

Catholic University, Washington DC - March 26, 2012 Professor Receives French Academic Honor

Joan Tasker Grimbert, Professor of French and medieval studies, has been named a Chevalier (knight) in the Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Order of Academic Palms). The academic honor is awarded by the French government to those who make significant contributions to French education and culture.

(In a more recent interview, Grimbert's husband Bob Smarz confirmed that he is delighted with the honor and deserved recognition for his wife, as also are her close friends Professors Mary Hynes-Berry and Gordon Berry).



“Professor Grimbert truly deserves this honor for her exceptional academic achievements,” said Claudia Bornholdt, associate professor and chair, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. “She is not only one of the most notable international scholars of medieval French romance literature, but she is also one of the foremost experts on the medieval Tristan legend, as well as a devoted teacher of French language, literature, and culture.”

Grimbert was honored at a March 22 reception at Curley Hall that was hosted by L.R. Poos, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences; the modern languages and literatures department; and the Embassy of France.

Grimbert joined the faculty at Catholic University in 1987 and served as chair of the

modern languages and literatures department from 2004 to 2010. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she serves as coordinator of the department's French section.

At the reception, Grimbert was presented with the Chevalier medal by Emilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas, the French Embassy's attaché for university cooperation. Baneth-Nouailhetas was one of three representatives of the embassy who attended the reception.

“Napoleon himself founded the Ordre des Palmes Académiques, and to this day it represents outstanding service to French culture. CUA is exceptionally proud that France is bestowing this distinction upon one of our faculty,” said Poos.

While enjoying the reception, Grimbert noted, “It is wonderful to receive this honor surrounded by my colleagues. I have devoted my life to French language and culture. This is very special.”