



I glanced over at the doctor as he reviewed my latest test results. His face was impassive. No clues there.

Finally, after what seemed like a long time, he spoke.

“You could live to be 120 years old,” he said.

I smiled because I thought he was joking. “I’m not sure I *want* to be 120 years old,” I replied, flippantly.

“You’re assuming that you would be 120 and have some sort of impairment. What if your quality of life were still good?” he countered, with an earnestness that surprised me.

It took me a second to grasp that he was serious. He went on to say that he believes it might be possible to live much longer than we can imagine right now.

The timing of our conversation was apropos, because I’ve been thinking about the passage of time a lot as we have prepared this issue.

An article about the new Ernest J. Gaines Center, for instance, reminded me that the first cover story I wrote for *La Louisiane*, in Fall 1993, was about Ernest Gaines. He told me that he would always be loyal to the university because of the opportunity it had given him to concentrate on his writing. Like one of the honorable characters in his novels, he has kept his word.

This issue also has an update on Dr. Darrell Bourque, UL Lafayette professor of English emeritus, who was named Louisiana’s poet laureate in November. *La Louisiane* featured him on the cover of its Fall 1997 issue. He was way cool even then, with rimless glasses and a ponytail. We reprinted one of his poems, “Le Courir de Mardi Gras.”

*“Early in the morning all the men
of the grand courir line up
behind our leader, dressed in passion’s
red. . .”* it began.

And, the “In Memoriam” section includes entries for two alumni with special ties to the university: Glynn Abel, a former dean of men who is often cited for his role in the peaceful desegregation of Southwestern Louisiana Institute in the 1950s, and Robert Trahan, a generous and devoted UL Lafayette supporter. They will be missed.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *La Louisiane*.

— Kathleen Thames