

In Memoriam: Ralph Slovenko, **1926–2013**

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Long-time *Names* member Ralph Slovenko died of congestive heart failure on November 3 2013. A month earlier he was vacationing in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he fell and broke his hip two days before he was scheduled to return to the US. Preferring to have whatever surgery he needed in the US, he flew back and was operated on, after which he was bedridden and given rehabilitation. Ralph subsequently took a turn for the worse and was rushed to the hospital but died en route. He is survived by his wife Natalia, stepson Boris, a grandchild and a brother and their families.

Ralph was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on November 4 1926. He attended Tulane University where he earned a bachelor's degree, masters, and a PhD in psychology and a law degree from Tulane. After graduating, he was a Fulbright scholar in France and earned Certificates in international law from The Hague in Holland, the Sorbonne, and the University of Paris.

As an undergraduate he was Editor of the *Tulane Hullabaloo* (the Tulane student newspaper) and as a law student he was Editor-in-chief of the *Tulane Law Review*. Prior to his academic career, he served as a law clerk for a Louisiana State Supreme Court Justice and worked as a senior assistant district attorney in Orleans Parish.

Ralph began his teaching career at Tulane. During that time he developed an interdisciplinary interest in law and psychiatry, and was invited to study psychiatry on a non-medical internship at the Menninger Foundation in Kansas, one of only two such internships given to nonmedical students at the time. He subsequently went on to teach law and psychiatry at the the University of Kansas, and then at the University of Florida, before coming to Wayne State University in Detroit in 1969 where he was Professor of Law and Psychiatry. During sabbaticals he traveled to South Africa as visiting professor at the University of Bloemfontein, University of Natal, and University of Cape Town. During the winters of 1991 and 1997 he was the Rood Eminent Scholar at the University of Florida College of Law, and the Utrecht University, in the Netherlands, respectively. He also lectured in Australia, Israel, Japan, and the Soviet Union.

Ralph was a prodigious writer-scholar who fluently spoke five languages. His resumé, which ran to 102 pages, included 23 books, 42 chapters in books, 45 forewords to books, 257 peer-reviewed journal articles, 111 book reviews, and 462 op-ed articles and columns in newspapers and magazines. His book, *Psychiatry in Law*,

published in 1973, was awarded the prestigious Manfred Guttmacher Award by the American Psychiatry Association, the highest recognition for scholarly contribution to forensic psychiatry. The book was cited as a “monumental work” and was named a Book of the Month Club selection by the Behavioral Science Book Club. Among his other awards (too numerous to mention), Ralph was the first recipient of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law’s “Amicus Award” in 1986, for contributions to the field of law and psychiatry.

Ralph’s onomastic contributions were mainly written for psychiatry journals. A partial list includes “On Naming,” in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy* (1980); “Destiny of a Name,” in the *Journal of Psychiatry and Law* (1983); “Politically Correct Team Names,” *Psychiatry & Law* (1994); and “Aliases, Nicknames, and Epithets in Criminal Law,” in the *American Journal of Forensic Psychiatry* (2008). In 1984, he edited and contributed an article for a symposium issue on “Names and the Law” in *Names*.

On a personal note, I first met Ralph at the Names society meeting in Albuquerque. Neither of had known each other before or that we were both on the faculty at Wayne. After getting back to Wayne we met for lunch at the Detroit Institute of Arts cafeteria and found we had a lot of interests in common, among which was the happy disease of bibliomania. (Both of us mourned the closing of Border’s book stores and the way other book stores had become toy and game shops.) But whereas my disorder was almost manageable, Ralph’s had progressed far beyond treatment. Shortly after moving to Wayne he rented a bedroom-living room apartment so that he could walk to work. He kept a bed and had a little dresser, but the rest of the place was filled with books on shelves on every wall, two and sometimes three deep. His office at Wayne was just as saturated with books. Unlike my own book cache which I hoarded with the intent to read someday, he actually read parts if not all of his books and had inserted clippings for future reference in some of them.

Ralph wore his prodigious scholarship lightly. He was a very outgoing person and had a great sense of humor. He especially liked to laugh at the absurdities of present-day academia. He will be fondly remembered.

In Memoriam: Adrian Room, 1933–2010

EDWARD CALLARY

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Adrian Room, consummate researcher, compiler, and editor, died in Lincolnshire, England, in 2010. His contributions to onomastics were remarkable and his life and work deserve mention in *Names*, even four years after his passing.

Room was born in Melksham, Wiltshire, England, in 1933. He graduated with honors from Exeter College, Oxford, in 1957 and from 1958 through 1971 he taught at several English institutions, including King’s College, Cambridge. From 1971

through 1973 he was a freelance teacher and writer. In 1974 he joined the Ministry of Defense as a lecturer in Russian, a post he held until 1983 when he retired as senior lecturer to pursue a full-time writing career. He was active in a number of professional organizations. He was a founding member of the Association of Teachers of Russian, a member of the Royal Geographical Society, the British Names Society, and the American Name Society. He appeared in *Names* on a number of occasions; his major articles included “The Case for Casterbridge: Thomas Hardy as Placename Creator” in 1989 and “Literary Linkage: The Naming of Serial Novels” in 1992. In addition, he contributed book reviews and had a dozen books of his own reviewed in the journal, from 1975 when Kelsie Harder reviewed *Place-Names of the World* through 1997 when Ladislav Zgusta reviewed *Placenames of Russia and the Former Soviet Union*.

To say that Adrian Room was a prolific writer and editor would be a gross understatement. I have not been able to determine exactly how many original books, updatings, editions, and compilations he produced, but there are more than sixty different titles, excluding revisions, new editions, and reprints, which themselves are numerous. *Placenames of the World* (the spelling of the title was apparently changed for American audiences) has appeared in at least twenty-four editions or reprints since it was first published in 1974. (The 2006 edition was reprinted as recently as 2013.) Reprintings of two of his books are scheduled for 2014: *The Naming of Animals: An Appelative Reference to Domestic and Show Animals Real and Fictional* (a reprint of the 1993 edition, reviewed in *Names* 43: 231–235 by Carole Hough) and the previously mentioned *Placenames of Russia and the Former Soviet Union* (1996 edition).

Room’s domain was language in the broadest sense and his interests were wide-ranging. He published in mainstream language fields, but primarily in areas that some might consider peripheral to more central concerns of the discipline. Along with such titles as *Dictionary of Word Histories*, *Dictionary of Changes in Meaning*, and *Foreign Words and Phrases*, his books include *Dictionary of Music Titles*, *Dictionary of Coin Names*, *The Guinness Book of Numbers*, and the *Dictionary of Cryptic Crossword Clues*.

Many (perhaps half) of Room’s publications concern names, in all their variety, and nothing better sums up his approach to name study than remarks he made during an interview with *Contemporary Authors* (New Revision Series, vol. 102: 422) in which he is quoted as saying

Especially fascinating, and [. . .] under-rated and under-promoted, are names. Names are words, of course, but what makes a name a name? [. . .] Name-study is rarely taught as an academic subject, but why not? Place-names [. . .] contain a mine of information about history, language, geography, demography, psychology, and the human race as a whole. Most of my writing is consciously name-oriented [. . .] [and] I aim to popularize name-study as a worthwhile and highly rewarding topic.

Popularizers have done great damage to serious scholarship through oversimplification and misrepresentation. But there are also serious, intelligent popularizers, to whom primary scholars owe a great debt, and Adrian Room was one of the best; he brought the results of onomastic scholarship to a wider audience in a straightforward,

intellectually honest, and useful way. He provided a bridge between the often stuffy, pedantic dryness of formal onomastics and the desire of general readers for information on names and their role in society. His position was neatly summed up by the distinguished onomast W. F. H. Nicolaisen in his review of Room's edition of *Brewer's Dictionary of Names*, published in *Names* 40 (1992: 214). Nicolaisen wrote "[O]ne has to admire Adrian Room's industry, the felicitous language of his presentations, and the general reliability of the information provided. [This book] strikes the right balance between rigorous scholarship and popular appeal." Nicolaisen was quick to add "popularization is not synonymous with lack of authority or authoritativeness."

With Adrian Room's passing, onomastics lost a visible and important link to the general educated public. He was a valued and valuable member of our discipline and we will feel his loss.

For those who may be new to onomastics and for those who wish to refresh their memories, I will close this brief review of the career of Adrian Room with a list of some of his more important contributions to name study.

African Placenames (from 1994)

Alternate Names of Places: A Worldwide Dictionary (from 2009)

Cassell Dictionary of Proper Names (from 1990)

Cassell's Dictionary of First Names (from 1995)

Dictionary of Astronomical Names (from 1988)

Dictionary of Irish Place Names (from 1986)

Dictionary of Place-Names in the British Isles (from 1988)

Dictionary of Pseudonyms: 11,000 Assumed Names and Their Origins (from 1981)

Dictionary of Trade Name Origins (from 1982)

Nicknames of Places (from 2006)

Place-name Changes Since 1900 (from 1979)

Placenames of France (from 2004)

Placenames of Russia and the Former Soviet Union (from 1996)

Place-Names of the World (from 1974)