SCHOOL LITERATURES CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS

FALL 2010

KIBBEE RETIRES AS SCHOOL'S 1ST DIRECTOR; **BENMAMOUN NAMED SUCCESSOR**



ouglas A. Kibbee, the first director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics (SLCL), retired on August 15 after serving in the position since 2007.

He is succeeded by

Abbas Benmamoun

Abbas Benmamoun, professor and former head of the Department of Linguistics.

When the academic units in the Foreign Languages Building officially became a school at the U of I in 2007, Kibbee was selected to be the School's first director.

"Professor Kibbee was a superb choice for director of the newly-formed School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics," Karen Carney, associate dean for humanities and interdisciplinary programs, said. "As an experienced department head himself, he understood and respected the various departmental cultures in the School, and was an expert mentor and guide to the executive officers who reported to him. What's more, he worked hard to encourage the units to 'think like a School,' and to build a sense of community and shared intellectual vision that crossed disciplinary boundaries and helped map new areas of inquiry. He was also an incredibly kind and generous person who recognized the contributions of everyone-staff, faculty, students, and administrators."

Kibbee completed his PhD at Indiana University in 1979 and joined the U of I faculty in 1985, earning tenure and promotion in 1991. After a stint as visiting professor in the Département de Lettres Modernes at the

Université de Nantes in France, he returned to serve as head of the Department of French until 2000.

Kibbee's academic work has focused on the history of the French language and the history of linguistic theories. He has published books on the history of the teaching of French in England and on language legislation and linguistic human rights.

In honor of his distinguished service as the first director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, and on the occasion of his retirement, the Kibbee Prize has been created by the colleagues, friends, and students of Professor Kibbee.

The Kibbee Prize will be awarded annually to the winner of an SLCL Dissertation Completion Fellowship whose dissertation project is judged by the School's Executive Committee to be the most outstanding.

On occasion the Executive Committee may choose to select two winners of the Kibbee Prize.

Kibbee's successor as director is Professor Abbas Benmamoun, professor of linguistics and LAS Global Studies, and from 2003-2010, head of the SLCL Department of Linguistics. Benmamoun began his new duties on August 16.

Benmamoun earned a PhD in linguistics from the University of Southern California in 1992. He was a visiting assistant professor in the department of linguistics at the U of I from 1993-1995, and joined the faculty as an assistant professor of linguistics in 1997.

He began his administrative experience at the U of I when he was named acting director of the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in the fall of 2001, and later that year was named the program's associate director, a position he held through 2002.

He was promoted to full professor of linguistics in 2006. His research interests include syntax, morphology, and Arabic and Arabic linguistics.

He is the co-author of a new book, The Syntax of Arabic (Cambridge University Press, 2010), and has been invited to teach a course at the Linguistic Society of America's Summer Institute in summer 2011 at the University of Colorado.

Among his many accomplishments as head of linguistics, Benmamoun:

- Addressed the financial challenges that the department faced and put it on a more stable financial path;
- Merged linguistics with the Division of English as a Second Language (DEIL) and strengthened Second Language Studies;
- Developed initiatives such as the successful Summer Institute for the Languages of the Muslim World in collaboration with area centers on campus;
- Hired new faculty and lecturers that helped strengthen key areas of the linguistics and language programs;
- Helped develop research facilities for empirical research in linguistics and language acquisition in collaboration with the School and a number of departments; and
- · Helped strengthen the collaboration between Linguistics and many programs in the humanities, social sciences, and engineering.

Benmamoun adds that these accomplishments "were not possible without the hard work of the staff, students, and faculty.

"The role of the head is to facilitate their work and provide the environment for them to do what they do best. It is a team effort," the new School director commented.

For more about Kibbee's career and future plans, see page 7.

SCHOOL OF LITERATURES CULTURES and LINGUISTICS

Fall 2010

School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics College of Liberal Arts and Sciences University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Liberal Arts & Sciences

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

(Editor's note: Douglas A. Kibbee retired from his position as director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics on August 15, 2010. The following is his final "Letter from the Director" to SLCL faculty, staff, and graduates.)

It is with great gratitude that I look back on my time as director of the School. It is with great excitement that I look forward to new directions the School will take under my distinguished and creative successor, Professor Abbas Benmamoun.

The faculty and the staff of the School took a momentous leap into the unknown when they agreed to form the School in the spring of 2005. Departments feared for their autonomy and the staff was working without a clear central authority to guide them. The School's first mission was to demonstrate the utility of an added level of administration.

Fortunately, good people stepped forward. A faculty committee created bylaws for the new School that calmed fears and won overwhelming acceptance. An extremely hard-working staff, frequently stretched to near the breaking point, bravely and creatively addressed each challenge. The School's ability to support the intellectual aspirations of faculty and students, financed by the sacrifices and the ingenuity of the staff, has amply realized the hopes that led us to form the School.

The test of academic administration, perhaps of any administration, is the ability to provide outstanding people with the resources they need to succeed. In the past five years the School has financed visits by distinguished scholars, colloquia and conferences, graduate student fellowships, new research laboratories, and the creation of new courses. Intellectual activity has flourished even as the University has faced unprecedented financial challenges. At the same time, the staff has used a retreat and subsequent meetings to find new ways to better serve our collective goals, and has prepared a guidebook to help new faculty and students find their way in their new academic home.

Most importantly, we have all learned to work together. Humanistic research has a tradition akin to that of monks working in individual cells. Through interactions encouraged by the School we are discovering the pleasures and the benefits of collaboration and cooperation. Here I cite just a few examples:

- Through the tireless efforts of graduate student Michael Foster, an annual "Share Fair" provides an opportunity to demonstrate successful techniques for language instruction;
- The Phonetics Laboratory, under the direction of Professor Ryan Shosted, brings together linguists from throughout the School to work with an array of the most advanced tools; and
- Faculty and students from every department of the School will participate this fall in an international conference entitled "Shifting Paradigms: How Translation Transforms the Humanities."

What has been accomplished thus far is just a first step toward much more exciting things to come. I thank everyone for their contributions to this process, and look forward with great anticipation to the future achievements of our faculty and staff under the leadership of Professor Benmamoun.

Best wishes,

J.A.C.

Doug Kibbee

Thulin Lecture: Alkire Discusses a More Humane Economy

Sabine Alkire (AB '90, sociology) of Champaign, Ill, and director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative at the University of Oxford, gave the Annual Marjorie Hall Thulin Lecture in Religion on campus in April.

The title of her lecture was, "How an Adequate Notion of Human Flourishing Challenges Economics."

In her address, Alkire said that the economy is "poised to change. The status quo is fractured. The economy is in transition. What's the likelihood of economics developing in a more human space? The potential for this is the highest it's been in decades, but the likelihood is low for this happening."

She said the current crisis centers on the idea that economists "must look at the bigger picture" and those who specialize "in their own patch must curtail their own limited vision." Overall, she asserted, there is a "failure of collective imagination."

She referred her audience to Joseph Stiglitz, the author of *Free Fall*, in saying, "The world economy has had a near-death experience."

However, she added, the economy seems to be poised for a change, what she terms a more "humane" economy, one "in which citizens live up to shared values—the notion of the flourishing of a human life."

Next, Alkire asked, "What would an economy as human flourishing look like?" She asserts that answers should come from people of different ages and cultures, to reflect a diversity of values and a corresponding welcoming of disagreement.

The speaker mentioned the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who wrote of enabling people to lead flourishing ideas. She also cited the works of economist Adam Smith, political philosopher Karl Marx, and educator John Stuart Mill, among others.

Much of Alkire's own research has centered on the ideas of Amartya Sen, an eminent Indian economist and philosopher who teaches at Harvard University. In 1998, Sen won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to work on welfare economics.

She said that in Sen's view, economics should function to advance well-being, not solely economic growth, and to expand people's freedoms, "as agents to advance respect for individuality, human rights, and so on."

Therefore, flourishing people "find success in the currency of the value of people's lives." These are freedoms people can actually enjoy, she said.

Specifically, Alkire explained that freedoms and functions are the things people can do or enjoy—for example, a piece of knowledge, music, sports. "These are things people value and

have reason to value."

Conversely, Alkire addressed the paradox of "things we value that conflict or hurt others." She stated that Sen doesn't answer this question, but provides a framework within which to ask these questions.

Within this framework one sees people "not as victims but rather as agents of their own change," both personally and collectively—interpersonally and politically.

She said that Sen relies on the agency of people to do

things for themselves. "It's not 'one size fits all' for Sen," she noted, but rather, "flexible and responsive."

Sen, whom Alkire termed a secular, atheist philosopher, teaches that "we need to keep different principles in mind, and use them to weed out immoral ideas."

The Theories of John Finnis

Alkire also has extensively studied the work of author John Finnis, a Catholic/Christian theologian, legal scholar, and moral theorist whose ideas, she finds, have similarities with Sen. She said that she finds the structure of Finnis's thoughts compelling.

Finnis, she said, writes about the "dimension of human good and practical reason, directed toward everyday fulfillment. As in, 'Why did I do this?" Through asking such questions, Alkire, asserts, one will see a pattern of reasons for acting.

The speaker referred to this as "self-observation of what's valuable. Distill reasoning to one essence. This will be 'multi-dimensional."

Finnis discussed such factors as relationships, work and play, self-integration, emotional well-being, and harmony as a greater-than-human source of fulfillment—categories people use to reflect on by looking for similarities.

"What's interesting," stated Alkire, "is the

commonality between these lists"—for example, emotional well-being.

She asked her audience, "Can we use an under-

specified view? Could these be a usable international standard by employing these ideas?"

Above all, Alkire sees cause for hope, and that "space for change has never been higher." She discussed the idea of economists returning to a moral ground—what she calls "the courage to be utopian."

And yet, Alkire said that it is unlikely that an economy of flourishing will take place. She listed five reasons why:

1. Welfare economics— "which entailed the idea

that policies are directed as 'human good'"—is extinct," as it is no longer taught in undergraduate courses.

2. Data on human flourishing is weak or missing—for instance, having a poverty measure or being able to track progress.

3. What she termed 'Technicality'—with income as a one-dimensional standard of measure.

4. "The type of model that's needed does not exist." For example, linking climate change to human factors. Such models, she says, are underdeveloped.

5. Lack of research coordination, due to the training of economists that tends toward individualism—that is, to keep their data to themselves.

Alkire advocates bringing together the different types of economists from various sub-disciplines within the field.

"The economy is poised to change," she said. "So the question is [about] how to encourage that change."

She left her audience with a final thought by suggesting this approach: "Recruit the enthusiasm of more noble natures to this work."



Sabina Alkire, 2010 Thulin Lecturer in Religion

FAITH IN NO MAN'S LAND

FOR MANY SOLDIERS, THE HORRORS OF WORLD WAR I STRENGTHENED THEIR BELIEF IN GOD. By Dave Evensen, Spring 2010 LAS News

Y ears after the Civil War, William Tecumseh Sherman uttered, "war is

hell," which sounded all the more memorable coming from a Union Army general whose troops burned their way across Georgia in 1864. The quote spoke to the widespread impression that war disillusions and diminishes the faith of those who conduct it. But does it really? Jonathan Ebel would argue that in many cases, it doesn't. In fact, the assistant professor of religion at the U of I has studied American soldiers' experiences of World War I extensively, and he believes that "the Great War"

confirmed for many the belief that war is a meaningful and redemptive experience. Many Americans who helped fight World War I interpreted the war through their Christian faith, and after returning home they set about with renewed, often militant, vigor to shape the country.

Ebel, a former U.S. Navy intelligence officer, became interested in war and religion in graduate school, where he studied American evangelist Billy Sunday's revival campaign after the United States entered World War I in 1917. American pulpits emitted a strong pro-war sentiment at this time—ironically most vociferously by liberal pastors, who saw the war as a chance to end war—and by then Sunday was the most famous pro-war preacher, known for waving the American flag during services and otherwise portraying the war as, in his words, "hell against heaven."



Assistant professor Jonathan Ebel has studied American soldiers' experiences of WWI and believes the war confirmed for many the belief that it is a meaningful and redemptive experience. (Images courtesy of U.S. Department of Defense.)

One feature of Sunday's revival campaign, Ebel says, is that the preacher allowed the U.S. Army and Navy to set up recruiting booths in the back of the revival tent. After the altar call, during which congregants would come forward and declare themselves for Jesus Christ, they would turn around and see the recruiting booths.

"And it just struck me that it would be interesting to follow that through," Ebel says. "Maybe some of those guys did go to the recruiting booth and went off and fought. What would they think afterward?"

To answer that question, Ebel studied scores of memoirs, diaries, letters, surveys, and other documents across the country containing the thoughts and opinions of

soldiers, nurses, and others of various religions and races after World War I. One thing he has learned is that, contrary to the old saw, there are indeed atheists in foxholes. But another thing is that World War I often strengthened faith.

The war was among the first and to that point the most devastating—where soldiers fought an enemy they couldn't see (according to one estimate, artillery was responsible for 67 percent of combat casualties in World War I). The distant forces dictating life and death left World War I particularly open to religious interpretation among soldiers. Ebel

says many American soldiers embraced a militant Christianity and "imagined they were modern incarnations of the Crusaders." The distant forces dictating life and death left WWI particularly open to religious interpretation among soldiers. Professor Ebel says many American soldiers embraced a



militant Christianity and 'imagined they were modern incarnations of the Crusaders.'

"How did [veterans] make sense of death?" Ebel asks. "There are quite a few American soldiers who thought of themselves as imitators of Christ. Suffering to redeem the world. Suffering to save the world as Christ had done." He found an old survey of African American World War I veterans in Virginia that included a question about how the war affected their religious beliefs. Time and

again, the response was that it strengthened it, a sentiment that was echoed in other materials he found. Some did have their faith shattered, Ebel says, but he focused on those whose faith was strengthened or reanimated—and there were many of them. After the war, of about 4 million eligible veterans, a quarter of them joined the American Legion, which wielded significant political sway and portrayed the war as a religious struggle, Ebel says.

The American Legion also didn't disregard violence as a way to improve America, at least in its early days. The organization formed to support veterans after the war, but it was also known for fighting with elements that members thought were dangerous to America—labor unions, "Soviets, anarchists, revolutionary socialists, and every other 'red," declared Legion Commander Alvin Owsley in 1923. "Not everyone comes back from war thinking that it's awful and meaningless,



or fought as Ezra Pound said, 'for an old bitch gone in the teeth, for a botched civilization,'" Ebel says. "Clearly that sentiment is there, [but] there's also this other sentiment that needs some examining."

For example, Ebel says we may better understand America's actions in the 20th century if we better understand how belief in the redemptive qualities of combat and violence and how it was weaved into faith in America persisted after World

War I. Ebel can hear echoes of Woodrow Wilson's American idealism (the World War I president famously called for war against Germany to make the world "safe for democracy") even now, in the words of presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Another reason to consider this topic, Ebel says, is that the questions of faith soldiers asked themselves in World War I—Why do some die while others don't? Who controls it? What happens after I die?—seem to be quite common in warfare. Modern wars after World War I, however, including World War II and Vietnam, largely have not been studied from the religious perspectives of the participants.

"I think most Americans think of war as a primarily secular experience," Ebel says. "Whether it's Yorktown or Gettysburg or the Battle of the Bulge, My Lai, you can do that by thinking about authority, about economics, about politics, by thinking about a whole range of things that don't have much to do with religion. But I don't think we fully understand wars if we don't spend some time thinking about the religious dimensions of it."



NEWS BRIEFS

Department of French hosts two conferences

The Department of French held two conferences in Spring 2010.

The conference on "The New Immigrant Europe: Languages on Borderlands," held in March, was organized by professors Douglas Kibbee, Zsuzsanna Fagyal (French), and Dorothee Schneider (History), and focused on language, literary voices, and the social and cultural life around the new EU borderlands associated with migrants and immigrants.

Highlighting research by U of I faculty, students, and guest speakers from Europe and the United States, the conference focused on themes that connect broader social policies with cultural life and national identities of countries within the European Union.

The conference on "Proust and His Era," held in April, was organized by professors Patrick Bray and Lawrence Schehr, and was sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics; the Department of French; and numerous other departments across campus.

The conference featured a group of scholars that discussed Proust's worlds—the ones depicted in his novels and the one in which he lived. The conference welcomed a variety of critical perspectives and included not only Proust's work, but also works by authors in the early 20th century, including Colette and André Gide, as well as writers who might be largely forgotten today but who were visible figures during the time Proust worked.

Lowe receives award from Brazilian Academy of Letters

Elizabeth Lowe, director of the Center for Translation Studies, was honored in August at the Brazilian Academy of Letters, Rio de Janeiro, for her work on translating Brazilian literature. Lowe also gave a presentation on her translation of a Brazilian classic, "Os Sertoes," by



Euclides da Cunha. Published in 1902, the book is considered to be the foundation for modern Brazilian literature. Published in 1902, it is a chronicle of a backlands war that took place from 1896-1897

Elizabeth Lowe

in the hinterlands of the state of Bahia, in which a starving band of religious fanatics were massacred after a prolonged and bloody guerrilla war by the army of the new Brazilian Republic.

Lowe's is the second translation into English; the first was done by Samuel Putnam in 1944 (University of Chicago Press). According to Lowe the book has had a great influence on the development of the field of Brazilian studies in the United States. It is the first of a new series of Latin American classics being launched by Penguin Books.

Cole named co-chair of Beckman's Biological Intelligence research theme

Beckman Institute researcher Jennifer Cole has been named a new co-chair of the Biological Intelligence (BioIntel) research theme.

Cole, a member of Beckman's Cognitive Science group, is an associate professor in the Department of Linguistics and a faculty affiliate in the Department of Computer Science at the U of I. She will be co-chair with Mark Nelson, a professor in the Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology at Illinois and a full-time faculty member in the Neuro Tech group at Beckman.

In addition to her appointments at Beckman and linguistics, Cole is an affiliate with the Department of Computer Science. Her research focuses on spoken language and includes phonology, phonetics, human speech processing, and computational linguistics.

Members of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics honored for outstanding service

Cori Crane, an assistant professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures (GLL) has earned the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) Academic Professional Award for 2009-2010. She is also director of the Basic Language Program of GLL and Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education.

Mary Ellen Fryer of the Graduate Services Office is the recipient of the 2009 Nancy J. McCowen Distinguished Service Award. She was nominated by Professor Michael Finke of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Geraldine Moore is the recipient of a 2009 LAS Staff Award. She was nominated by Professor Laura Hill, of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. Geraldine has worked in the Foreign Languages Building in various capacities since 1995. She is currently the School's 4th-floor receptionist.

Von Knight, human resources, has been awarded the Chancellor's Distinguished Staff Award for 2010. Von began her career at the U of I Press, where she worked in various capacities from 1998 to 2000. She joined the staff of the Foreign Languages Building in August of 2004.

Elena Delgado, associate professor of Spanish, has been named the 2009-2010 recipient of the Humanities Council Teaching Excellence Award. The award is given "to recognize teachers who are truly outstanding and to encourage all members of the profession to aspire to the highest standards of excellence."

East Asian Languages and Cultures professor wins grant from Japan Foundation Center

David Goodman, professor of East Asian Literatures and Cultures (EALC), in cooperation with colleagues in EALC and across campus,



and in partnership with the New York Japan Society and Keio University in Tokyo, won a three-year grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership to

David Goodman

establish the Illinois Japan Performing Arts Network (IJPAN).

IJPAN will explore ways to use high-speed Internet technology to facilitate arts exchanges between Japan and the U.S. and bring together performers and audiences from around the world.

Four events are planned so far this year and others are in the works. Those already planned include:

- A performance by veteran actor Yoshi Oida, "Interrogations," October 8, from the New York Japan Society, including a talk-back with the performer;
- A stage reading in English by American actors of Shoji Kokami's recent play *Trance*, November 15 (with rehearsal November 14), from the Japan Society with participation of the playwright from Tokyo;
- A performance by the Kashu-juku Noh Theatre, March 29 at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts; and
- An adaptation of Haruki Murakami 's 2004 novel *After Dark,* in April (date TBA), from the Japan Society.

The Career of Doug Kibbee

By Karen Fresco, professor and head of the Department of French

Doug Kibbee has had a distinguished career as a scholar, teacher, and administrator. His students remember him as a generous mentor and his colleagues as a smart, imaginative collaborator and problem solver. Earning his BA



Doug Kibbee (Photo by GradImages®.)

in French from Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y., he completed his PhD in French linguistics at Indiana University, Bloomington, in 1979. His first faculty position was in the Department of Modern Languages at Western Kentucky University, where he taught from 1979 to 1985.

He came to the University of Illinois in 1985, earning tenure and promotion in 1991. After a stint as visiting professor at the Université de Nantes in France, he returned to serve as head of the Department of French until 2000. He was selected to be the first director of the newly formed School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, a position that he held from 2007 until his announced retirement in August.

Kibbee's early research addressed the history of the French language and the history of linguistic theory. He became interested in how humanistic research shapes public policy and is shaped by it, a focus that led him to study the history of language legislation in France. His current work focuses on the nature of prescriptivism in linguistic behavior.

As he has moved along this intellectual pathway, he has made side trips, studying Baoulé with one of his doctoral students and eventually publishing a translation of Baoulé stories. He studied French law in order to address language legislation and human rights. Over the years he has collected and studied translations of *Alice in Wonderland* and has become engaged in translation studies, working to create the Center for Translation Studies at Illinois and bring to campus the Dalkey Archive, a leading publisher of contemporary fiction and poetry from around the world.

The richness of Kibbee's research interests is reflected in the range of courses that he has offered, from "History of the French Language" to "Language and the Law," from "The History of Linguistics" to "Language and Minorities in Europe," "Language and Public Policy," from "La lexicologie" to "Les langues de France" and "La création du français standard." It is also echoed in the diversity of the doctoral projects that he has directed: on language debates during the French Revolution; on the history of the baccalauréat examination, language policy and linguistic theory in the 19th and 20th centuries; on borrowings from French, English and Arabic in the Senegalese language, Wolof; on issues of the translatability of concepts between English and French.

A hallmark of his research is international collaboration. He was a leader in negotiating and developing a trailblazing scholarly exchange between France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and the Program in Medieval Studies. He obtained grants from the Worldwide Universities Network to organize an international research team on the topic of language reform. His international contacts have benefited the Department of French as he secured a series of grants from the French government to create a website for the dissemination of information about France and to support the University Library's celebrated Kolb/Proust Archive. He obtained the designation of the Department of French as one of 15 Centres pluridisiplinaires at American universities.

Kibbee's curriculum vita is studded with awards and grants, among them several Arnold O. Beckman Research Awards, support from the National Center for Supercomputing Applications and from the National Endowment for the Humanities, appointments to the Center for Advanced Studies and to the Program for the Study of Cultural Values and Ethics.

Kibbee leaves teaching and administrative duties to plunge into research projects. This fall he will be working on "Political philosophy and the establishment of the standard language in France, 1550-1651" as a fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago. In the spring he takes up residency at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, to work on a critical edition of *Liberté de la langue françoise dans sa pureté* (1651) by Scipion Dupleix. We look forward to having him return to speak to us about these projects.

School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics

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SCHOOL OF LITERATURES CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS

Spring 2010 Convocation



The 2010 Spring Convocation graduating class and faculty during their ceremony held in Foellinger Auditorium on May 15. Nearly 200 students received bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degrees during the ceremony before a capacity crowd. The keynote speaker was Douglas A. Kibbee, professor of French and director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. (Photo by GradImages[®].)