

## LATIN IN THE REAL WORLD AND THE SECRET LIVES OF WORDS

With a curriculum vitae that encapsulates the achievements of a forty-year career teaching language and literature, preparing future educators, authoring articles, books, and textbooks, presenting at conferences, serving as President of the American Classical League, editing *The Classical Outlook*, advising professional organizations, and consulting for educational agencies, there's certainly no question that University of Georgia Franklin Professor of Classics Emeritus Richard A. LaFleur has made a lasting impact upon the field of Classics. Most of us likely own of one of his revised editions of Frederic M. Wheelock's classic introductory Latin text-book or have used one of his Latin poetry readers in the classroom. Many of us were also certainly inspired just over twenty years ago to explore new ways of teaching Latin by a volume of articles he edited about Latin pedagogy, *Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom* (ISBN 978-0673576088). After so many decades of hard work, it would have been totally understandable if he had decided to spend his well-deserved and hard-earned retirement years just hanging out at the beach all day and soaking up the sun. It's certainly an option that he and his spouse could have chosen. LaFleur, his wife Alice, and their French bulldog Ipsa do have a modest cottage in the Florida panhandle where they spend time enjoying the unspoiled, natural splendors and sandy white beaches of Apalachicola and St. George Island (affectionately referred to as "The Forgotten Coast" by its residents, due to its being in one of the least populated and best preserved counties in the Sunshine State). However, LaFleur's passion for the Classics and education has remained steadfast, and even in retirement he continues to engage actively and congenially in a variety of generous ways with students, teachers, and enthusiasts who have an interest in the Latin language and Classical civilization.

LaFleur still teaches Latin, providing distance learning tutorials especially suitable for mature and motivated beginning, intermediate, and advanced language learners (<http://www.wheelockslatin.com/tutorials/home.html>) and has kept his online repository of *Methods and Materials for Teaching Latin* (linked on the same page) freely accessible. He also runs his very own active and engaging Facebook group, *Doctor Illa Flora's Latin in the Real World* (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1073110462770592>), "a forum for reading and posting interesting examples of the ubiquity of LATINA IN VERO MUNDO/'Latin in the Real World,' i.e., in the English language and 21st century culture" (LaFleur: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1073110462770592/about>). *Latin in the Real World* (or *LITRW* for short) celebrated its fifth anniversary this year and is certainly one of the most upbeat and convivial general discussion groups focused on Latin and the Classics out there, with a 4,000-plus member following

that includes, but extends well beyond, the teaching profession.

LaFleur sets the tone for *LITRW* with ease, amiably welcoming new members and keeping the conversations light, jovial, and inclusive for anyone who wants to participate. There's truly something for everyone, regardless of the number of years of Latin study. No experience is required—just a love of words and language. LaFleur enthusiastically encourages everyone belonging to this good-natured community to share examples of the Latin language found "online, on television, and radio, in magazines, newspapers, film, music, product branding and advertising, and other media" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1073110462770592/about>). Each day, participants happily oblige with new and wonderful contributions demonstrating how the influence of the Latin language can be found in the modern world.

LaFleur leads by example, regularly contributing to *LITRW* relevant photos, memes, articles, puzzles, games, and other items he comes across on social media. But every so often, he also shares the most recent link to the latest installment of his own delightful, etymologically-themed monthly column "The Secret Lives of Words," which he began writing in 2014 for *The Apalachicola Times* (<https://www.franklincounty.news/>), a small local newspaper published weekly for the residents of Franklin County, Florida. In each installment, LaFleur either writes about what's going on in the scenic and enchanting coastal village he and his wife live in for part of each year, or he explores one of his many wide-ranging passions and interests (which include, but are not limited to, holidays, food, wine, music, movies, and humor). No matter what, though, he always makes some sort of connection to the Classical world and the Latin language. To assist the reader, LaFleur draws attention to both the Latin words and the English derivatives he uses in each essay by capitalizing them.

You could, of course, go back through all the messages on *LITRW* to find the links to all of Dr. LaFleur's past columns in order to read and enjoy them, but that seems like an awful lot of work. Fortunately, LaFleur has already taken care of that for you in *The Secret Lives of Words: From Rome to Apalachicola*, a trade paperback containing updated and expanded versions of over fifty columns. Available from Amazon in full color (ISBN 979-8574907993; \$39.95) or black and white (ISBN 978-1074538255; \$19.95). An appendix includes pronunciation advice and a complete index of featured Latin words and phrases along with their English derivatives. You can also look for future installments in one of the newspapers in which LaFleur's columns appear.

Be forewarned, as you read this, you'll likely find yourself tempted to plan a trip (or pick up and move) to the "Forgotten Coast." There could soon be an influx of Latin teachers and professors showing up in Apalachicola to enjoy the *ostreae* (oysters) and *cerevisia* (beer)!

**SHARON KAZMIERSKI, "The Clearing House"**