



Emilie Patton **de Luca** | Ph.D.  
Professor Emerita of French

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Updates on Peace Faculty & Staff

by Christiane Newell '15

"Life is wonderful, and you have to enjoy every moment you've got."

Dr. Emilie Patton de Luca, William Peace University *Professor Emerita* of French, serves as a model of what it means to enjoy every second of life, to never stop learning, and to never stop giving back to your community.

Dr. de Luca grew up in Chapel Hill and earned her Bachelor's degree, Master of Arts in teaching, and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has also studied around the world, including at Sorbonne and *Ecole du Louvre* in Paris, France, and at *Universita Italiana per Stranieri* in Perugia, Italy, where she studied Italian. She holds a degree in Romance Philology (RPH), which is the study of the romance languages and developed from Latin during the Middle Ages.

Her interest in language began early on in her childhood.

"My mother's family was German, so language was always there," said Dr. de Luca. "It was very interesting, and I always loved to travel. During World War II, when I was a child, it was so exciting that all these things were happening around me. I just got excited about it all."

At Peace College, Dr. de Luca taught French and was the coordinator of international programs. Teaching runs in her family, as both of her parents were professors. Her mother was a math professor at NC State University, and her father was a professor at UNC Chapel Hill at the Center for Southern History. Her "wonderful students" were her favorite thing about Peace, and she accompanied many of them on trips to England and France, encouraging them to explore the world and everything it has to offer through an educational lens.

"Peace is wonderful because it's small and it gives people who have not had a lot of experiences an opportunity to see all this wonderful world that is out there and to learn about different cultures, different lives, and different lifestyles," said Dr. de Luca. "It's a wonderful experience to travel."

When she retired in 1999 after 25 years of teaching at the school, *The Emilie de Luca International Travel Fund* was established to honor her legacy with gifts made by alumni, friends and colleagues. Today, the fund provides financial assistance to William Peace University students wishing to study abroad and/or participate in an international experience. Preference is given, but not limited to, a student wishing to study abroad in France or a French-speaking country.

Dr. de Luca keeps up with many of her former students, and has even attended some of their, and their children's, weddings. She has also returned to Peace several times since her retirement to see concerts and lectures.

Dr. de Luca resides in Chapel Hill, and also has a home in Charleston, South Carolina. She keeps heavily involved in both of these communities, supporting educational efforts and her passion for history.

"I do a lot of things with preservation," said Dr. de Luca. "I really care about old houses and old things."

She has served on the Chapel Hill Historical Society Board, and is involved with the Charleston Museum, the Preservation Society of Charleston, the Chapel Hill Preservation Society and the Historical Society of Chapel Hill.

Dr. de Luca is also passionate about UNC-TV, where she serves on the foundation board, and works to bring in donations during their annual fundraiser, FESTIVAL. She also supports UNC Library, and the National Humanities Center, which is located in Research Triangle Park. She attends many of the lectures held there.

Dr. de Luca is very involved with the election process in Orange County, and serves as Chief Judge in her precinct. She is responsible for setting up all of the voting materials and overseeing the voting process on voting day.

"I really enjoy this because it is so important to vote and be involved in all aspects of our government, be it local or national," said Dr. de Luca.

Dr. de Luca is also actively involved with her church in Chapel Hill, The Chapel of the Cross. She sings in the choir, delivers flowers from the altar to the sick and elderly, and is involved with their foyer group.

She also stays involved at her church in Charleston, especially during the Spoleto Festival, where she works in their tea room, serving food and working the kitchen.

Since her retirement, Dr. de Luca has continued to travel. When she first retired, she would travel to Europe every summer. She has also traveled to Australia and New Zealand.

Her favorite place to visit?

"Every place," she answered. "I've never found a place I didn't enjoy because there's always something else to see, something new to see, and something to experience."

She hopes to continue to travel and to experience and learn all that she can.

Dr. de Luca enjoys entertaining friends and family at her homes both in Chapel Hill and in Charleston. She keeps in close contact with Dr. Valerie G. Hall, Peace *Professor Emerita* of History, and she has two children and three grandchildren who keep her busy.

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