

Elizabeth Anthony
Princeton In France Stage 1998

President Guy Wildenstein
The American Society of the French Legion of Honor

September 18, 1998

Dear Mr. Wildenstein,

I would like to take this brief hiatus in the school day to thank you and the American Society of the French Legion of Honor for the fellowship you granted me which allowed me to intern at the Préfecture du Finistère in Quimper this summer. It was one of three internships in which I participated and was an integral part of furthering my overall understanding of France, her system of government and her people. Through my meetings with various officials and civil servants at the local level, I gained a much more extensive understanding of the day to day lives of the French people as they relate to their government than I had learned in any of my courses at Princeton, or even in my seven week family stay in Avignon last summer.

Since I hope to pursue graduate studies in International Relations after leaving Princeton next spring, my time at the Préfecture was enormously helpful and gave me a good deal of insight into the ways in which the French government functions on a local level. No matter how civilized the world becomes, it is clear that true international harmony cannot exist without understanding, and I believe that is the primary realm in which I matured this summer. It is easy to sit back in the U.S., criticize French bureaucracy and faltering socialist economics and talk about the simple capitalist principles that would solve all France's problems, but when one actually witnesses the daily situation first-hand, some of the American arrogance fades away and one realizes things are much more complicated than they appear from home. This summer I learned that the French have different priorities and long-term goals than Americans, and that real diplomatic progress cannot be made until both sides attempt to understand why the other does what it does.

I do not mean to imply that through my internship this summer I was enlightened as to how establish world peace, but I do think it opened my eyes regarding relations between France and the United States and my capitalist-clouded vision has cleared considerably. Again, thank you very much for providing me with this opportunity and I hope to be able to pay back the Society someday by performing any future diplomatic duties (formal or non) I may have all the better for having learned what I did this summer.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Anthony