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# Foreword: Professor Alain A. Levasseur — Through the Eyes of His Students

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## Foreword: Professor Alain A. Levasseur—Through the Eyes of His Students

*Volume 76 Board of Editors, Louisiana Law Review*

With this Issue of the *Louisiana Law Review*, we take the opportunity to pay homage to that sentinel of the Civil Law—the jurist. As the late Professor Julio C. Cuerto-Rua explained, “the future of the Civil Law is closely related, essentially linked, to the future of the civilian,” with “[t]he civilian jurist [being] the main creator of the Civil Law.”<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the Civil Law is more than a set of positive rules that govern the day-to-day lives of the citizenry; it is a living system that seeks to incorporate the mores of society into an edifice built upon lessons of comprehensive rationality, systematic organization, empirical observation, and historical perspective.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the Civil Law requires civilian jurists to develop the tools needed to navigate its structure, speak the language of its legal culture, and educate a new generation of custodians to safeguard it from the legal erosion of economic, social, and ideological shifts. In short, the Civil Law needs the civilian jurist to be, at once, a navigator, a translator, and an educator, and few individuals have embodied these roles as completely as the honoree of this Issue, Professor Alain A. Levasseur.

Professor Levasseur has taken on the roles of the civilian jurist with an intense passion, which is instantly evident to anyone fortunate—and brave—enough to take one of his courses. As a first-year law student in his Legal Traditions and Systems course, for example, you are instantly transported into the world of the Civil Law, with all of its historical perspectives and cultural nuances. While on this journey, you will not only develop the essential skills needed to navigate the Civil Code, but you will also gain a deep respect for the legal system that Professor Levasseur holds so dear. Although the timid first-year law student sitting in his Obligations course will often find the Professor’s unwavering commitment to methodological precision and substantive mastery intimidating, that student will come to truly appreciate Professor Levasseur’s gift of an intellectual foundation, which will serve as the basis for a lifetime commitment to excellence in legal analysis.

Of course, educating law students has only been a fraction of the Professor’s distinguished career. As a testament to this fact, the pages of this Issue will describe Alain Levasseur as a scholar, linguist, and champion of the Civil Law in English, whose influence spans jurisdictions, legal systems, and languages. But we, his students, see him in a somewhat

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1. Julio C. Cueto-Rua, *The Future of the Civil Law*, 37 LA. L. REV. 645, 678 (1977).

2. *See generally id.*

different light—Professor Levasseur is our guide who teaches us to embrace the Civil Law and appreciate Louisiana’s unique place in the international Civil Law tradition. In this capacity, Professor Levasseur’s impact spans far beyond the borders of Louisiana, inspiring lawyers around the world. For instance, Dan E. Stigall, the current Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General in the National Security Division of the Department of Justice and former student of Professor Levasseur, stated that Professor Levasseur “inspired [him] with pride in [his] Louisiana heritage and captured [his] imagination as an aspiring international lawyer.”<sup>3</sup> Like many other students, Mr. Stigall has found the lessons that he learned from Professor Levasseur invaluable while practicing law in Europe, the Middle East, and throughout the United States. Mr. Stigall’s experience is just one of the many examples of how Professor Levasseur’s influence travels across jurisdictions and legal systems, whether it be in the written word of his scholarship or the hearts and minds of his students.

Professor Levasseur’s influence does not only spread across jurisdictions and legal systems; it transcends time itself. Professor Levasseur has educated, is currently educating, and will continue to educate generations of civilians, who have been meticulously trained to carry on the spirit of the Civil Law. As a result, although our Professor’s retirement is the end of a chapter in his career, his contribution as a jurist is timeless—he is the architect of a network of not merely law students or lawyers, but civilians and comparativists. As civilians, it is we who must strive to ensure the preservation and evolution of the Civil Law tradition, and thanks to Professor Levasseur’s dedication and tenacity, we are well-equipped to hold the future of the Civil Law in our hands.

It is for these reasons that we, the Volume 76 Board of Editors of the *Louisiana Law Review* and students of Professor Levasseur, are honored to have sponsored the 2016 Symposium of the Civil Law and compiled this *Liber Amicorum* to commend our beloved Professor.

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3. Email from Dan Stigall, Counsel to the Assistant Attorney Gen., Nat’l Sec. Div., U.S. Dept. of Justice, to Olivier Moreteau, Professor of Law, Paul. M. Hebert Law Ctr. (Mar. 16, 2016, 4:54 P.M. CST) (on file with Professor Olivier Moreteau).



