



Alliance Française

Sacramento

Candidate Statements for the Alliance Française de Sacramento BOARD 2018

New Candidates

Don Rodes

With over 40 years of business experience I can contribute a helpful business perspective to the board and increase Alliance Française Sacramento's visibility within the business community. I understand that success in business depends on being able to attract and retain the best people and, to do this, business depends upon the rich cultural life of their community. Also, having spent 10 years of my career as a non-profit executive, I know how non-profits work and how an effective board of directors operates.

An excellent high school French teacher and a college trip to France kindled my interest in the French language and culture. Pursuing a career and raising a family intervened so it was not until a trip to Paris and Avignon in 2014 that my interest was rekindled. The following year I enrolled at AF Sacramento and I've taken classes continuously since then. After retiring last year I have been active as a volunteer coordinator and as a member of the planning committee responsible for this year's upcoming Dinner Gala.

Over these several years I have met and become friends with staff, members and students and that experience has instilled in me a passion for the mission of AF Sacramento. It has so much potential. What an exciting opportunity it would be for me to help this wonderful organization become an even more important part of the cultural life of our region.

Susie Hennessy

French has always been part of my identity. I began learning the language at the age of 13, studied in France as a college student and earned a PhD. in French. When I began my career as a university professor, I joined the local *Alliance Française* and took a leadership role. My involvement with the organization has enriched my life over the years. I have enjoyed the sense of community that comes from sharing a common love of the French language and culture. At the same time, my experience as president of a small *alliance* in Missouri taught me how to contend with the challenges of expanding membership and appealing to a wide audience with limited resources. Having planned and directed countless French cultural events over the years, I welcome the opportunity to serve the Sacramento *Alliance Française* however I can.

As a member of the board, I would like to contribute to the mission of the organization in a number of ways. Specifically, I can foster collaboration between the *Alliance Française* and the American Association of Teachers of French, a professional organization for which I am the regional representative. My position as a high school teacher means that I have insight for how best to reach young people in Sacramento. My training in language pedagogy is another area of expertise that could be tapped regarding the language classes offered at the *Alliance Française*. Finally, as a former AF president, I can bring a fresh perspective and new ideas for community outreach.

I am truly grateful for all that the *Alliance Française* has given me over the years and I am eager to work with fellow francophiles and francophones for the promotion of French and cross-cultural understanding.

Continuing Candidates

Barbara Cotter

To : Members of the Alliance Francaise of Sacramento

I have had the pleasure of serving on the board of Alliance Francaise of Sacramento for one year and would like to remain on the board to assist in whatever way I can with its mission of promoting French language and culture. The Alliance continues to expand its services and offers an impressive mix of educational and entertaining activities. I have been impressed with the talent and dedication of my fellow board members and look forward to our ongoing teamwork. As an employment attorney in a boutique law firm based in midtown, I have been able to provide the Alliance with assistance on regulatory issues in connection with hiring and pay practices. I hope to continue serving as a resource in this regard in any future term.

With respect to personal information, I grew up in the Bay Area and have lived in Northern California all my life. I moved to Sacramento in 1989 when I landed a job here after law school. I am fluent in Spanish, but fluency in French is a work in progress. I appreciate the Alliance's support in my quest to eventually speak French with ease. I hope to continue my association with the Alliance – whether as a board member or a member at large – for years to come.

Benigno Salazar

I am interested in continuing to serve on the Alliance Française de Sacramento board to help further enrich the Greater Sacramento community through the French language and culture. I learned to love the French language and culture while in high school many years ago and continued my French studies in college, earning a Minor in French from MIT. Oui! They teach French at MIT. Over the last several years, I have reconnected with my appreciation of the French language and culture, including through volunteering at Alliance Française events, and at the Sacramento French Film Festival. (Fortunately, my French is improving with practice.) In addition, I'm currently serving as a member of the Alliance Française's Cine Club. I recently hosted a film screening to a good audience of members and guests.

Finally, my various leadership, professional, and cultural experiences will enable me to continue to effectively serve as an Alliance Française de Sacramento board member. In my years on the board, I helped with fundraising, led some volunteer teams, contributed business and financial insights, and provided Cine Club updates. Even the Alliance Française Federation appreciated my financial knowledge during the national conference in San Francisco. I am especially known for my persuasive leadership style, education and diversity advocacy, strategic consulting, financial and technical expertise, cultural insights, volunteerism, and can-do attitude. I would be honored to serve again as a board member of the Alliance Française de Sacramento.

Thank you for considering my nomination.

Etienne Girard

I, Etienne Girard, am seeking re-election as Board member of Alliance Francaise Sacramento. As a dual citizen from both France and the USA, married to a US citizen teaching French in high school and with three bi-cultural kids, I think my family symbolically represents the intent of reinforcing the links between the two cultures. Professionally, as the Credit manager of a large tech company, I am also exposed to multiple organizations trying to scale successfully their business and this way feel that I can add value to the Alliance, as Board member, in its quest to grow and gain even more visibility throughout the Sacramento area. I am committed to help the Alliance become the central point of the US-French friendship in the region, and one of the most exemplary Alliance within the US.

Kristin Rapinac

I am honored to be considered for re-election to the Board of Directors of the Alliance Française Sacramento. If re-elected, I will work with my colleagues to raise the profile of the Alliance, boost our fundraising, and share the rich French language and francophone cultures with the Sacramento community.

I have been deeply involved with the Alliance Française network for many years. In 2012, I joined the Board of Directors of the Alliance Française Sacramento and have served as President since 2013. During my tenure, the Alliance moved to our new center at CLARA, hired a new Executive Director, and saw revenues and enrollment rise to our highest levels. I currently serve as Vice President of the Federation of Alliances Françaises USA. In addition, I worked at the Alliance Française in Milwaukee, served on the Board of Directors of the Alliance in St. Louis, and was a member and student at the Alliance in Toronto.

I've been fascinated by everything French ever since I took my first class with Madame Blanc in middle school. I continued my French studies in college, at my local Alliance Française, and at the Université de Montréal, and was able to put my French into practice in three bilingual jobs. For the last six years, I have been taking advanced conversation classes at the Alliance Française Sacramento.

My professional background includes positions in nonprofit marketing, fundraising, journalism and community development. My husband, Myron, and I owned a horse stable, where I trained and showed Arabian horses and taught riding lessons. I hold a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Missouri with an emphasis in journalism as well as certificates in fundraising and grant writing from the University of Southern Maine.

I moved to Sacramento in 2012 from Portland, Maine, with my husband and two beagles. I am active in my Midtown neighborhood, serving as the Co-Chair of the Marshall-New Era Neighborhood Association. In addition to speaking French, I enjoy hiking, cycling, kayaking, traveling, and meeting people from around the world.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Paul Beard

Paul became involved as a student at the Alliance Francaise shortly after he moved to Sacramento in 2003. Originally from Los Angeles, he is an environmental and land-use attorney with an international law firm. He helps developers and other landowners obtain permits to use and develop their properties, and represents them in court if necessary to defend their entitlements.

In 2016, Paul had the pleasure of assisting the Alliance, on a *pro bono* basis, with the negotiation of their new lease. In 2016, he became a board member, continuing to assist with legal issues on an as-needed basis. Paul will continue to lend his background and expertise to legal issues that the Alliance may confront from time to time. Having spent a number of years as an attorney for a nonprofit legal foundation here in Sacramento, he also has some fundraising experience under his belt.

Before embarking on his legal career in 2000, he attended Cornell Law School in New York, and did his undergraduate work at UCLA, where he studied (among other things) French language and literature. He enjoys transmitting his love of French language and culture to his wife, Julie, and their six-month-old daughter, Madeline, through French conversation and French-language sing-along videos. Besides French, Paul is a native Spanish speaker and is fluent in Italian.

Paul is eager to continue to help the Alliance grow in membership and donations, and build on its status as a premier cultural institution in Sacramento.