

**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
**MORRISSEY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**

**On the Retirement of Prof. James (Jeff) Flagg**  
**of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures**

by Franco Mormando, RLL Dept. Chair  
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How do you summarize in two minutes the career of a colleague who has given 55 years of devoted service to BC? – 34 years of which, by the way, coincide with the equally devoted service to the university of his wife Margaret, who also retires this year as Part-time Instructor of French. Jeff's BC career began in September 1964 as instructor of French. The letter of recommendation dated July 24, 1964 from Prof. Hunter Kellenberger, Chair of the French department at Brown University (where Jeff completed the MA degree) states accurately and indeed prophetically: "Mr. James F. Flagg, Jr. is an intelligent young man who takes his responsibilities seriously and has done good work here, doing more, rather than less, than is expected of him. You could count on his complete dedication to his work and eagerness to accept advice and direction. He is quiet and unassuming but firm and persistent and sticks with a problem until he has finished it."

Yes, indeed: dedication, persistence, generous service that goes beyond the call of duty, and also, we must add, common sense – much common sense! – efficiency, and above all, great humanity that has always shown itself in great affection and concern for his students. In addition to his teaching of French language and literature – he has been one of our most popular and most devoted of teachers – Jeff has filled practically every administrative hat in our department: from Assistant Chair to Director of Undergraduate Studies to Study Abroad Advisor. In addition and most significantly, Jeff was the founding director of what has now become the very busy and very successful Office of International Programs, then called the Office of Junior Year Abroad. And to think that in the early days of that office, he had no administrative staff at all: he handled all business by himself!

In addition to all of this, there has been scholarly work too. On this front, I have time to only point out one enterprise: Jeff and Margaret's book-in-progress, *Boston's French Connection*, based on years of diligent, meticulous, multi-faceted, primary source research that will simply change the way we view Boston's history, especially for the enduring presence of the deep French influence that has been a major characteristic since its earliest days.

In conclusion, let me state it is no exaggeration to say that Jeff's influence on our department will be as long-lasting as will be the affection of those of us who have been fortunate enough to share this BC journey with him. We are and always will be the lucky beneficiaries of his wisdom, expertise, generosity, good humor, and great humanity. We – faculty and staff – will miss him – and Margaret! – enormously.