

Memorable Teachers

... a few teachers who stand out in my memory.

Miss Very ... white-haired and a quick tempered, and she taught music to my class all the way from grade 2 through grade 8. Along the way she taught us to sing and to read music, and the choirs she made us join won honours every year at the Kiwanis music festivals in northern Ontario. She must have been well-respected as a music teacher, because once at a competition she was asked to demonstrate how she could teach a choir a piece of music they had never seen before in just 15 minutes. She did, and we did!

Miss Kreegan, my high school Latin teacher. Also white-haired and rather old ... but she was a good teacher. She knew quite well that many of the boys in her class weren't really into learning a 'dead' language like Latin, so she used a little psychology.

She told us forcefully that under no circumstances were we to check out books in Latin from the city's public library, especially poetry by Ovid, because much of it was filthy and obscene.

So of course, we did. We spent weeks translating the poems, at lunchtime, with multiple English-Latin dictionaries at our side. We had to learn about verb tenses, and declensions. Along the way we learned a lot of Latin. She was so sneaky!

And the poems? She was right!

Mr. Falkenberg was my grade 9 history teacher. On first glance, he wasn't very impressive ... sort of tall, non-descript looking, and going bald. He wore old baggy sweaters, and carpet slippers.

But we soon found out that he was a great history teacher. Mostly because he'd lived it. He was a tank commander in World War II ... on the German side! We got a unique view of the war from the other side, and he made history real for us.

Mr. O'Gorman was my math teacher for several years in high school. He stands out in my memory simply because he was a nice person who made math interesting. In the days before Diploma exams, teachers could explore different topics based on what students were interested in ... I remember Mr. O'Gorman spending a lot of time on math topics that I'm sure weren't on the curriculum ... but that got some of us hooked on math.