

Awards Ceremony

La Renaissance Française
Presentation of Medals
to
Honorees in the United States



Tuesday, June 14, 2011

2203 Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill
Washington, DC

Awards Ceremony

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

3:30 pm to 4:30 pm

La Renaissance Française

Delegation in the United States

Program

Arrival of Guests and Honorees

Welcome remarks by the Honorable Dan Burton
Co-Chair, Congressional French Caucus

Presentation of medals by Jane Robert
President, La Renaissance Française Delegation in the United States

*La Renaissance Française expresses its appreciation to the
Congressional French Caucus for its encouragement and support.*

Medal Recipients

Médaille d'Or de la Renaissance Française

Ambassador Craig Roberts Stapleton – Greenwich, Connecticut

Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel

Katharine Branning – New York, New York

Médaille d'Or de Solidarité et Valeur

Reid Henri Lewis – Elgin, Illinois

Médaille d'Or du Mérite Francophone

Christopher Paul Pinet, Ph.D. – Bozeman, Montana

Albert Valdman, Ph.D. – Bloomington, Indiana

Ambassador Craig Roberts Stapleton

Médaille d'Or de la Renaissance Française

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



Craig Roberts Stapleton served as United States Ambassador to France from 2005 to 2009. Previously, he served as Ambassador to the Czech Republic from 2001 to 2004.

Ambassador Stapleton is currently serving as a trustee of the George W. Bush Library and Foundation and the 9/11 Memorial Foundation. He has served on the Visiting Committee for Harvard College and the Committee on University Resources and Athletics.

He serves as a senior advisor to Stone Point Capital in Greenwich, Connecticut, and is lead director on the board of Abercrombie and Fitch. He was a partner of George W. Bush in the ownership of the Texas Rangers baseball team from 1989-1998. In July 2009, he joined in the ownership of the St. Louis Cardinals.

Ambassador Stapleton is president of the Vaclav Havel Foundation in the United States. He was awarded the Jan Masaryk Medal for service to the Czech Republic. He served on the board of the Peace Corps under President George H. W. Bush.

He has been a strong supporter of the Sister Cities programs and has been named an honorary citizen of the French towns Deauville, Chateauneuf du Pape, Rocamadour, and Vienne. He also recently published a book entitled *Where Liberty Dwells, There is My Country*, a history of twentieth-century American ambassadors to France. In May 2009, President Nicolas Sarkozy named Ambassador Stapleton a *Commandeur* of the Legion of Honor – France's highest recognition.





Katharine Branning

La Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel

This medal recognizes persons who have rendered distinguished service in the following fields: French language, literature, fine arts, science and technology, artisans, promotion and visibility of the French patrimony (including traditions and artistic heritage).



Katharine Branning is vice-president of the French Institute Alliance Française in New York City, where she serves as director of FIAF's Library, the leading all-French library in the United States. Before coming to FIAF in 1994, she was the librarian at the French Embassy Cultural Services in New York City. In 1982, she was one of the founders of the Library of the French Institute of Architecture in Paris.

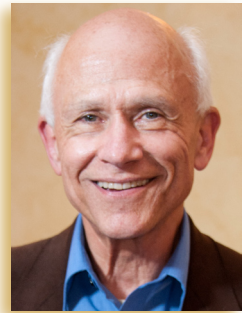
In addition to providing the impetus for the creation of the FIAF Library, she is the founder and sustainer of two projects for the network of American Alliance Française chapters: Project Benjamin and Project Merlin, which spearhead the development of libraries and professionalism efforts for Alliance chapters. Through the resources of these initiatives, she has helped to create at least eight libraries and to distribute more than 5,000 books to Alliance chapters throughout the United States and the Caribbean. Her training programs, workshops, and lectures at national conferences have provided invaluable resource material to more than 25,000 French-language students, teachers, and Alliance Française members throughout the United States, as well as countless others throughout the world who consult the resources on the Project Merlin Internet portal. Moreover, she has created and led numerous public programs at FIAF to promote French thought, most notably that of *Café Philosophique* and the European Book Club.

Ms. Branning enjoys a wide reputation for her expertise, generosity, and willingness to help others find and enjoy the richness of French culture and literature. Her recently published book *Yes, I Would* highlights her unique linkage to Turkey and the Islamic community in a time when human bridges between cultures and faiths are ever more important. In this regard, she serves as an ambassador of both French and American cultural values across an international divide. The French government recognized Ms. Branning with the prestigious award of *Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Mérite*.

Reid Henri Lewis

La Médaille d'Or de Solidarité et Valeur

This medal distinguishes 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.



Reid Lewis is founder and director of *Aventure Française*, Inc., a total-immersion language school with weekend and summer programs for middle school, high school and adult students. Created in a recreational setting in 1987, *Aventure Française* models the use of the French language for authentic purposes while engaging students in fun, novel activities, primarily out-of-doors.

During the American bicentennial celebration in 1976, Mr. Lewis led a 23-man canoe trek to replicate the La Salle Expedition from Montreal to the Gulf of Mexico in 1681-82, creating temporary camps along the Mississippi River to teach residents about the French in America. He also re-enacted the 3,000-mile voyage of Joliet-Marquette in 1673-74 and served as consultant, translator, crewmember, and actor in a film about the Mississippi River for the Cousteau Society. As founding member and board director of *La Compagnie des Amis de Fort de Chartres*, Mr. Lewis contributed to the restoration of the last eighteenth-century French fort built in the Illinois Country. His current projects to enhance Franco-American friendships include locating La Salle's ship *Le Griffon* and serving as a representative to Chicago-Paris Sister Cities, the Chicago Marathon, *Alliance Franco-Américaine du Midwest*, and *France-Louisiane Franco-Américaine*.

A French-immersion teacher, adventurer, environmentalist, and motivational speaker for forty years, Reid Lewis delivers multimedia presentations to schools, civic groups, and corporate meetings in the United States and abroad. The French government has awarded Mr. Lewis the title of *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*.





Christopher P. Pinet, Ph.D.

La 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 the French language and culture in their country.



Christopher P. Pinet is Professor Emeritus of French at Montana State University, Bozeman. He earned his B.A. with Honors and Distinction at the University of Kansas and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Brown University, where he was an NDEA and Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellow. Chris Pinet served on the Executive Council of the American Association of Teachers of French and the Board of Directors of the Federation of Alliances, U.S.A., Inc. He was recently made an Honorary Member of the AATF.

A specialist in French literature, Dr. Pinet has presented over 90 papers, workshops, and roundtables throughout the United States and Europe. As Editor in Chief of the *French Review*, Dr. Pinet conceived and edited special issues on Paris, Québec and Francophone Canada, Martinique and Guadeloupe, the Francophone World (including Vietnam, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb and France, the Antilles and Vietnam), Francophone cinemas, Francophonie in the United States (including the Northeast, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Kansas), French-speaking Belgium, and Algérie/France. Finally, Dr. Pinet wrote 71 editorials on a wide range of issues concerning francophonie.

In recognition of his work in promoting language and Francophone culture, the French Government named him *Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* in 2010. Patrice Servantie, then vice-consul general of the French Consulate in San Francisco, said of Dr. Pinet: "Throughout your life you have nurtured a profound family connection with France...You have made a wonderful and effective contribution to our country with your real ability to understand its culture and history." Dr. Pinet's Great Uncle Eli fought as a doughboy in the Battle of the Somme in World War 1, and his father, Frank Samuel, participated in D-Day off Omaha Beach. His cousin, Jean Tallet, was a member of the French Resistance in Limoges.

Albert Valdman, Ph.D.

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 the French language and culture in their country.



Albert Valdman is Rudy Professor Emeritus at Indiana University, where he chaired the Department of French & Italian and Linguistics and established the Creole Institute, the only center in the United States which specializes in research and training in the area of applied linguistics with a focus on French-based creoles. He earned his Ph.D. at Cornell University and was granted an honorary doctorate from the University of Neuchâtel. He served as president of the International Association of Applied Linguistics and as president of the American Association of Teachers of French. He is now on the *Comité International des études Créoles* and on the scientific network “*étude du français en francophonie*” of the *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie*.

Dr. Valdman first authored two pioneering basic resources published in France: *Le créole: structure, statut et origine* (1978) and *Le français hors de France* (1979). He then was at the forefront of studies of North American varieties of French, developing course and reference materials through the Creole Institute. He has written some 200 articles for journals and written or edited several books, including *A Dictionary of Louisiana Creole* (1998), the *Haitian Creole-English Bilingual Dictionary* (2007), and the very first *Dictionary of Louisiana French As Spoken in Cajun, Creole, and American Indian Communities* (2009). He also co-authored a college French program, *Chez nous: branché sur le monde francophone*, now in its fourth edition. He is the founder and editor of the journal *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*.

Dr. Valdman has been a member and served as officer of several national and international professional associations and organized several conferences and conventions. In recognition of his work, the French Government has named him *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* and he was received into the *Ordre des francophones d'Amérique* by the *Conseil supérieur de la langue française* in Quebec.



*Photo courtesy of
Indiana University*

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 to 1979 she served as France's Minister of Health. In France she continues to exert significant political, legislative and social influence.

The recipient of honors 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 has given her an exceptional lifelong personal courage. Her autobiography has been published in English: *A Life: a memoir of Simone Veil* – Haus Publishing.

His Excellency François Delattre Ambassador of France to the United States

Honorary President, Renaissance Francaise ~ Delegation in the United States

Ambassador François Delattre was appointed Ambassador of France to the United States by President Nicolas Sarkozy on January 19, 2011. Prior to his present appointment, Mr. Delattre was Ambassador of France to Canada, a position he had held since 2008, following four years as French consul general in New York (2004-2008), two years as deputy director of the French Foreign Minister's Office (2002-2004), and four years as press and communications director at the French Embassy in Washington, DC (1998-2002).

A career diplomat, Mr. Delattre was on the foreign policy team of President Jacques Chirac from 1995 to 1998, with particular responsibility for security and defense issues. Before coming to New York, he was deputy chief of staff to Dominique de Villepin, then foreign minister. In his career at the French Ministry, which he joined in 1989, he has held posts at the French embassy in Bonn and in the Foreign Ministry's Department of Strategic Affairs and Disarmament.

Mr. Delattre holds a degree in international law and is a graduate of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, of which he is a former honorary president, and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration.

Congressional French Caucus

Co-Chairs

The Honorable Dan Burton
The Honorable John Campbell
The Honorable Russ Carnahan
The Honorable Michael Michaud

The French Caucus is a bipartisan, bicameral congressional member organization, dedicated to enhanced US-French relations in the spirit of partnership and cooperation. Since its inception in 2003 under the leadership of the Honorable Amory Houghton, the Caucus has fostered dialogue and multicultural understanding around both policy debates and cultural events that contextualize the depth and dynamic nature of French-American relations. (Courtesy: *News From France*, 10-23-10)

La Renaissance Française

Medal Recipients in the United States 2009-2010

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
Robert L. Miller – New York, New York (selected by the Delegation in Italy)

Delegation in the United States 2010-2011

Jane Robert – St. Louis, Missouri, President
Liza Forshaw – St. Louis, Missouri, Secretary
Bernard Duhaime – Omaha, Nebraska, Treasurer
David Black – Chappaqua, New York
Elyane Dezon-Jones – Sarasota, Florida and Paris, France
Marie-Christine Koop – Denton, Texas
Margot Steinhart – Glenview, Illinois
Guy Wildenstein – New York, New York

La Renaissance Française gratefully acknowledges

Former Ambassador of France Pierre Vimont, who lent his prestige and insights to the organization in his role as the first Honorary President

Professor and former *Sénateur* André Maman, who contributed valuable guidance and experience in the founding years of the American Delegation

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 non-profit organization benefiting from the patronage of the President of the French Republic and the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior, of Defense, and of Education. It has 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 François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, serves as *Président d'Honneur* for the Delegation in the United States. Simone Veil, former *Ministre d'Etat*, past President of the European Parliament and current member of the Académie française, serves as *Présidente d'Honneur* of La Renaissance Française in Paris.

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.

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.



The Residence of the Ambassador of France to the United States in Washington, DC

Contact La Renaissance Française
janerobert@mac.com
www.la-rennaissance-francaise.com