

Marie Louis Rahier

When one is in the company of Madame Marie-Louise Rahier, nee Massoux, there is never a moment's doubt about her French allegiance or origin in the Walloon sector of Southern Belgium. For she often speaks nostalgically about her native land and the city of Liege where she was born and grew up. During her childhood years she sometimes accompanied her father, a businessman, on trips to neighboring countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and Greece. She especially loved to visit Paris and to wander for hours through the famous Louvre or see one of the dramatic productions at the Comedie Francaise. It was in Liege that she came to excel in academic achievement at the Ecole Normale and won two first honors for scholarship. It was taken for granted by the family that she would pursue higher studies. She enrolled in the state university of Liege and began a five year period of demanding work. In the early part of World War II, while Belgium was occupied by the German army, she completed the doctorate in the school of pharmacy. After receiving her diploma, she went to Brussels to begin a career as a pharmacist. There she accepted a position as directress of a pharmacy, which coincidentally happened to be owned by the mother of her future husband, Luc Rahier. Eventually she was able to purchase full ownership of the enterprise. In April of 1957 she and Lue were married. In the course of the next several years she also had the opportunity to do some teaching in the Ecole Normale and in a Lycee in the capital city. She soon realized that her real love was for teaching. Working with students in the classroom was far more challenging and interesting to her than compounding of drug prescriptions. This conflict of interest was finally resolved by the in-

tervention of the Belgian government, which exercised its power of eminent domain and condemned the Rahiers' pharmacy to be demolished to make way for a new highway. Now freed from the demands of the business, she and Lue decided to seek a change of climate and scenery and, in 1963, emigrated to the United States.

Her parents and sister had already preceded her to Gaffney, S.C.

The Rahiers chose to settle in Charlotte, where Lue found a promising opening in his metier as a master cabinetmaker. They made their home in the parish of St. Ann's, where Msgr. Michael Begley was serving as pastor. In the summer of 1966 Madame Marie-Louise met Abbot Walter Coggin and Fr. John Oetgen, the respective heads of Belmont Abbey and the college. As fortune would have it, the school was searching for a French teacher for the summer classes. Thus began Madame's association with Belmont. It has been one of rewarding spiritual significance for her because of her close ties with the Benedictine monastery of Maredsous in Belgium since her youth. The Benedictine tradition of education with its emphasis on liberal arts, moral values, and a family spirit strikes a responsive chord in her heart.

After teaching in the French department for a year, she obtained the permission of Dean Walter Spear to initiate the audio-visual method CREDIF for language instruction. She has been very active in promoting this approach to foreign language study, and cooperates with the researchers of the Ecole Normale de Saint Cloud in Paris on the implementation of the A-V methodology in American colleges. She teaches the CREDIF method in the Alliance Francaise of Charlotte and has also served as Chairperson of the



Madame Rahier's vivacious approach to language study is evident even in a photo of her classroom technique.

committee of coordination between the Alliance and the universities and colleges of this area. Each summer she returns to Belgium and delivers a lecture to the alumni and students of the university of Liege about some aspect of education in the U.S.

As chairperson of the modern language department of the college for the past eight years, she has been instrumental in instituting a junior year of study abroad at the University of Aix-en-Provence, France. Abbey students are now able to benefit from study in an international atmosphere and then return to complete their bachelor's degree in the senior year at Belmont. Madame has recently introduced courses in French culture and civilization as part of the humanities offerings of the school. These have become very popular with our students. She arranged for an annual "French Mass" which is celebrated by Fr. Kenneth

Geyer, O.S.B., on the feast of St. Joseph. This event is becoming quite a 'happening' on campus and draws a sizeable congregation to the Cathedral.

When she is not engaged in her work at the college, Madame cultivates the traditional pursuits of the continental homemaker - she is fond of gourmet cuisine which features delicate souffles, wine sauces, and French pastry.

She is fascinated by Chopin, enjoys literature, conversation, and needlepoint. Professionally her interest remains captivated by the field of pedagogy and educational psychology. She relishes the creative challenge of education and establishes as her primary goal to contribute to the intellectual and character formation of students. To the campus she brings a Gallic flair. Abbey students responding to her vigorous approach to the study of language agree: "C'est formidable!"

ALUMNI NEWS

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'69 - John Spacek is with Hartford Insurance Company in Columbia, where he, his wife and son live. Max Alvarez is marketing representative with Mobil Oil Corporation in Tampa, Florida. He received his Masters in Counseling Education from Florida State University.

Lee Whalen is still with Owens-Illinois and he and Alice have just bought a house in

Malvern, Penna.

Phil Ford is half-way through the MBA at Valdosta State College. He is Squadron Commander and Assistant Administrator - Plant Management at Moddy AFB and will be promoted to First Lieutenant in March. Bill Burns received a J.D. degree from UNC Law School in 1972 and is with the law firm of Levine and Goodman in Charlotte.

'70 - Gary Verno is working as

an accountant with the Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, Penna. Abbot Edmund visited with him when he was in that vicinity in February. John Moore is a senior assistant accountant with Haskins & Sells in Philadelphia and lives in Lindenwood, N.J. He is associate director on the Educational Projects Commission of the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Association of Accountants, and Treasurer of the Philadelphia

Chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants. Charles Martin is with Liberty Life Insurance Co. in Charlotte. Gary Lathan came by to say goodbye; he has accepted a position as a senior accountant with Bechtel, Inc. of San Francisco on the trans-Alaskan pipeline and road project and will be living in Fairbanks, Alaska.

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