



language legacies

BOARD MEMBER PETER LADEFOGED DIES

On January 24, 2006, ELF board member Peter Ladefoged passed away. He served on the Board of Directors since the Fund was founded in 1996, and his tireless support and inspiration were one of the driving forces behind the establishment and continued success of ELF. Peter died after suffering a stroke on his way home to California after conducting fieldwork on the Toda language of India.

Peter was a leader in the field of phonetics. He was a professor at UCLA from 1962 until his retirement in 1991, though he continued working until his death. He was also an adjunct professor at USC and an editor of the *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*. His work focused on speech production, acoustic phonetics, perceptual psychology, and experimental phonetics. He spent his career cataloguing the world's languages and developing theoretical models to explain their diversity. A passionate field worker, he also helped improve upon the instruments of phonetic data collection, and he used his data to expand the understanding of the sounds of the world's languages. His landmark text, *A course in phonetics*, is the standard introduction to phonetics for students of linguistics.

One of Peter's greatest passions was to record and collect the widest possible variety of sounds of the world's languages. His work helped define the boundaries of the vast range of phonemes available to languages, and his 1996 work *Sounds of the world's languages*, written with Ian Maddieson, is the authoritative catalogue. He searched far and wide for speech sounds which, although unattested, were theoretically possible, and his work helped identify several new phones. He

was instrumental in bringing about an expansion of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to accommodate a greater number of speech sounds.

Peter was also a motivating force in the development of the instruments of phonetic data collection; many of the anecdotes of Peter's career involve spectrographs, complex recording equipment, dental casts, palatograms, linguagrams, MRI, X-ray and ultrasound images and electromyographs. He managed to develop portable versions of some of these technologies to carry with him when he went into the field, some of them weighing over a hundred pounds and sitting precariously in the bottom of a dugout canoe or Land Rover. His 2003 book *Phonetic data analysis: An introduction to phonetic fieldwork and instrumental techniques* is an essential resource for phoneticians in the field.

Peter is personally responsible for thousands of hours of endangered language recordings, which represent a unique and invaluable portrait of human communication.

One of Peter's grants from the NIH established the UCLA Phonetics Lab in 1962, which he directed until 1991. The atmosphere of intellectual collaboration, carefully crafted by Peter, was described by ELF board member Louis Goldstein at Peter's memorial service: "The lab group that sprang to life, seemingly spontaneously, but actually under his careful guidance, provided a way for those people to grow, to interact creatively and critically, to support each other, and to make collective discoveries that none of us individually could have made... As those of us who had this moment in the sun spread out and created our own labs, we brought that experience with us, attempted to imbue our own groups with its spirit. In my own experience, it is never as successful as the original, but it is there to some extent. And all of this makes the field of phonetics a much better, more human place, than it would have been."

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Peter also helped to discredit the use of voice recognition as legal evidence through several experimental studies that demonstrated the fallibility of remembering voices. His work to question this type of legal testimony came after years of acceptance of voice identification in courts, which turned out in several cases to be false. Peter was also famous for his role as the phonetics advisor to the makers of the 1964 movie "My Fair Lady." He is not in the credits, but he was sanguine about it, pointing out that at least two actors with speaking roles were also omitted.

Peter traveled far and wide to conduct phonetics research among the world's endangered languages. He found himself in contact with countless languages on every continent, and he frequently expressed his concern for the future of the languages he studied. As much as the languages themselves, however, Peter respected the opinions of the speakers and their right to determine the future of their languages. He is personally responsible for thousands of hours of endangered language recordings, which represent a unique and invaluable portrait of human communication. Peter's endangered language projects helped inspire a generation of linguists concerned with the fate of the world's languages.

The UCLA Department of Linguistics has posted a list of comments from Peter's friends and colleagues on their web site: www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/ladefoge/remember. In addition to a lengthy tribute to Peter's many professional accomplishments, the comments recall his generosity, humility and magnanimous character that have always inspired the affection and gratitude of the people around him. At the request of Peter's family, many new and old members have made memorial donations to the Endangered Language Fund; thank you to the more than 50 linguists, friends, and loved ones who have contributed to ELF in his honor.

NATIVE NATIONS, NATIVE VOICES

Gordon Bronitsky of Bronitsky and Associates, in conjunction with ELF, is planning the three day Native Nations, Native Voices conference in New York for the spring of 2007. The conference will feature Native American authors from Chile to Greenland who will read their work in their own languages and in translation.

Native American literature is a growing field, and the goal of the conference is to provide a forum for writers to be heard on a national and international level. According to Bronitsky, "Throughout Native America, a small but growing body of writers are giving new voice to Native languages, using their own languages to write about and confront the world they live in, the world of the twenty-first century." Bronitsky intends to call attention to a group of authors who have had difficulty in finding the level of publicity that is enjoyed by many non-native writers.

One of the most important aspects of the conference will be its focus on younger writers who have made an impact in their own communities. Several high school and college students who have been recognized for their exceptional talent in writing will take the stage to share their work with other authors and with the public. "They are the future of languages," says Bronitsky.

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The Native Nations, Native Voices conference will take place over the course of three days in New York. The conference comes after two indigenous and international literature events held in New York this spring: PEN's World Voices Festival of International Literature and The People's Poetry Gathering, sponsored by City Lore and the Bowery Poetry Club. For more information about the Native Nations, Native Voices conference, contact Gordon Bronitsky at g.bronitsky@att.net or the Endangered Language Fund at elf@haskins.yale.edu.

ELF JOINS LINGUAPAX INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

In April, ELF joined the International Linguapax Network as the North American delegation. The Linguapax Institute, located at the Catalunya branch of UNESCO in Barcelona, works for peace and global understanding through equitable language policy and the maintenance of endangered languages. The International Network is composed of delegations from Africa, Latin America, North America, East Asia, Central Asia, Catalunya, the Basque Country, and the Pacific.

Nick Emlen traveled to Barcelona in February on ELF's behalf to meet with the members of the Linguapax Institute and with the other International Network delegations. The delegates were in Barcelona to attend Linguapax's International Mother Language Day conference on the protection of linguistic diversity, which featured a round table discussion on the world's minority languages and a screening of the film *In Language We Live* by Signe Byrge Sørensen and Janus Billeskov Jansen.

The Linguapax Institute was established in 2001 to promote language policies that defend the linguistic rights of minority and indigenous people. The International Network is a way of coordinating the efforts of organizations around the world that share the Linguapax philosophy. As they explain in their web site, "Beyond isolated international activities coordinated from Barcelona, there is a need to channel and multiply Linguapax actions abroad, which justifies the creation of Linguapax delegations or branches in each continent." ELF is pleased to be able to join this network in order to further advance the study, revitalization, and documentation of endangered languages, and we look forward to working with our new colleagues in Cameroon, Mexico, Japan, The Republic of Kalmykia, Spain, and New Caledonia.

For more information about the Linguapax Institute and the International Network, visit www.linguapax.org or contact ELF at elf@haskins.yale.edu.

CHANGES IN ELF BOARD

As part of the International Linguapax Network, ELF will join its colleagues in Cameroon, Mexico, Japan, The Republic of Kalmykia, Spain, and New Caledonia in supporting endangered languages.

ELF is honored to announce two new members of the Board of Directors, Janine Scancarelli and Richard Shanahan. Long time Secretary Dennis Holt has also decided to step down after ten years of dedicated service to ELF.

Janine Scancarelli is an attorney at the law firm of Folger Levin & Kahn LLP in San Francisco, CA. She holds a Ph.D. in linguistics from UCLA, and she has taught linguistics at UC Santa Barbara, The University of Kentucky, and the College of William and Mary. During her career as a linguist, Janine focused on Native North

American languages, and she wrote her doctoral dissertation on Cherokee. Her volume *Native languages of the Southeastern United States*, co-edited with Heather Hardy, was recently published. Janine also co-edited the *Endangered Species Act* (Stanford University Press, 2001). In addition to the Endangered Language Fund, Janine serves on the Salvation Army's San Francisco Metro Advisory Board and the California Low-Income Oversight Board.

Richard Shanahan is a Branch Manager for Raymond James Financial in Branford, Connecticut, where he has worked since April 2002. Before joining Raymond James, Richard worked with UBS PaineWebber, Janney Montgomery Scott, and SNET. He is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and holds a B.A. in Biology and Chemistry and an MBA from the University of New Haven. His expertise in financial planning will help us make short- and long-term decisions on how to meet our goals.

Dennis Holt, one of the original members of the ELF Board of Directors, has resigned to more fully pursue his bardic endeavors. Dennis was also our first Treasurer, ably handling our books and resources from the early days in which there was not much to keep track of through our more recent, more complex days. He also designed our logo, which continues to serve us in its newly modified form. We are very grateful to Dennis for his years of service and wish him well in his current projects.

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NOAM CHOMSKY TO DELIVER BENEFIT LECTURE FOR ELF

On November 15, 2006, board member Noam Chomsky will deliver a lecture to benefit the Endangered Language Fund. The topic of the talk has not yet been announced. The event will be held in New Haven, CT, and it will be followed by a reception. Contact ELF at elf@haskins.yale.edu or (203)865-6163, x265 for more information or to make a reservation.

PEOPLE'S POETRY GATHERING HOSTS ELF IN NEW YORK

From May 3 through May 7, City Lore and the Bowery Poetry Club sponsored the People's Poetry Gathering in New York City. The event brought together poets and musicians in dozens of languages to perform at the United Nations Headquarters, CUNY, The Bowery Poetry Club,

and other venues across New York. Poets read work in Welsh, Basque, Scots Gaelic, Tlingit, Sicilian, Mapuche, Russian, Duungidjawa, Turbul, Wakka Wakka, Gubbi Gubbi, Urdu, Irish, Tohono O'odham, Yiddish, Spanish, and many other languages. Musicians and dancers from Africa, Australia, and Ireland performed traditional dances set to native music and singing.

One of the highlights of the festival was Kewulay Kamara's presentation of an epic poem from Sierra Leone. The only copy of a village's epic poem was burned during the country's civil war. City Lore sent Kewulay Kamara to rewrite the epic. The poem is a link to the past and highlights some of the most important events of the last several hundred years of West African history, as remembered from the perspective of the village.

ELF set up a table at the Book Exhibition at the CUNY Graduate Center to meet new members, connect with old friends, and to see some of the performances that are giving new life to endangered languages around the world. To learn more about The People's Poetry Gathering, visit www.peoplespoetry.org.



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