FRENCH-CANADIAN HALL OF FAME 2012

Dr. Claire Quintal, the founding director emerita of the French Institute, was inducted into the French-Canadian Hall of Fame at the American-French Genealogical Society in Woonsocket, Rhode Island in October 2012. The AFGS French-Canadian Hall of Fame annually recognizes individuals of French-Canadian ancestry who have made significant contributions to their community and who have achieved notable success in their life’s endeavors. The Society introduced the Hall of Fame during its 25th Silver Anniversary in 2003.

Claire Quintal receives the hall of fame award from Normand Deragon, AFGS President, and Sylvia Bartholomy, Chairperson of the AFGS French-Canadian Hall of Fame.

PRIX DU QUÉBEC 2012

The director of the French Institute, Dr. Leslie Choquette, was awarded the Prix du Québec 2012 at the Biennial Meeting of the American Council for Québec Studies in Sarasota, Florida in November 2012. The prize, which recognizes a lifetime scholarly contribution to the field of Québec Studies, was presented to Dr. Choquette by M. Jean-Stéphane Bernard of Québec’s Ministère des Relations internationales, de la Francophonie et du Commerce extérieur. The prize consists of an original work by a Québec artist as well as a stipend of $2500 to support research in Québec Studies. Dr. Choquette plans to use her award to begin digitizing selected print and archival holdings of the French Institute.

Nos hivers, par Jeanine Atala

Prix du Québec décerné à Leslie P. Choquette
American Council for Québec Studies
Sarasota, novembre 2012
PUBLICATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR


SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES


Dr. Choquette’s other scholarly activities in academic year 2011-2012 included evaluating a doctoral dissertation for Université Laval in Québec and serving on the editorial boards of French Colonial History, Québec Studies, the Journal of Early American History: The American Colonies, 1500-1830, Recherches sociographiques, the Encyclopédie du patrimoine culturel de l’Amérique française, and the Early American History Monograph Series of Brill Academic Publishers.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FRANCO-AMERICAN AUTHORS

Claire Quintal, in collaboration with Armand Chartier, is compiling a biographical dictionary of Franco-American authors who wrote in French. The work, which will contain dozens of entries spanning the 19th and 20th centuries, should be available for consultation next year through the French Institute website.

MASTER OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

French Institute cataloguer and archivist Nina Tsantis received her master’s degree in library science from the University of Rhode Island in Spring 2012, while also working full time on the French Institute collections. Félicitations, Nina!
THE GEORGE AND RICHARD CHRISTIAN MISSION COLLECTION

The George and Richard Christian Mission Collection, our newest collection at the French Institute, comprises materials produced by the Missions étrangères de Paris (Paris Foreign Missions Society). The books and manuscripts, which concern French missionaries and martyrs in Asia and North America during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, were researched and translated into English by the Christian brothers. The collection also includes: correspondence between the Christian brothers and members of the Society on matters of translation and publication; photographs; postcards; journal issues; and devotional materials.

The donors, George E. Christian, O.P., and Richard L. Christian, have made much use of their bilingual background; their father was an American of French-Canadian descent and their mother a Francophone Canadian. Both attended bilingual St. Anne School, in Woonsocket, Rhode Island as well as Assumption Prep. Over the years, they have together translated some thirty articles and fourteen books on various topics for the American-French Genealogical Society of Rhode Island. They have also translated three biographies of martyrs, along with numerous flyers and booklets, for the Paris Foreign Missions Society, as well as articles for the New Catholic Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America. In collaboration with Christine Tansey, the two have contributed translations of works by Henri Lacordaire, O.P., documents that have never before appeared in English. At least three volumes were translated for individuals, and one special: a translation from English to French of The Loss of the Lancasteria, a ship bombed in port at the beginning of World War II. Last but not least, the brothers have done translations for the Dominican Province of St. Joseph; George was ordained priest for the Province in 1955.

We wish here to express our abiding gratitude to the Christian brothers for the donation of this important collection which greatly enriches the French Institute’s holdings.
IN MEMORIAM

Marthe Biron Péloquin
(1919-2012)

The French Institute has lost a dear friend with the passing of Marthe Biron Péloquin last spring. Born in Nashua, New Hampshire, she was the youngest daughter of French-Canadian immigrants. Her father, Louis Biron, was the editor and owner of Lowell’s French newspaper, L’Étoile, which served the Franco-American community for many years. Marthe was a journalist at L’Étoile from 1940 to 1955 and was awarded the Yvonne Lemaître French Journalism Prize for her work.

Marthe obtained bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Rivier College, and she also received honorary doctorates from both Rivier College and Assumption College. She married Laval U. Péloquin, a prominent Lowell physician, in 1950. Their four children survive them: Louise, Laval, Bernard and Marie.

Marthe was a dynamic leader in Lowell’s cultural community, and she was particularly committed to her Franco-American heritage. She was a member of the Cercle Jeanne Mance, a Lowell-based Franco-American women’s club, and she served as president of the Fédération féminine franco-américaine and editor of their Bulletin for fifteen years. She was also president of Société historique franco-américaine, and she served on the Comité de Vie française en Amérique, the Massachusetts Cultural Exchange Commission, the Franco-American school board, the French Institute advisory council, and the board of directors of the Caisse Populaire Jeanne d’Arc. She was a communicant of St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish and the former Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and Saint-Jean-Baptiste parishes.

Marthe was proclaimed Franco-American of the Year in 1979, the first woman to be so honored. In 1985, Québec Prime Minister René Lévesque named her to the Ordre des Francophones d’Amérique. In 1989, she received the Palmes Académiques from the government of France, which also awarded her the prestigious Ordre National du Mérite in 1990.

Merci pour tout, chère Marthe, vous nous manquerez !

NEW FRENCH INSTITUTE WEBSITE

We are continuing to work on the new French Institute website, which includes useful links to our collections and finding aids as well as links to other special collections of Canadiana and Franco-Americana. The site is located at:

http://www1.assumption.edu/frenchinstitute/

Please come visit us on the web!

CENTRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE DES AMÉRIQUES

In June 2012, Leslie Choquette joined area Francophones at the Québec Government Office in Boston to meet with Denis Desgagné, the president and director general of the Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques in Québec. The center’s mission is to promote the flourishing of French on our continent in a context of cultural diversity through strengthening relations between Francophones and Francophiles in Québec, Canada, and throughout the Americas. The group discussed goals and possible collaborations, including the idea of creating a French heritage trail in New England. It plans to meet again before the end of the year to continue the process of strategic planning for the future.

COLLABORATION WITH FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

In July 2012, Leslie Choquette and Nina Tsantinis met with colleagues Kathryn Wells and Mark Melchior from the Center for Italian Culture (CIC) at Fitchburg State University, an entity similar to our own but in the early stages of development. We enjoyed discussing the possibilities and challenges of our small, ethnically based research centers, and we look forward to collaborating fruitfully again in the future.