



TRUMAN PROFESSOR ACHIEVES KNIGHTHOOD

BY MERCY TEE
Staff Writer

Truman State University will soon have a knight on campus, but not the guy most picture on a white horse saving the damsel in distress.

French professor Audrey Viguier has recently received the Order of Academic Palms award. It is rare for someone as young as Viguier to receive such an award.

The award was originally founded as a decoration by Emperor Napoleon to glorify notable members of the University of Paris. Today, the award is a national order of France given to prominent figures in the field of education and world of culture.

Viguier's faculty mentor, Tim Farley, said Viguier is dedicated to teaching French and engaging students.

"She really looks for opportunities — she's already helping out with our French Honorary Society with Dr. Betty McLane-Iles, so she's very quick to volunteer," Farley said. "She tackled our French brochure that we needed to update, and she took charge of that."

Denis Quenelle, Deputy Cultural Attache in the Office of Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General of France in Chicago, said he put Viguier's name on the nominee list because of her exceptional contribution in promoting French language and culture.

"So we have been proposing, for instance, training sessions for business French, French of diplomacy, French of technology, medical French, and so on," Quenelle said. "[Viguier] has already hosted three of these training sessions, and she made a really great job to connect with all the French teachers over the use to convince them to come to the training sessions, which was not easy in the beginning."

In 2012, Viguier said she realized American professors who wanted to be trained in France for

their professions were receiving training sessions in Paris. As she also wanted to receive training in the United States, she said she requested assistance from the French Embassy.

Viguier said Jean-Claude Duthion, the Head of the Educational Affairs Department, approved her project almost immediately.

In May 2013, Viguier said she organized the first training session in Texas. So far, 150 professors have already been trained, and every year, there are three to four training sessions at various universities across the United States.

"After these trainings, all the participants can offer professional certificates to their students through the International Chamber of Commerce of Paris," Viguier said. "These diplomas are called Diplomes de Francais Professionnel [French Professional Diplomas.]"

Viguier said she hopes to have a training session during May at Truman.

Viguier said though she came from a very disadvantaged family, she was able to benefit from the opportunities in front of her to get to where she is today.

"My parents are really proud," Viguier said. "My mother even told me that my father cried when he heard about the good news."

Though the date has not been set, a ceremony will most likely take place a year from now in a place of her choosing so she can officially receive her Order of Academic Palms medal, Viguier said.

"I'd probably choose France because, you know, I want to be with my family," Viguier said. "You know, for my PhD, they couldn't come, so now I have the opportunity to celebrate something with them in France."

For more information about this process, contact Viguier at aviguier@truman.edu.

