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## Franco-American Recognition Dinner Remarks

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Remarks on the Occasion of  
1986 Franco-American Recognition Dinner

Madeleine Giguere  
University of Southern Maine

Sponsored by Action for Franco-Americans of the Northeast for the benefit of programs of research scholarships to be administered by the Franco-American Office of the University of Maine.

September 28, 1986

Ramada Inn  
Lewiston, Maine



## Remarks on the Occasion of the Recognition Dinner

Thank you all for coming here on this September Sunday to honor my work and to raise money for the Franco-American Office at Orono.

When the representatives of ACTFANE told me last spring that ACTION FOR FRANCO-AMERICANS OF THE NORTHEAST wanted to honor my work of documentation, I was very surprised and very pleased. Surprised because the work of documentation is not very well known. It is done in private with books, a computer and a pencil. It provides background information on employment, education, housing and marketing for government and private programs. I am very pleased to have my work recognized. My parents provided me with models of an ethnic consciousness which expressed itself in volunteer work in the general community. My training at Columbia gave me the skills. The United States Census obliged with an ethnic question, and FAROG, the Centre d'Heritage and Rhode Island College provided the psychological support.

Early in the seventies I was interested in the women's movement but soon I recognized that there were many workers in women's studies but no one in the Franco-American movement doing the work that I knew that I could do. I believe that my work of tracking the French in the U.S. census is important for the Franco's as a group. I am delighted to have it recognized here today.

I want to thank everyone involved in the organization of today's recognition dinner. I thank ACTFANE for having selected me. I thank their Executive Director, Paul Parà for



orchestrating today's celebration. I thank all of those who agreed to serve as honorary chairs as well as the members of the Steering Committee. I thank the members of all the local groups, Le Centre d'Heritage, the Festival Franco-American, Le Richelieu and la Survivance Francaise and l'Union St. Jean Baptiste who worked hard in arranging today's banquet under the leadership of Adrien Lamontagne of the Association Canado-Americain. I thank each of you who accepted to be on the program.

I also wish to thank an other set of organizations. today. These are organizations which helped me along my documentary path. At the University of Maine at Orono, there is the Canadian Studies Center, the bilingual education program and members of the Foreign Language Department and FAROG were supportive of my work. Rhode Island College, the Fédération Feminine Franco-American, and the French Institute at Assumption College and now ACTFANE have given recognition to my work.

At my campus, the University of Southern Maine granted me two sabbaticals, one of which I used specifically for the work honored here today. The University several times awarded me research grants for Franco-American projects. At all times the University provided computer access, secretarial services and a telephone to receive calls --very important in my role as a provider of information on Franco-Americans to governmental officials and researchers from Maine and from all over the United States and Canada. All of this support contributed to the effectiveness of my work. I am fortunate indeed to be working in such an atmosphere.

A substantial part of my work has been to track the Franco-Americans in the United States Census. I compile what they have



published and I generate new information from the Census material. It is interesting to note that in their recent volumes the Census has published data for all ethnic groups similar to what I developed in the 1970's for the Franco's.

I think numbers are important. It makes a difference in how we are treated and how we feel about ourselves to know that one quarter of the population of Maine is of French ancestry. However, if the Census doesn't ask the question "What is your ancestry" in the 1990 Census, we won't know this in the future. In my judgment, if we want the ancestry question included in the 1990 census we have to fight for it right now. Congress will review the topics for inclusion in the 1990 census by next April. Now is the time to sensitize the members of Congress about the topic of ancestry. If you don't know the size of your group and its breakdown by age, education, income, etc., the government and other large organizations will not be very responsive to your needs. As you leave today you may want to take a handout with the addresses of your Senators and Congressmen and information on the ancestry topic. I urge you to look at the material and then decide whether to contact your congressional delegation.

En terminant, je veux dire un mot au sujet de l'office franco-américaine. Ce n'est que depuis quinze ans qu'il y a une présence franco-américaine organisée sur le campus d'Orono de l'Université. Depuis le début Yvon Labbé et ses collaborateurs ont fait un paquet de choses enfin d'aider les étudiants franco-américains, à prendre pleine possession de leur héritage. L'Office franco-américaine, anciennement connu sous le nom de FAROG--Franco-American Opportunity Group--est un centre d'accueil et d'information. L'Office a rehaussée et affermie la présence



franco-américaine à l'Université, par des jours d'études, des programmes culturelles et une collaboration avec bien de groupes à Orono et à l'extérieur. Le FAROG Forum, un journal bilingue, est un canal d'information et d'échange d'idées pour tout le peuple franco-américain. Je crois que le travail de FAROG élargi et soutient l'identité franco-américaine parmi les étudiants et parmi nous tous. Je me suis toujours fait un grand plaisir d'appuyer les efforts de FAROG. Je suis heureuse que ce banquet soit au bénéfice de bourses de recherches qui sont administrées par l'office franco-américaine.

As a center of information and cultural programs for students, the Université and the general population, the Franco-American office at Orono is doing a splendid job. As an agency of cooperation with many organizations both on and off campus, it is without a peer.

I am very pleased that this banquet will provide funds for research scholarships to be administered by the Franco-American office.

Thank you very much.

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