

Lettre de la présidente

Fall 2016

Dear Colleagues,

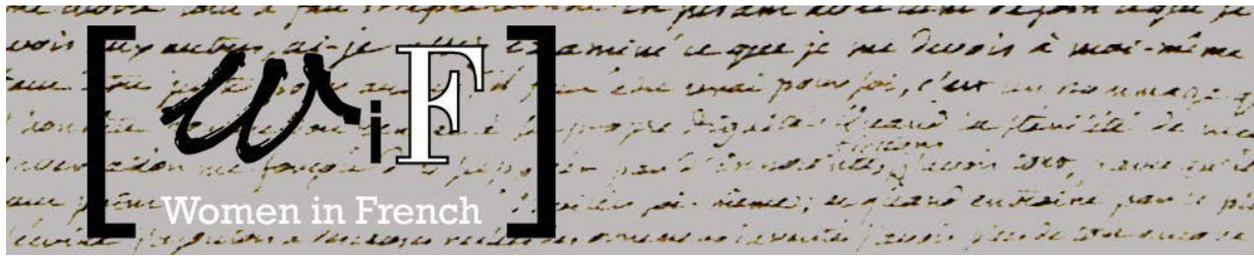
In these times of turmoil and dissention both at home and abroad, I believe that the mission of Women in French, indeed of our profession in general, is all the more important. As professors of French and Francophone languages, literatures and cultures, and as scholars of women's creative production, feminist thought and gender theory, we all contribute not only to improving intercultural understanding, but also to promoting social justice throughout the world. I am honored and grateful to be able to serve as president of this organization, and I would like to begin by thanking you all for your participation in Women in French.

The highlight of the past six months for our organization was the Women in French conference at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania on June 9-11, 2016, which was superbly organized by Florence Ramond Jurney. The conference, whose theme was Fluid Identities: Margins and Centers in French and Francophone Women's Literature, Cinema and Art, attracted 89 participants from around the world. Our keynote speaker, Yanick Lahens, a Haitian author who received the Prix Fémina in 2014 for her novel *Bain de lune*, gave an insightful talk entitled "Les femmes écrivent dans l'oeil du cyclone." Her novel was also the focus of our inaugural One Book One WIF program with a discussion led by Linda Brindeau (please see Stephanie Schechner's description of the program on p.8).

Another exciting aspect of this year's conference was that we had in attendance all of the presidents of Women in French since 1990, the period when Women in French officially became an independent association and an Allied Organization of the MLA: Annabelle Rea (1990-1995), Colette Trout (1995-1999), Catherine Montfort (1999 -2003), Mary Rice-Defosse (2003-2007), Juliette Rogers (2007-2011), and Mary Anne Garnett (2011-2015). Their presence was testimony to the strong sense of community that I believe is one of the important characteristics of our organization.

I was also very encouraged to hear so many excellent papers by graduate students and other emerging scholars at the conference. The future of our organization and of the profession depends of course on their participation. Seven of the graduate students present received a WIF Travel Grant to attend the conference: Rosanne Abdulla (U of Waterloo), Stacie Allan (U of Bristol), Lisa Karakaya (CUNY Graduate Center), Meghan Kort (U of Victoria), Noelle Lindstrom (Indiana U Bloomington), Sabrina Medouda (U de Toulouse II—Jean Jaurès), and Annemie Treier (U of Toronto).

Providing a supportive and inspiring community to emerging scholars is one of the strengths of our organization. In addition to providing opportunities for informal mentoring and networking, Women in French also has a more formal mentoring program for graduate students or junior



faculty, a mock interview program for job seekers, essay awards for both graduate and undergraduate students, and travel grants to regional and national MLA conferences. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Meredith Scheiring, advised by Dr. Grace M. Armstrong of Bryn Mawr College, who won the 2016 WIF undergraduate essay award with her paper "Soumise(s) ou révoltée(s) dans *Une si longue lettre* et *L'Enfant de sable*."

I have the great pleasure to announce that the next Women in French conference will be hosted by Florida State University in Tallahassee thanks to Aimée Boutin. The conference will take place in February 2018 and the theme will be *Le Bruit des femmes* / Women and Sound. Please keep your eyes open for more information in the coming months.

Many thanks to all the board members and to the regional officers who have been busy organizing WIF sessions at the regional MLA conferences. In December, we will have elections for six of the offices: Secretary, Treasurer, three Regional Representatives—Central and Rocky Mountain, Great Lakes, and Middle Atlantic—and a Graduate Student Representative.

Over the summer, the WIF board agreed that it would be in our best interest to redefine our regional structure to correspond more closely to the MLA conference regions rather than the MLA electoral regions given that the main role of our regional representatives is to organize sessions at the regional conferences. We will therefore be voting on this issue in December. If the proposal is approved by a majority of the members, we will implement the new regional structure over the next few years as the elected representatives finish their terms. Once again, thank you all for your participation in Women in French. I wish you all the best in these final months of 2016!

Cecilia Beach

Alfred University