

Excerpts from Chair Flore Zéphir's nomination letter

"Since obtaining her Master of Arts degree in French from MU in 1973, Mrs. Robert has had an illustrious career as a French teacher in Saint Louis, a career which spans over thirty years. Indeed, she taught at Parkway West Senior High School, which is home to one of the top 50 foreign language departments in the country. Moreover, she has taught as an instructor at Saint Louis University, and has been a volunteer French teacher at St. Gerard Majella Catholic Grade School. She is also a founding board member of the recently established St. Louis Language Immersion Schools. Throughout her long career, Mrs. Robert has been a tireless advocate of French cultural studies in the United States, and has taken countless numbers of foreign language students on study abroad programs in France. Of particular importance is her 1997 Summer Abroad trip to Paris with a group of students from St. Gerard Majella School, which included a private invitation for her and her students to attend the dedication of the *Cathédrale d'Evry* by Pope John Paul II, and to participate in the World Youth Day, held in Paris on August 24, 1997.

Moreover, Mrs. Robert maintains a strong presence not only in the *Alliance Française* in Saint Louis, MO, her city of residence, but throughout the United States. The Federation of *Alliances Françaises* is an organization dedicated to the enduring friendship between France and America, and to the promotion and celebration of the French language and culture throughout the world. Indeed, Mrs. Robert can be credited for being the co-founder of the publication of the Federation of the US *Alliances Françaises*, titled *le Magazine*. She has served on the School Committee of the *Alliance Française* of St. Louis, and has maintained channels of communication with *Alliance Française's* school directors throughout the United States. She has also observed *Alliance Française's* classes in the United States, in London, and Paris. In addition, she has increased contacts with other *Alliances Françaises* worldwide, particularly in Mexico, Canada, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands.

Mrs. Robert has held important positions in a variety of French/Francophone organizations. Among them can be listed the *Renaissance Française—USA*, of which she is the president; the American Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, of which she is a founding member and has served as Vice Chair; the Federation of *Alliances Françaises* in the United States, of which she was the president from 2000 to 2006; the *Société des Professeurs français et francophones d'Amérique*, of which she is the founder of the Prix Léopold Sédar Senghor; the Saint Louis—Lyon Sisters City, Inc., of which she was the president from 2007 to 2009; and both the *Institut Maison Bourbon—USA* and the *Institut Maison Bourbon—Paris*, among others. In addition, she holds memberships in many regional, national, and international organizations, including the Foreign Language Association of Missouri, the American Association of Teachers of French, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the French Heritage Society, the Center for French Colonial Studies, the *Association France-Amériques*, *La Société française*, and *L'Union internationale de la presse francophone*.

Mrs. Robert has hosted important events for dignitaries, such as the Saint Louis visit of His Royal Highness, Prince Louis de Bourbon; and the Paris luncheon of Mrs. Gretchen Leach, wife of the US ambassador to France, Howard Leach. Additionally, she travels frequently to Paris to meet with French partners of the Federation of *Alliances Françaises*; to organize and participate in discussions with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the American Embassy in Paris, and with the Secretary General of the *Organization Internationale de la Francophonie*, Abdou Diouf, who is also the former President of Senegal.

All of those activities convincingly demonstrate that Mrs. Robert is a true champion of the advancement of French cultural studies globally. For her countless contributions she has received many honors. Indeed, September 21, 2007 was proclaimed "the Jane Robert Day" by the City of St. Louis. Along the same lines, October 26, 2007 was also proclaimed "the Jane Robert Day" by St. Louis County. In October 2007, she received the Charbonnier Award by the Federation of *Alliances Françaises*. On December 2007, she was made *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*, an honor bestowed upon her by the French government. In 2011, she was made an *Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, an honor also awarded by the French government. In that same year, she received another award, la *Médaille d'or*, from the *Renaissance Française*. In 2008, Webster University presented to her the Distinguished Alumna Award, and the College of Arts and Science at the same institution honored her with an Outstanding Alumni Award.

After obtaining her BA in French from Webster University in 1969, Mrs Robert decided to come to MU's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures to pursue her Master of Arts degree in French. There is absolutely no doubt that Mrs. Robert has accomplished a great deal in her field. Indeed, very few French teachers can boast such outstanding accomplishments, have championed so passionately the cause of French cultural studies, and brought so much visibility to the field. Owing to her significant contributions, she has distinguished herself as an exceptional MU Alumna. She is undoubtedly among the very best individuals that the College of Arts and Science has ever produced. It is only fitting that we bestow upon Mrs. Jane Marie Robert a 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award. Such an award does justice to a lifelong of meaningful achievements, and honors a lady who has spent her entire career at the service of others, and being true to her profession and the values that were instilled in her by MU, her alma mater."