

Mr. Guy Wildenstein

President, The American Society of the French Legion of Honor

October 23, 1998

Dear Mr. Wildenstein,

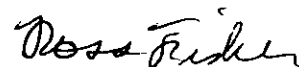
I am writing to thank the American Society of the French Legion of Honor for its generous funding of my *stage* at the Préfecture d'Haut Rhin in Colmar, France, this summer. It was an incredible experience that opened my mind to the world of French culture.

My six weeks in Colmar were split between the *Préfecture* and the city hall. At the *Préfecture*, I visited a sample of several different offices, where I was educated in the general workings of the French government system. Among the bureaus that I visited were the ones dealing with immigration, infrastructure, technical services, environmental regulation, personnel, and many others. The employees there were extremely helpful in giving me a sense of the unique characteristics of the French system and the differences between it and other systems of government. I was often allowed to sit in and watch while the *fonctionnaires* at the *Préfecture* did their work so that I could get a general sense of what their job was like. I was even permitted once to sit in on an official meeting of the environment and natural resources officials from all over the Alsace region. My duties consisted mostly of observation and learning about what French government was like. My boss at the *Préfecture*, Christian Carabin, was generous enough to allow me to go to lunch with him every day, so I had ample opportunity to ask questions if I did not understand something.

For the second half of the *stage*, I went to work at the Colmar city hall, which was a somewhat different kind of experience. I was given free tours of Colmar's five official museums, and the head of the *Service des Musées*, Marc Lischer, took me one day on a trip to Strasbourg, which I found to be a very interesting city. I was sent one day to the *Service des Sports*, which took me on a day-long cycling trip in the Vosges Mountains. I spent another day working at the *Service des Activités Culturelles*, where I helped set up for a public concert in the one of the town squares. I also worked for two days at the *Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture* (M.J.C.), where I helped set up for a picnic and barbecue. The people at the city hall were incredibly accommodating and friendly, and they arranged something new for me every day.

All in all, it was a highly enjoyable and extremely enriching experience. I learned a lot about Europe, and my French improved tremendously. I am very grateful to you for helping make this possible.

Sincerely,



Ross Fisher