

# TIRF TODAY

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**Promoting research and best practices to improve the use of English in the emerging global knowledge economy of the 21st century**

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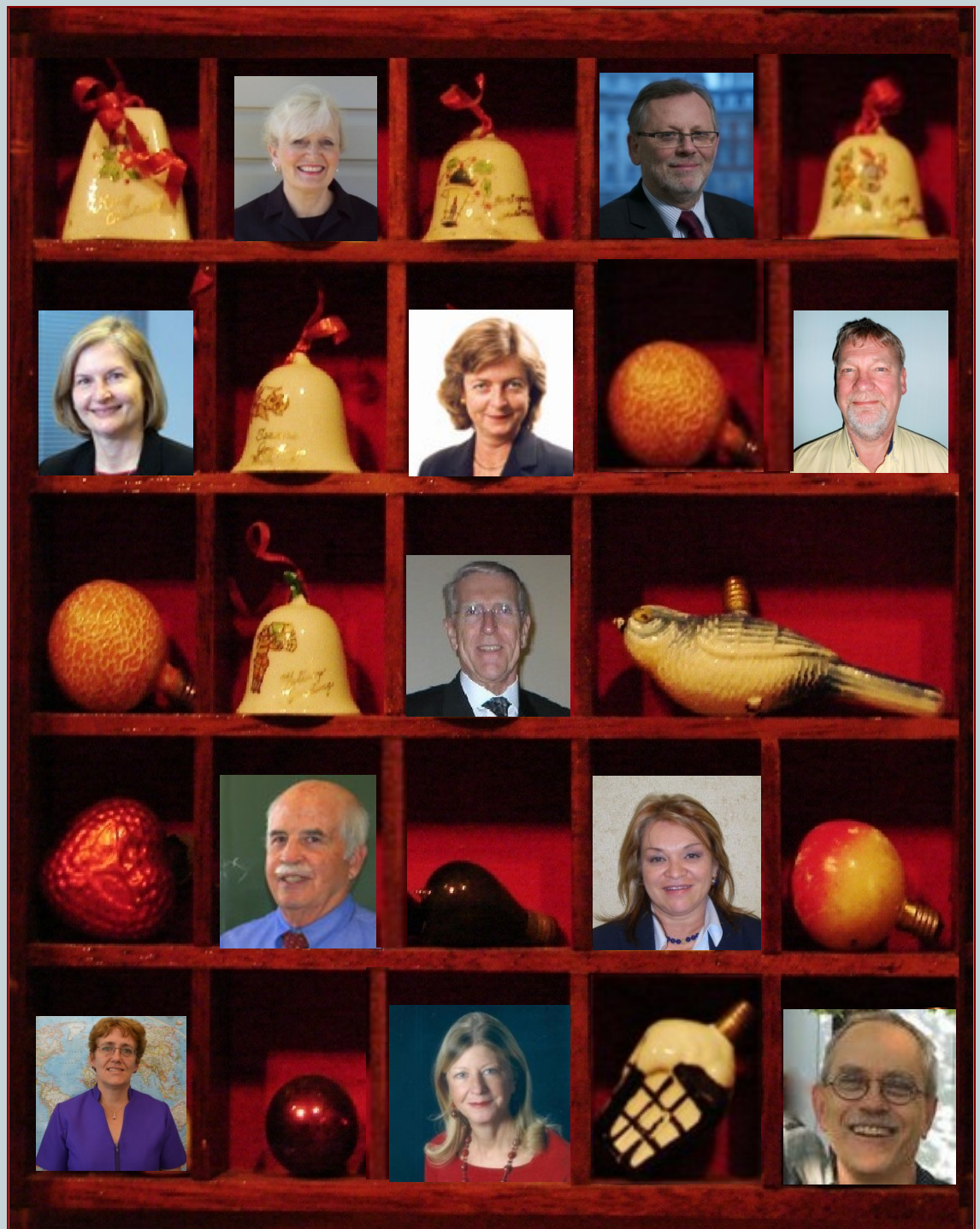
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## Year-end Greetings from Our Trustees

Whether you celebrate Hogmanay, Hanukkah, Boxing Day, Kwanzaa, Pancha Ganapati, Mödraniht, Soyal, Milad un Nabi, Bodhi Day, Christmas, the Winter Solstice, New Year's Day, or the Dongzhi Festival, we here at TIRF want to wish you health and happiness for the holidays and the coming year.

Please click on any of the Trustees' photos below, and you will be taken to a holiday greeting from the Trustee you selected. It has been an excellent year for the Foundation, and we are grateful to have your support!



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**Kathleen Bailey,  
Chair of TIRF**

## Global Research on Teaching and Learning English

We are pleased to announce a new book series, Global Research on Teaching and Learning English, co-published by TIRF and Routledge. This series showcases research by young scholars from around the world, whose studies have been funded by grants from TIRF, awarded through carefully vetted international competitions.

Since 2002, TIRF has commissioned and/or funded research on a range of topics associated with the teaching and learning of English worldwide. This series offers a collection of previously unpublished empirical studies. Volumes in the series will report on issues of current concern to the applied linguistics community and the language teaching profession. They will present a wide variety of research topics investigated through a range of research procedures. All volumes in the series cover the issues that motivated the research, the context of the research, the research question(s) addressed, the data collection and data analysis procedures, the findings and discussion, and the implications for policy, practice, and future research. This standard chapter structure guarantees consistency and coherence across the volumes, while at the same time allowing each author to report on the unique contents of his/her own study.

Commenting on the series, Naomi Silverman, Publisher for Routledge, stated, "I have for a long time had the

### ACTFL 2014 Convention: Proposals Due Soon

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo features professional learning and collaborative networking opportunities. The convention will be held November 21-23, 2014 in San Antonio, Texas.

The ACTFL convention is an international event bringing together over 6,000 language educators from many language and levels. At the convention, there will be more

### Videos: Dr. Jim Alatis Elected as TIRF Trustee Emeritus

As reported in the September issue of *TIRF Today*, [Dr. James E. Alatis](#) (known to us as Jim) was honored as a Trustee Emeritus at the Fall 2013 Board of Trustees meeting. At that event, Trustees Kathi Bailey, Richard Boyum, MaryAnn Christison, and Dick Tucker shared their thoughts with Jim about his influence on the Foundation and the field. Jim's wife, Penny, and his son, Anthony,

### Chair's Report — Languages, Lessons, and Nelson Mandela



This month, we mourn the passing and celebrate the life of a great leader – Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. TIRF Trustee David Nunan once met Nelson

Mandela. David wrote about that encounter in the August 2013 issue of *Tokyo Journal*. To read that story, please [click here](#).

Along with his historical and political significance, Mandela believed in learning languages. He spoke at least Xhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, and English. He also learned Afrikaans, the language of his oppressors. He is quoted as having said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Mandela was known to his people as "Madiba" - the name of his Xhosa tribe. It is considered an act of honor to refer to somebody by the name of his tribe.

A few years ago, I had the privilege of attending a concert by the Soweto Gospel Choir, which was touring California. I went to hear them sing with my friend and student, Ms. Thuli Ndaba, who is from South Africa.

When we got the concert programs, I couldn't read the names of the songs. I asked Thuli, "Can you translate the names of these songs for me? I don't know anything about this language."

Thuli read over the program and said, "Oh, I'm sorry. There are actually eight different languages represented here and I can only speak six of them." In fact, there are six official languages of South Africa, listed here in alphabetical order: Afrikaans, English, Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, and Zulu.

Thuli is a language teacher at [UNISA – the University of South Africa](#). It is known as the largest university in South Africa and is believed to be one of the largest distance education institutions in the world. This past week UNISA sent a group of singers to Mandela's memorial services. Thuli sang as part of that choir. She also sang at an interfaith event hosted by UNISA, where representatives from different religions prayed and spoke about Mandela. Thuli wrote, "The event was emotionally and spiritually uplifting AND was an eye-opener for me as I learned a bit more about other faiths. The people there were African Ancestral, Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i, Christian-Catholic, Lutheran, Method-

highest respect for TIRF's work to support research on English language teaching and learning, to promote its practical applications to pedagogy and language policy, and to recognize the importance of indigenous languages and cultures worldwide and of English as an international language." She added, "When Kathi Bailey approached me about Routledge forming some kind of working relationship with TIRF, I jumped at the opportunity.

This led quickly and smoothly to launching this new series, co-published by Routledge and TIRF – an exciting synergy for expanding dissemination and spotlighting the important contributions of TIRF-supported research via the publishing expertise and global marketing of Routledge's strong presence in the field."

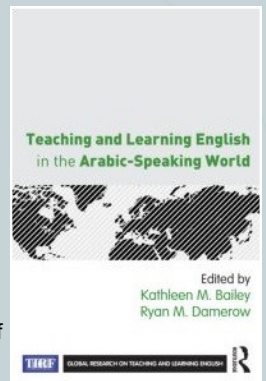
We are excited to be working with Routledge in this way, and are eagerly anticipating the launch of the first book. For more information on the series, please [click here](#).

than 600 educational sessions in a variety of formats covering a spectrum of the language profession. There will also be over 250 exhibiting companies showcasing products and services for language education.

The ACTFL 2014 call for proposals is now open. All submissions must be submitted online by Wednesday, January 15 at 11:59pm ET. The call for proposals can be found by [clicking here](#).

also shared in the festivities.

There are several videos that were taken at the event. Please [click here](#) to view them. We hope you will join us in congratulating Jim as we celebrate this important milestone. Cheers, Jim!



ist, Ethiopian Orthodox, and Rasta. They all reiterated that Madiba brought people and religions together. I was a bit amused that each religion claimed Madiba as its own."

Thuli explained, "The African Ancestral people believe that our ancestors are the mediators between man and God. The more you please the ancestors, the better they represent you before God and your ways will be bright. So when we die, our ancestors have to carry us to God. For them to do that, we must light candles and burn incense. When the elder kneels before the burning incense, she speaks in short phrases asking the Mandela ancestors and relatives to welcome their son and show him the way, and also beseeching Madiba to be a good ancestor and protect and bless us."

Through his life, Mandela set a model for us all to follow – as a learner of languages, as a peace-maker, and as a joyful person. Let us end this year in remembrance of him and of those lessons.

*Kathi Bailey*