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Prestigious French Honour bestowed upon Brisbane School Teacher

A teacher at Brisbane Girls Grammar School has been awarded one of the world’s oldest civil honours, in recognition of her twenty-year quest to strengthen relations between French and Australian schools and school students.

Ms Lorraine Thornquist, the Director of International Studies at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, was bestowed the highly prestigious The Order of Academic Palms, an award originally created by Napoleon and decided upon by the French Ministry of Education, Advanced Instruction and Research.

The award is given to French educators who have made major contributions to French national education and those outside France who have made major international contributions to the expansion of French culture. Ms Thornquist was nominated by French teachers, and was given the rank of “Chevalier of the Academic Laurels.”

In presenting her the award, Monsieur Jöel Bernuchon from Lycée Saint Paul school in Angoulême, France, told the Brisbane Girls Grammar School assembly that Ms Thornquist had “always known how to make the theory of language into a living reality, to encourage communication and human contact. You have always known that establishing friendship, experiencing common ground as well as differences, is an important part of understanding how we may live amicably in a troubled world.”

The award was a surprise for Ms Thornquist, who only found out about it as she was being presented with her medal.

Ms Thornquist says she feels humbled by the award and to be singled out of so many educators who work to inspire their students. “It is a great honour to receive acknowledgement for what I believe is a natural extension and complement to my passion as a teacher of French.”

“I believe that professional passions, if purely motivated, inevitably translate into service to your clientele and therefore the community at large,” she said.

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