

The Petrossian-Tarrant Scholarship Fund

History

Alumni and friends of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures initiated the Petrossian-Tarrant Scholarship in honor of two influential Illinois State University foreign language faculty members: Dr. George A. Petrossian and Dr. Patrick Tarrant. These former students wanted to recognize Drs. Petrossian and Tarrant through their gifts to the Petrossian-Tarrant Scholarship fund. The Petrossian-Tarrant Scholarship fund was established to supplement travel abroad expenses for Illinois State University foreign language students.

Of Armenian birth, Dr. George Petrossian served in the U.S. army (stationed in Italy) from 1945-1947. Following the war, he received his B.A., M.A., and PhD. from the University of Michigan, in 1950, 1952, and 1974, respectively. He joined Illinois State in 1963, and he taught at the University until his retirement in 1991. During his long career, he served in the College Council and the Academic Senate. He was also Director of the Illinois State Summer Program in French at Grenoble, France, from 1970 until 1999. He also served as the host of the popular Cercle Français (now in its 45th year). Even after "retirement" George hosted the French Coffee Hour every week, arriving early to prepare the coffee and cookies. Dr. Petrossian was inducted as Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques in 1993. This award, founded by Napoleon in 1808, is conferred by the French Ministry of National Education upon those foreign citizens who have contributed to the diffusion of the French Language and Culture.

Dr. Tarrant received his B.A. in French from the National University of Ireland in 1947, his M.A. in French from the same institution in 1949, and his Ed.D. in French from Columbia University in 1960. Throughout a long and varied career, he taught in Ireland, England and France, as well as the United States. He was a member of the faculty at Illinois State University from 1963 until his retirement in 1987. During that time, he served as Chair of the French Section (1965-1974), member of the Academic Senate (1971-76), and Chair of the College Curriculum Committee (1965-68), as well as member of numerous other department, college, and university committees. He organized and directed the very first summer session in French for Illinois State at Grenoble in 1969. He was also very active in the IAHE, of which he served as president on two occasions (1975-76 and 1978-79).