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## SCOLT through the Ages: 1990 to 2010

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The previous history of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) from its origins through 1989 was undertaken by Herman F. Bostick, SCOLT founder and first co-editor of the conference proceedings; James S. Gates, past SCOLT Secretary-Treasurer; and Robert Terry, past SCOLT Chair and co-editor of *Dimension*. The history was published in the Silver Anniversary edition, *Perspectives and Horizons Dimension: Languages '89*. The SCOLT Board recommended that a two-decade summary of SCOLT's history be included in this current volume as illumination for the Index, which also appears. The authors of this current two-decade history are Lee Bradley, Executive Director from 1988-1999, and Lynne McClendon, Executive Director since 1999.

### History of SCOLT from 1990-2010

#### *1990-2000: Calm before the Storm*

The 1990s ushered in a new optimism with the close of the Cold War era as the USSR officially dissolved on December 25, 1991. While a relatively non-threatening scene appeared beyond our borders, the debates on “English Only” were just beginning to rise inside the U.S. The Clinton Administration opposed this legislation, and by the mid 1990s an alternative legislation known as “English Plus” was set in motion. The unfortunate casualties of the “English Only” movement were many wonderful bilingual language programs.

While the bilingual issue occupied the political agenda, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in collaboration with many allied language organizations, began creating learning standards in tandem with the new standards movement sweeping the educational landscape. The *ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning* debuted in 1996, although they had been in committees and drafts for a few years prior. SCOLT capitalized on the standards in the conference themes, such as “Addressing the

Standards for Foreign Language Learning” in 1997, “Communications, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities” in 1998, and “Connections Beyond the Classroom” in 1999. The decade ended with the U.S. Census report for 2000 showing that the foreign-born population in the United States had grown by 57.4%, over 31 million people. The 2000 SCOLT Conference theme “New Millennium, New Directions” perhaps anticipated that a sense of change was imminent for the coming decade.

As an organization, SCOLT began to recognize outstanding instructors with the “Outstanding Teaching Awards,” and members who had made significant contributions to SCOLT over the years were given the SCOLT Founders Award. Four SCOLT Founders were recognized during this decade: Elizabeth Epting, the first SCOLT Secretary-Treasurer (the designation later changed to Executive Director); Joanna Breedlove Crane, past SCOLT Chair and longtime participant; Herman F. Bostick, SCOLT founder, and Lee Bradley, the fourth Executive Director for SCOLT since its founding. In 1995 SCOLT awarded its first language study scholarship offered through the French Cultural Services of the French Embassy. By the end of this decade, the scholarship program grew to three awards: one in French given by the French Embassy, one in German given by the Goethe Institute and American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and one in Spanish given by the Spanish Embassy.

The early 1990s also gave rise to the expansion of the SCOLT Web site, which Lee Bradley, Executive Director initiated with assistance from colleague Grady Lacy at Valdosta State University. During Lee’s tenure, SCOLT was the beneficiary of extensive administrative support provided by Valdosta State. The organization began to utilize the Web site as a means to reach more of its constituents in the region. The current Web site with its unique URL evolved from these earlier efforts.

### *2001-2010: The Storm and the Aftermath*

The multilingual world expressed deep sadness for the events of September 11, 2001. As the U.S. government began assessing ways to prevent such events in the future, the nation almost immediately discovered that there were not sufficiently trained speakers of languages (other than English) to call upon for assistance, especially for the less commonly taught languages. While the Homeland Security Act of 2002 highlighted our lack of speakers of other languages, the nation looked inward at its educational system to ensure a citizenry equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001** enacted January 8, 2002, required all public schools to administer a state-wide standardized test annually to all students to determine if schools were preparing students for success. The unfortunate consequences of this enactment tended to shift funding for instruction for core subjects (state testing) and for remedial special education, while many other programs languished or were dissolved. As the importance of assess-

ment as an instructional tool began developing in the 90s, the increased emphasis on assessment and evaluation was explored to a greater extent in the next decade. Eight articles in *Dimension* volumes during this period reflect this emphasis on assessment and evaluation; and in 2004, SCOLT selected as its theme “Assessment Practices in Foreign Language Education.”

During this period of time, SCOLT experienced exponential growth as a professional organization. The number of scholarships increased to eight with donations from the University of Québec at Chicoutimi, the French Cultural Services of the French Embassy, Cemanahuac Educational Community, the Embassy of Spain, the Goethe Institute and AATG, Estudio Sampere, Centro MundoLengua, and, in 2010 the Academia Latinoamericana, the Linguistics department of Equatorial University. SCOLT’s awards recognition program also increased to include “Friends of World Languages.” The longstanding award for “Outstanding Teacher of the Year K-12 and Post-Secondary” was renamed “Teacher of Excellence K-12 and Post-Secondary,” and a new award was developed to allow SCOLT to participate in regional and national competitions for the “World Languages Teacher of the Year.” This new award grew out of the work of *New Visions in Action: Foreign Language Education*, spearheaded by Duarte Silva, Chair of the Task Force for Teacher Recruitment and Retention for New Visions. The new “Language Teacher of the Year” award was given by ACTFL to recognize K-12 language teachers from each region, who then competed at the national level. One regional recipient was chosen and announced at the annual ACTFL conference. The kickoff for this new award began in 2005, designated by ACTFL as the “Year of Languages.” Ken Stewart, member of the SCOLT Board of Directors and SCOLT’s candidate for the national competition, was selected as the first national language teacher of the year at the 2005 ACTFL conference.

The SCOLT Founders Award was given to acknowledge the long-time support, contributions, and participation of the following members: Frank W. Medley, Jr., former President and *Dimension* Editor; Bruce Fryer, former *Dimension* Editor; Paula Heusinkveld, former *Dimension* Co-Editor; Robert Terry, former President and *Dimension* Editor; Billie O. Edmonds, former President; Helen Zimmer-Loew, frequent presenter; David Alley, former President and *Dimension* Editor; Carolyn L. Hansen, former President and *Dimension* publisher; Greg Duncan, frequent presenter; and Sharon Rapp, former President and long-time conference registrar. One of the former recipients of the SCOLT Founders Award, Herman F. Bostick (1997), set up a special scholarship incentive for first-time conference attendees to be awarded at the 2010 conference. Many SCOLT members have contributed to the success of the organization by seeking opportunities to serve the profession.

The SCOLT Board realized that it needed a shepherd to lead advocacy efforts not only for the Board but also for the state organizations; and hence, the position of “Advocacy Director” was created. From 2003 to 2006, SCOLT sponsored Foreign Language Advocacy Summer Camps for members of state language organizations. The camps provided opportunities to share information and discuss ways to help strengthen state organizations and to fine-tune services offered

by SCOLT. Most importantly, states learned various ways of approaching advocacy. Most states appointed advocacy directors or tasked a board member to fill this role if such a position did not exist. Following the success of the camp, the advocacy gathering became a regular part of the pre-conference day at the yearly meeting.

## **New Initiatives and Ongoing Projects**

### *Dimension Index, 1980 to 2009*

In 2002, Maurice Cherry, President and Co-Editor of *Dimension*, proposed that he assemble an index for the *Dimension* journals, beginning with 1980. It was originally thought that this project might be ready for publication for the “Year of Languages” in 2005; however, the task was an enormous undertaking. While SCOLT provided limited funding for assistance at the initial outset of the project, Maurice called upon a Furman Advantage Research fellow interning in his department. The project’s on-going work has been due to the support of Maurice’s department at Furman University with the lion’s share of the work on the Index completed by Maurice, to whom SCOLT is indebted for this valuable contribution.

### *Careers Project*

Prior to starting her term as SCOLT president in 2005, Carol Wilkerson proposed the development of a Web page for Foreign Language Careers Information. All board members contributed to the development of the project. The information is free and available for download on the SCOLT Web site [www.scolt.org](http://www.scolt.org).

### *SCOLT Assessment Project*

Sue Barry, President of SCOLT in 2006, attended an Assessment Summit sponsored through *New Visions in Action*. She encouraged the Board to consider a role for SCOLT in emphasizing assessment. As a result, a grant was issued throughout the SCOLT region for K-12 school districts that would commit to training the entire foreign language staff to develop and use performance-based assessments (PBAs). Four applications were submitted, and the selection committee, headed by past president Peggy Bilbro, chose Richmond County School District in Augusta, Georgia. Greg Duncan, former ACTFL President and long-time SCOLT member, was selected as the project facilitator. The training sessions began in the summer of July 2007, and the field testing of the PBAs and rubrics took place from August 2007 to January 2008. Follow-up training sessions were provided in February and May of 2008. As a result of its work, the Richmond County Foreign Language Department was tapped to make assessment contributions to the newly revised language standards for the Georgia Department of Education Web site. The culmination of this project was a presentation given by the Richmond County Foreign Language Group at the 2009 SCOLT Conference co-hosted with the Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG) and the Southeast Association of Language

Learning Technology (SEALLT). The group was headed by the coordinator, Dr. Penny Johnson, who was instrumental in all phases of the project.

*Southern Initiative for Language Leadership (SILL) Project*

In 2007 Lynn Fulton-Archer, Advocacy Director and SCOLT President in 2009, investigated various leadership activities that SCOLT might undertake. She brought to the Board's attention the work of the Western Initiative for Language Leadership (WILL), sponsored by the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS), a Language Resource Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. CASLS collaborated with the Pacific Northwest Conference for Languages for a successful leadership program and later received permission to extend the grant-funded initiative to other regions. Lynn worked with Greg Hopper-Moore, the WILL project leader, to create a brochure to promote SILL in the language organizations in the SCOLT states. Early in 2008, 20 candidates were selected to participate in the first summer induction process held at the Simpsonwood Lodge and Conference Center in Duluth, Georgia. At the close of the week-long session, the participants had begun to develop plans for action research they were to conduct during the 2008-2009 school year. To keep the project alive and active, CASLS provided a special SILL-NET site for each participant as a way of sharing and disseminating information throughout the year. In the summer of 2009, 14 participants were able to return to the same location. One participant was deployed to Iraq and was unable to be with the group. Another participant, who became known as "Beth in a Box" sent her laptop in a FedEx box to the group leader so she could Skype in each day of the program because the imminent birth of her child did not permit travel. The program for this second summer featured a mini-conference in which each participant presented the action research project completed prior to arriving. The participants agreed that the initiative had been successful in helping them to assume leadership roles more effectively, to improve their own classroom management, and to hone their instructional skills. The group members were encouraged to present their action research at SCOLT and ACTFL.

*A Look to the Future:*

The current economic situation will likely cause organizations to examine their operations, and SCOLT is no different. In the future, SCOLT will rely more on the use of technology to improve and facilitate its outreach and information delivery. Already in this first decade of the 21st century, SCOLT has moved to on-line submission of conference proposals and has placed the 2009 spring edition of *SCOLTalk* at the SCOLT Web site, where future editions will be published and archived. The 2010 conference theme, "Communication Beyond the Classroom," embraces technology used in today's classrooms to move students and teachers beyond the classroom walls in meaningful ways. At the 2010 conference, we come together again as SCOLT celebrates its 45th anniversary to "to look at the future of foreign language teaching and of SCOLT" (Fordham, 1990,vii).

## References

Fordham, P. (1990). Preface: SCOLT's Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration. In T. B. Fryer & F. W. Medley, Jr. (Eds.), *Perspectives and Horizons, Dimension: Languages '89* (pp. vvi-x). Columbia, SC: Southern Conference on Language Teaching.

### SCOLT History 1980-2010

#### **2010 Winston-Salem, NC Communication Beyond the Classroom**

SCOLT President: Nancy Decker, FL

*Dimension* Editor: Carol Wilkerson:

#### **2009 Atlanta, GA Empowerment through Collaboration**

SCOLT President: Lynn Fulton-Archer, SC

*Dimension* Editor: Carol Wilkerson:

#### **2008 Myrtle Beach, SC Languages for the Nation**

SCOLT President: Norah Jones, VA

*Dimension* Editors: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC) & Carol Wilkerson: Western Kentucky University

#### **2007 Atlanta, GA Languages: From Practice to Profession**

SCOLT President: Jim Chesnut, GA

*Dimension* Editors: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC) & Lee Bradley: Valdosta State University (GA)

#### **2006 Orlando, FL Languages for Today's World**

SCOLT President: Carol Wilkerson, TN

*Dimension* Editor: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC)

#### **2005 Charlotte, NC Many Languages, Many Learners, One World**

SCOLT President: Sue Barry, AL

*Dimension* Editors C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC) & Lee Bradley: Valdosta State University (SC)

#### **2004 Mobile, AL Assessment Practices in Foreign Language Education**

SCOLT President: Peggy Bilbro, AL

*Dimension* Editors: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC) & Lee Bradley: Valdosta State University (GA)

**2003 Atlanta, GA Models of Excellence in Second Language Education**

SCOLT President: Sharon Rapp, AR

*Dimension* Editors: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC) & Lee Bradley: Valdosta State University (GA)

**2002 Baton Rouge, LA Cyberspace and Foreign Language: Making the Connection**

SCOLT President: C. Maurice Cherry, SC

*Dimension* Editor: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC)

**2001 Myrtle Beach, SC 2001: The Odyssey Continues**

SCOLT President: Carolyn L. Hansen, SC

*Dimension* Editor: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC)

**2000 Birmingham, AL New Millennium, New Directions 2000**

SCOLT President: David Alley, GA

*Dimension* Editor: C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC)

**1999 Virginia Beach, VA Connections Beyond the Foreign Language Classroom**

SCOLT Chair: Susan Blankenship, AL

*Dimension* Editors: David Alley: Georgia Southern University & C. Maurice Cherry: Furman University (SC)

**1998 Savannah, GA Communications, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities**

SCOLT Chair: Kathy White, NC

*Dimension* Editors: David Alley: Georgia Southern University & Paula Heusinkveld: Clemson University (SC)

**1997 Myrtle Beach, SC Addressing the Standards for Foreign Language Learning**

SCOLT Chair: Kathy White, NC

*Dimension* Editors: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1996 Mobile, AL Global Access Through Language**

SCOLT Chair: Anne Fountain, NC

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1995 Charleston, SC The Future Is Now**

SCOLT Chair: Billie Edmonds, SC

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1994 Savannah, GA Changing Images in Foreign Language**

SCOLT Chair Billie Edmonds, SC

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1992-1993 Atlanta, GA FL: Internationalizing the Future**

SCOLT Chair: Robert Terry, VA/ Billie Edmonds, SC

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1991 Research Triangle Park Making a World of Difference  
Raleigh-Durham, NC**

SCOLT Chair: Rosalie Cheatham, AR

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1990 Nashville, TN Acting on Priorities: A Commitment  
of Excellence**

SCOLT Chair: E. Wayne Figart, NC

*Dimension* Editor: Robert M. Terry: University of Richmond (VA)

**1989 Little Rock, AR Languages: Perspective & Horizons**

SCOLT Chair: Paula Fordham, SC

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer and Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina

**1988 Charleston, SC Language in Action**

SCOLT Chair: John Austin, GA

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina

**1987 Atlanta, GA New Challenges and Opportunities**

SCOLT Chair: Robin Snyder, WV

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina

**1986 Orlando, FL Planning for Proficiency**

SCOLT Chair: Christa Kirby, FL

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina



**1985 Atlanta, GA Perspectives on Proficiency**

SCOLT Chair: Frank W. Medley, Jr., SC

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina (combined 1984-85 edition)

**1984 Birmingham, AL Expanding Horizons: Business and Industry**

SCOLT Chair: William C. Holdbrooks, AL

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina (combined 1984-85 edition)

**1983 New Orleans, LA Shrinking World/Expanding Horizons**

SCOLT Chair: William C. Holdbrooks, AL

*Dimension* Editors: T. Bruce Fryer & Frank W. Medley, Jr.: University of South Carolina

**1982 Richmond, VA Foreign Language Teaching: Is the Present Perfect?**

SCOLT Chair: Martha McClure, GA and Howard Altman (KY)

*Dimension* Editors: Martha McClure, Fulton County Board of Education (GA) & Howard Altman, University of Louisville, KY

**1981 Atlanta, GA Foreign Language Teaching: Building on Our Successes**

SCOLT Chair: Jack Davis Brown, MS

*Dimension* Editor: Jack Davis Brown, University of Mississippi

**1980 Charleston, SC Progress: Promise**

SCOLT Chair: Caro Feagin, GA

*Dimension* Editors: Carol Feagin, Georgia Department of Education, & James S. Gates, Managing Editor, Spellman College (GA)