France: The Return of the Remains of Napoleon II (Le Retour des cendres de l'Aiglon)*; and Paul Aussaresses, *The Battle of the Casbah (Services spéciaux Algérie 1955-1957)*, among others.

He has lectured on Book TV on the topics of “The Battle of Algiers and Terrorism” and “FDR and Decolonization”; and in Paris on “Les États Unis et la décolonisation 1943-1963” at the Académie des sciences d’outre-mer. An article by the same title was published in 2009 in the *Bulletin de l’Académie des sciences d’outre-mer*. He lives in New York City.

Mr. Miller has just been commissioned by the Fondation Charles de Gaulle to translate into English the *Catalogue du Mémorial Charles de Gaulle at Colombey-les-Deux-Églises*.



Simone Veil de l'Académie française

Honorary President – La Renaissance Française

Simone Veil is acknowledged as one of the world's most courageous, powerful and influential women and is one of the most popular public figures in France. She was the first elected President of the European Parliament, and also served as President of the Judicial Commission for this powerful group. From 1973-1979 she served as France's Minister of Health. In France she continues to exert significant political, legislative and social influence.

Honored in France, the Ivory Coast, Spain, Morocco, Germany, Greece, Venezuela, Italy, Belgium, Israel and the United States, Simone Veil is known for her work on behalf of women's rights, adopted children, older adults and immigration.

When Simone Veil was 17 years old, she and her family were deported to the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen. They suffered unimaginable atrocities. Her parents and her brother died in the camps. Simone Veil and one sister survived. This tragic experience gave her the courage to accomplish anything that she chooses to do. She exemplifies this courage daily. Her autobiography has recently been published in English: *A Life: a memoir of Simone Veil* (Haus Publishing).

His Excellency Pierre Vimont, Ambassador of France to the United States

Honorary President, Renaissance Française – Delegation in the United States

Ambassador Pierre Vimont was appointed Ambassador of France to the United States by President Nicolas Sarkozy on August 1, 2007. Prior to his present appointment, Mr. Vimont was chief of staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a position he had held since 2002. He was previously ambassador and permanent representative of France to the European Union from 1999 to 2002.

Pierre Vimont joined the Foreign Service in 1977. He was first posted to London, where he was first secretary from 1978 to 1981. He then spent the next four years with the Press and Information Office at the Quai d'Orsay. From 1985 to 1986 he was seconded to the Institute for East-West Security in New York. Returning to Europe, he served as second counselor with the Permanent Representation of France to the European Communities in Brussels (1986-1990), and was subsequently chief of staff to the minister delegate for European affairs from 1990 to 1993.

He went on to serve as director for development and scientific, technical and educational cooperation and then for cultural, scientific and technical relations. He was deputy director general of the entire Cultural, Scientific and Technical Relations Department from 1996 to 1997 and then director of European Cooperation from 1997 to 1999. Born in 1949, Pierre Vimont holds a degree in law and is a graduate of the Institute of Political Studies and the National School of Administration (ENA).

La Renaissance Française Delegation in the United States

Mission Statement

Renaissance Française-USA, the American Delegation of La Renaissance Française, founded in Paris in 1916, aims to recognize persons who have raised awareness of the French language and Francophone cultures among people living in the United States. The American Delegation will act at all times in harmony with the policies of La Renaissance Française.



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