

MÉAI NUCESQUE

A Newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

Honoring Karl Maurer

As many of you know, Dr. Maurer spent his final years working on translations and, as an educator, he instilled within his students an appreciation for the difficult task of capturing the beauty of a poem through translation. To celebrate Dr. Maurer's devotion to poetry and his work as a scholar and teacher, alumni and faculty of the Classics Department have established a translation prize entitled "The Karl Maurer Translation Prize." While the details of the prize are still being determined, this award ideally would be given every year to an undergraduate student whose English translation of a Latin or Greek poem makes the original verse truly sing. The prize will include a modest monetary gift as well as a book of poems such as the Dalven translation of Cavafy, a selection of Modern Greek poetry that Karl himself greatly admired. Funded by the donations of alumni, faculty and friends, this prize will honor the memory of our beloved colleague and mentor as well as celebrate poetry through the eyes of a talented individual. If you have questions about the prize, please feel free to contact Dr. Teresa Danze about it. We hope to start accepting submissions in Fall 2016.

Thanks to a very generous gift by an anonymous donor, the Classics Department has also been able to establish a fund that will sustain partial tuition scholarships for graduate students in the Classics Masters program. This fund will be known as "The Karl Maurer Scholarship Fund" and the first awards will be made in the coming spring semester.

Quote of the Day

"Exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non Aquilo inpotens
possit diruere aut innumerabilis
annorum series et fuga temporum."

Horace, *Odes* 3.30.1-5

Classics Departmental News

The Classics Masters Program just began last year, and we already have our first graduate—Travis Qualls, who started here in the Humanities graduate program. By transferring all his coursework into the new degree, he was able to earn his MA last December. As many of you know, Travis is now teaching Latin in Phoenix at the Veritas Academy, one of the charter schools associated with the Great Hearts network. This is a wonderful beginning to our new program, and more good things are sure to come. We currently have six Classics graduate students and we offer two degrees—the Master of Arts in Classics and the Master of Classics. Several students are on track to receive their degrees next spring.



New members of Eta Sigma Phi enjoy a reception after their induction ceremony.

The Classics Department is also happy to announce the reactivation of the Eta Lambda chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, the Classics Honor Society. A few weeks ago, five seniors and three juniors were inducted into the society. Congratulations to Rebecca Deitsch, Maggie Dostalík, Rachel Fountain, Zachary Foust, Elizabeth LaFrance, Rachel Marlett, Mary Spencer, and Isabella Villanueva!

In the upcoming spring semester, the Classics Department will for the first time be offering an elementary Latin course in the evening. J. R. Moss will be teaching Latin 1305 on Mondays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:20 pm. With this evening time we hope to attract a new audience to Classics—the working adults who aspire to learn the language but cannot attend class during the day.

Contributing writers: Dr. David Sweet, Dr. Teresa Danze and Rebecca Deitsch

Alumnus Spotlight

Peter Heyne graduated in 2001 with a double major in Classics (Greek focus) and Drama and later returned to UD for graduate school in English (MA 2005). He went on to teach rhetoric/composition and ethics/literature at several colleges in Wisconsin before attending Marquette University Law School. After graduating *cum laude* and being admitted to the state and federal bar in 2010, he managed a private solo litigation practice for five years in Green Bay and the environs. In October 2015 he joined the trial division of the Wisconsin State Public Defender, where he handles criminal, juvenile, and mental health cases for those who cannot afford an attorney.



Photo © Peter Heyne

The Value of a UD Classics Degree

By Peter Heyne, Guest Contributor

Like Caesar dividing Gaul or the three parts of the Platonic soul, I can think of at least three ways, from the mundanely practical all the way up to the metaphysical, that Classics has helped me to become a better lawyer.

I. First and most mundane, as a litigator I use Latin every day. I'm not talking about Holofernes' lost labor of pedantry (or Costardian neologism like *Honorificabilitudinitatibus*), nor about ostentation, like one appellate judge up here who randomly dropped obscure Shakespeare quotes into his opinions (*Timon of Athens*, really?). I'm talking about Latin we use all the time, on the record, in the heat of argument. Not just the common terms that we no longer always italicize (like *alibi*, *affidavit*, *de facto/de jure*, *subpoena duces tecum*, *habeas corpus*, *dicta*, *ex post facto*, *errata*, *pro bono*), but also the terms that we still *do* italicize and yet use all the time. *Mandamus*, *certiorari*, *sua sponte*, *eiusdem generis*, *per curiam*, *remittitur*, *res ipsa loquitur*, *respondeat superior*, *in rem/in personam*, *mens rea/actus reus*, *nolo contendere*, *quantum meruit*, *res judicata*, *stare decisis*, *de minimis*, etc.

It helps to know what you're actually saying in court or writing in a brief. That way you don't look like an idiot when you are a Supreme Court Justice and you write *de minimus* instead of *de minimis* when authoring a published precedential case.

II. Beyond just the merely practical—memorizing some magic words like first-year kids at Hogwarts and actually spelling them correctly—for me the second and more important benefit of training in Classics has come from grammatical/syntactical analysis. A critical part of my job is statutory interpretation. I just finished an important brief that dissected the exact placement, use and choice of conjunctions in a sentencing statute, a statue that can mean years and years of prison. There is nothing like having parsed Thucydides et al. and all those damn Greek participles to help you figure out sloppily drafted statutes. This same skill in parsing, of course, can also translate into interpreting contracts and any fine print. This is the bread and butter of those in the law. Cracking open wickedly-twisted walnuts of words and phrases and sentences and paragraphs.

Classics, along with a liberal arts education such as

UD offers, provides well-crafted tools to help understand, archaeologist-like, the many historical-cultural layers of Troy that make up our modern American legal system. Far too few practicing attorneys know, or care to know, legal history, especially pre-1776. My law school Torts professor openly mocked Latin in class (at least until the Dean walked in and with a sly grin noted, "Did you not get the *memorandum*—thing which must be remembered?").

In my recent, and successful, appellate brief, I included as persuasive authority not just Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist 83*, but more importantly, the ringing declaration of the right to a trial by jury in Magna Carta, Article 39: *nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum vel per legem terre*. Reading ancient legal authors like Plato, Aristotle and Cicero in the original and studying the Athenian Constitution, the Roman Revolution et al., is invaluable to understanding the law today, both in theory and in gritty practice (I have met more than one Gorgias in court).

III. But the aforementioned two benefits remain earthbound to quotidian utility. The lawyer's more lofty laud for Classics is the ability to raise one's eyes skyward, above the sweat and toil in the silver mines of Laurion, where many (though not all) in my profession value the law for lucre, not liberty. (As a public defender, I have the luxury that fallen human nature, finite natural resources, and perpetual penury mean that I will never lack for work, so in between rushing off to court and hours of bail hearings, etc., etc., I can ponder the Good, the True and the Beautiful.) My education in Classics has provided a firm foundation for stopping and remembering what really matters. There is more in life than a fat retainer or contingency fee or the thrill after a scorching deposition, favorable verdict or appellate decision. But in writing for a UD newsletter, I am preaching to the choir.

So in sum, a Classics education has helped me to become a better lawyer, and a better person. Do I still need to be able to translate Robert Frost into Attic meter (what is Greek for "downy flake")? Maybe not, but as we enter autumn, I am glad that I wandered often lost, Dantean, through the lovely, dark and deep woods of "those dead languages"—the sometimes infernal experience makes the present *purgatorio* all the better.

Kalos kagathos. Veritatem Justitiam Diligite.