UC SANTA BARBARA

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French Government Awards Chevalier des Palmes Académiques

Cynthia Brown, a professor in the Department of French and Italian, has been named Chevalier (Knight) of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Order of Academic Palms). The award recognizes her outstanding scholarship and instruction in French literature and culture.

The Ordre des Palmes Académiques is an Order of Chivalry of France for academics and cultural and educational figures. It was founded by the Emperor Napoléon to honor eminent members of the University of Paris. Early Palmes Académiques were awarded to professors and teachers. Later, the scope was broadened to include major contributions to French national education and culture by anyone, including non-French citizens and French expatriates who expand the culture throughout the rest of the world.

Among the accomplishments for which Brown was recognized is “Women, Art and Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe,” a three-year project with the Université of Lille. Supported by a grant from the Partner University Fund in conjunction with the French American Cultural Exchange, the project gave her literary and cultural history graduate students an opportunity to study at Lille and brought art history graduate students from Lille to UCSB.

Brown’s research interests center on late medieval and early Renaissance French literature and culture; libraries of late medieval women; the transition from

manuscript to print culture; issues of authority and authorship; the relationship between text and image; and books as cultural artifacts. She is the author of several books and articles, including “The Queen’s Library: Image-Making at the Court of Anne of Brittany, 1477-1514” (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) and “The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne: Negotiation Convention in Books and Documents” (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

In receiving the prestigious governmental honor, Brown joins UCSB faculty members Catherine Nesci, professor of French and chair of the campus's comparative literature program; William Ashby, professor emeritus and specialist in Romance linguistics; and Ronald Tobin, professor emeritus in the Department of French and Italian, who was named Chevalier, Officier and Commandeur of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques in 1972, 1987 and 2005, respectively.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.