

A RESOLUTION ON THE RETIREMENT OF  
PROFESSOR EGLAL HENEIN

Professor Eglal Henein can truly be called a citizen of the world. Born in Egypt during World War II, she attended the University of Cairo, receiving the Licence de langue et littérature françaises in 1963. While pursuing a master's degree in French literature at the University of Cairo she also taught as a lecturer at Ein Chams University.

After receiving her M.A. in 1966, she began her doctoral studies at the Sorbonne in Paris funded in part by a grant from the French government. She was present during the demonstrations of May 1968, when a gendarme acquainted her with the pavement "up close and personally." In spite of (or, perhaps, because of this experience) she completed her Doctorat d'Université in 1972 and shortly thereafter moved to the United States.

In 1974 she took a position at Yale as an Assistant Professor of French and in 1977 she came to Tufts as both an Assistant Professor and as Coordinator of the French language sequence 21-22. In 1982 she was promoted to Associate Professor. Not satisfied with one doctorate, Eglal continued her research into French seventeenth-century literature until she was awarded the prestigious Doctorat d'Etat by the Sorbonne in 1992. This signal achievement as well as her many contributions to French literature and cultural studies led the French government to name her a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques in 1998. In the year 2000 she was promoted to the rank of Professor of French in the Department of Romance Languages.

Seymour Simches, our late colleague who established the Department, served as its chair

for many years, and for whom the Simches award is named, once told Eglal that she got an idea a minute. It has been one of her most endearing qualities through the years. Whether it was a decision to offer new courses such as French Canadian literature and culture, taking groups of students to see a play by Molière at the ART and exhibits in Canada, or establishing a program called “French bridges” between Tufts and local high schools in Somerville and West Roxbury, she has always thought of innovative ways to expand interest in French.

Her work on the five-volume seventeenth-century novel, *L’Astrée*, by Honoré d’Urfé has been at the center of her scholarly research since her graduate school days. It was the topic of her dissertation, a work so weighty that it resulted in two publications: *Protée romancier* (1996) and *Promesses de bonheur dans l’Astrée* (1998). And she is not finished! Her interest continues on-line, where she has just published the first volume of *L’Astrée* on a website. She is justly proud of its multimedia format and its many hyperlinks. In fact, she invites all of us to log on and let our “fingers do the walking!”

Beyond the classroom, Eglal has demonstrated her commitment to the larger Tufts’ community as well. From the time she came to the Department of Romance Languages she has had an abiding interest in the welfare of our part-time instructors. She has manifested this interest in word and deed, no more so than when she established a fund to assist those who face health care crises. Each year, in concert with others at Tufts, she has added to the fund and encouraged others to do so. That encouragement is extended to all today and in the future.

But it is not all work and no play. Eglal has shown some “derring do” as well, learning to drive as an adult—and in Boston to boot! During the Thanksgiving break, she managed to slip out of town with friends and spend the holiday in Las Vegas. But what happens in Vegas, as we know, stays in Vegas! She has also spent many years trying to master the idioms of English with

the frustration that only an exacting language teacher can appreciate. Trying to explain why making lunch and doing lunch are not the same thing is a challenge. One must just make do and go with the flow! Her plans after retirement are to relocate to Montréal in order to be closer to her family. I suspect it is also to be able to speak French at will and not worry about American slang.

Eglal's students are more aware than any of us of how important clear and concise thinking and writing are. She has always demanded and received the best from her classes. The appreciation has been reciprocated. Students have regularly named her one of the most important professors they have encountered at Tufts, both for her concern for their performance and the rigor with which she has challenged them. Her many advisees—both major and first-year—have appreciated her attentiveness and care. In 1995 she was named a “Friend of the Hill” as a result. It is fitting, therefore, that this resolution close with the words of a student, who summarized her experience in a French class with the simple declaration: “Eglal est magnifique!” Eglal Henein is truly magnificent as a scholar, teacher, colleague and friend. I ask that these remarks be spread upon minutes of the faculty of Arts and Sciences and that a copy be given to Professor Henein and her family.