

**French Association of University Women**

**AFFDU**

1920-2010

90<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Grand Salon, Sorbonne, Paris

19 March 2010

In front of over 200 people, including members and friends, French and European, ladies from the AFFDU, and in the prestigious Sorbonne setting, *Recteur* (Chief Education Officer) Patrick GERARD (*Recteur de l'Académie de Paris, Chancelier des Universités de Paris*), and AFFDU President Evelyne d'Auzac de Lamartinie opened the conference marking the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AFFDU's creation.

In the presence of UWE President Griselda KENYON and Marianne HASELGRAVE, representing the IFUW President, the morning was dedicated to reminding us about AFFDU's action not only in society (cf. Michelle PERROT, historian, and Wassyla TANZALI, essayist) but also with European and International authorities, thanks to the intervention of Marie-José JONCZY (Coordinator of International Relations (CIR), Vice-President of the UWE) and of Georges HADDAD (Director of the Division of Higher Education of UNESCO).

During the afternoon session, which was organized by AFFDU Past-President Nicole BECARUD and by Claire GUICHET (President of the *Fédération des Associations Générales d'Etudiants (FAGE)*) thoughts were shared on "the keys for women's success".

The opening conference was delivered by Brigitte GRESY (Senior civil servant, *Inspectrice générale des Affaires sociales*, and a specialist in women's issues).

The programme indicated that this session was co-organized by Claire GUICHET and myself. This co-organization is designed to be a symbol of the need to relay generations and also be a sign of the conflict between elders' experience and the young's aspirations and lifestyles. Several voices were heard on "the keys for women's success".

Indeed, if the notion of a model applied to women having reached great notoriety or high corporate positions today seems outdated, then on the other hand, young university-graduate women had questions to ask these important people who **mastered** their professional lives and **built** their careers.

Some of the questions were the following: How? Why? What message? Others were mentioned to very important women who are recognized in their fields, as diverse as they may be, by students who were designated by the *FAGE* and who are involved in university careers that are just as diverse.

I would like to express our gratitude to these important people, whose common interest is having succeeded in their professional careers as well as ... **taking an interest in AFFDU's action**, and having accepted the discussion that we offered them. Our gratitude goes out to the students who prepared these exchanges of points of view.

**First of all, Christine CLERC**, recognized journalist and author of many works; she knows the AFFDU well since she has participated in almost every AFFDU book show since the beginning.

**Laure NSIMBA, student mid-wife** (which I remind you is a 5- year programme following secondary school) who talked to Christine.

**Muguette DINI, Senator, first woman President of the *importante Commission des Affaires Sociales du Sénat***, unfortunately and much to her regret could not make it that afternoon. But, she was not completely absent because **Joannie CRIGNON**, a student in political science, had prepared this talk with a long interview with Muguette DINI whose main ideas she presented.

**Marie-Christine OGHLY** is the head of a firm, which is a position she conceives to be (as I believe is written in her biography) a series of challenges. She also actively participates in community life; I even think she was an AFFDU member.

**Claire GUICHET**, President of the *FAGE* and also a student involved in an information and communication science programme spoke with Marie-Christine.

**Odile VEILLON**, certified architect, is an example of what the AFFDU does concerning aid for young women having graduated from higher education. Indeed, she was the first laureate of the “*création d’entreprise*” grant, awarded by the AFFDU’s *Cercle Culture et Entreprise*, a group which has ensured a link between the AFFDU and the business world for over ten years.

It is Cécile KELCHE, a student in geography, who spoke with the freelance architect.

**Claire GUICHET** took note in her conclusion of the different common points that were brought out from these talks and of the need to resort to “tools”, such as:

- belonging to “professional and women’s networks”
- lifelong learning

**Marianne JULIEN**, engineer from the Paris School of Mines, director of the “hydrogen energy innovation” programs at Air Liquide, created and organizes an employee network named “O’PLURIEL” to promote good practices encouraging reconciliation between work and personal life. We cannot describe how interesting her networking experience is.

**Monsieur le Recteur Christian FORESTIER**, *administrateur général du Conservatoire national des Arts et Métiers*, the conservatory being one of the first schools to offer continued education, talked to the public about how lifelong learning is a major tool for succeeding at work.

Finally, **Marie-Christine LEMARDELEY**, **President of the *Université Sorbonne nouvelle Paris 3***, concluded the day with the insight and perceptiveness for which she is so well-known.

A guided tour of the Sorbonne was organized for our friends afterwards.

Lastly, a convivial gala dinner in the historic drawing rooms in the *Sénat* restaurant allowed us to become better acquainted with each other, particularly with our European friends, especially the Italians.

Translation: Danielle Lecointre-Erickson