

# Nudist Hall of Fame: Paul LeValley

## About the author

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Mark is associate editor of *Nude & Natural*, magazine of The Naturist Society.

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**D**r. Paul LeValley has a long, rich history with The Naturist Society and the American Association for Nude Recreation as an academic, both promoting and engaging in valuable naturist research.

He grew up on a Michigan farm where – in 1948, at age 6 – he first enjoyed skinny-dipping in a creek. As an undergraduate in the Flint College of the University of Michigan, LeValley pursued an English major with a history minor. During his practice teaching, he discovered the value of an interdisciplinary approach to Humanities combining art, history, music, literature, philosophy, and religion. For the next few years, he taught interdisciplinary classes – mainly at Saginaw High School. He later entered a Master's program at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, to take advantage of their stellar interdisciplinary program and their Eastern track of courses on India, China, Japan, and Egypt. He especially liked the classes on India, perhaps because he had already traveled through more than 60 countries around the world, with India impressing him the most.

LeValley then taught Eastern and Western Humanities courses for the next few years at Saginaw Valley State College (now University) until he opted to seek a PhD in Humanities at Florida State University. His dissertation was on the nudity experienced by the Gymnosophists that Alexander the Great met in India. He'd return to the historical and cultural theme of social nudity for years to come.

At FSU, he was able to write his own dissertation program. When the topic grew too large, he chopped it in half, dealing only with India. In addition, during summers he wrote articles on classical Indian and Greek nudity that were published by the Indian Society for Greek and Roman Studies. LeValley says that at a recent conference in India, he found he is now regarded as a senior scholar in the field of classical Indian nudity. "Fortunately," he says, "everyone else has had the good taste to avoid the topic, so I still have it pretty much to myself."

In the intervening years, LeValley has taught Art History at FSU, and Interdisciplinary Humanities at Florida A&M University. He has recently retired, and now lives at Cypress Cove Nudist Resort in Kissimmee, Florida.

LeValley co-founded in 1986 the semi-landed nudist club, Tallahassee Naturally. He has expressed pride in the club's retention of a strong college student membership over the years, due in large part – he explained in an interview given in 2009 – to the club's 20-year-plus annual spring College Greek Athletic Meet serving as a clothes-free reenactment of the ancient Greek pentathlon, and to full-moon skinny-dip trips to local sites each warm month of the year.

He was a founding board member of AANR-Florida, and was the driving force behind AANR's initiating its Youth Camps. In his region, LeValley worked with Tallahassee Naturally to challenge anti-nudity laws, and facilitated the creation of a student organization, Naturally FSU.

In 1997 he authored a useful booklet intended for legislators, and used by the Naturist Education Foundation and others: *Naturists: Upholders of Strong Family Values* (now in its 4th edition). He has for 21 years directed the TNS Professors and Researchers Special Interest Group, and has accepted the role of president of the American Nudist Research Library located at Cypress Cove.

For 20 years, LeValley regularly contributed the Art Follows Nature feature for Bern Loibl's *Naturally* (aka *Travel Naturally*) quarterly naturist magazine, as well as individual articles in TNS' *N* magazine and AANR's *The Bulletin*. He has collected his historical art analyses from *Naturally* and published them in a colorful table-top anthology, *Art Follows Nature: A Worldwide History of the Nude* (Edition One Books, 2016; available at [paullevalley.com](http://paullevalley.com)). His long-term work on the nude in art has helped naturists broaden their awareness of nudity's place in societies around the world and across the centuries.

Motilal Banarsidass, the publisher of academic books in India, published in 2018 more of LeValley's scholarly work in a second anthology: *Seekers of the Naked Truth: Collected Writings on the Gymnosophists and Related Shramana Religions*. Published by this company, the book should reach academics around the world interested in Indian history and culture, and this time they will receive a clearly stated position from someone with knowledge in the field and who speaks as a naturist.

*Since this was written, Dr. LeValley completed a 7-year series of naturist-friendly, family-friendly movie reviews for The Bulletin, now included in his third large book, "Naturist Writings of Paul LeValley", Including Movie Reviews. He entered the Nudist Hall of Fame in 2019, and is currently completing a series of Hall of Fame biographies.*