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MEDIA ADVISORY:
UNH Professor Emeritus Robert LeBlanc
on Board United Flight 175

By Kim Billings
UNH News Bureau
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September 12, 2001

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire has learned that Robert LeBlanc, professor emeritus of geography, was on board United Flight 175 that crashed into the World Trade Center yesterday morning. Colleagues in his department are still absorbing the shock of his death and have asked not to be contacted by the press at this time. However, we offer comments below from the president and the dean of the college. In addition, Ted Kirkpatrick, associate dean of liberal arts, is available for comment at 862-2062.

Professor Emeritus of Geography, Robert G. LeBlanc earned his BA at UNH and his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. Professor LeBlanc, a cultural geographer, began his career at UNH in 1963 and served with distinction until his retirement in 1999. He served as acting chair and chair of the department for nearly ten years.

Professor LeBlanc was a scholar in Canadian studies, studying Franco-American communities in New England mill towns. He traveled the world and brought his experiences back to Durham, sharing them with the hundreds of students he taught over his career.

He was honored as a Whiting Foundation Fellow in 1983, received the 1988 Distinguished Service Award

In a 1997 interview with the UNH News Bureau in anticipation of Geography Awareness Week, LeBlanc was excited about the resurgence of interest in geography, not only at the university but in grades K through 12 as well. He said, "While history is the study of events through time, geography focuses on the where and why. Studying geography is studying maps, but also human interaction with the environment, the importance of location and conditions to an event."

Marilyn Hoskin, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said:

"All of us were deeply saddened by the tragic loss of our colleague, Professor Robert LeBlanc. Professor LeBlanc was an outstanding scholar of Canadian studies and cultural geography. As both an alumnus of UNH and one of its finest teachers, Professor LeBlanc was one who cared deeply about the university and the Granite State."

Hoskin continued: "I had the honor of working with Bob in his capacity as Department Chair. One could not find another colleague with greater passion for teaching young minds about the complexities of the past and present and the connections between time and place. He lost his life traveling yet again to the further reaches of the globe. We will not forget the many gifts of his talent that he shared so willingly with students and colleagues. Our hearts go out to his family and friends in this time of sorrow. We share the deep pain of loss of this singular man."

UNH President Joan Leitzel said:

"Professor LeBlanc retired only last year and remained a fixture on campus after his 37 years of teaching and research. He was a highly valued and respected member of our community. We are deeply saddened by his tragic death. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, his UNH colleagues, and his former students."
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