

Calendar of Events

The German Society's office and library will be closed for a summer break from July 20 through August 11. We will reopen with normal business hours on Monday, August 12.

- Sun. Sept. 1 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
- Wed. Sept. 11 Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
- Sat. Sept. 14 Dogadelphia, time TBA
- Fri. Sept. 20 Friday Film Fest, 6:30pm
- Sat. Sept. 21 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
- Sun. Oct. 6 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
- Wed. Oct. 9 Konversationsabend, 6:00pm
- Sat. Oct. 12 Buchclub: *Die Schlafwandler* by Hermann Broch, 1:30pm
- Sat. Oct. 12 Oktoberfest Dance Party, time TBA
- Fri. Oct. 18 Friday Film Fest, 6:30pm
- Sat. Oct. 19 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
- Sat. Nov. 2 260th Stiftungsfest, 6:00pm
- Sun. Nov. 3 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
- Sat. Nov. 9 Buchclub, 1:30pm

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The German Society of Pennsylvania

Neuer Pennsylvanischer

Staatsbote

CELEBRATING
1764 **250** 2014
YEARS OF
**GERMAN
HERITAGE**

Summer 2024

Summer is Here: Reflecting on a Year of Growth and Community



GSP President Mark McGuigan

As we enjoy the warmth of summer (perhaps a little too warm at times!) and wrap up our programmatic and fiscal year, it's the perfect time to look back on the last months and celebrate our growing community. The German Society is more than just an organization; it's a family of individuals passionate about promoting German and German American heritage, language, and culture. The last year has seen...

A Fond Farewell

This spring, we were deeply saddened by the loss of Harold Glass, our Vice President of Strategic Planning, who succumbed to cancer. Harold's dedication and vision were invaluable, and he will be greatly missed.

Our gratitude and heartfelt thanks go out to outgoing board member **Barbara Afanassiev** for her many years of service and her continued assistance on key committees.

Welcoming New Faces

We are thrilled to welcome new board members, **Maiken Scott** and **Daniel Wiese**. Their fresh perspectives and enthusiasm will undoubtedly enrich our community. Additionally, we are grateful to **Christine Stenner** for stepping in as our new VP of Strategic Planning. Christine's impressive credentials and experience in organizational planning make her a fantastic addition to our team.

Celebrating Success

Over the year, we've made significant strides:

- **Existing programs:** Events like Wister con-

certs, Stiftungsfest, Christkindlmarkt, Konversationsabend, Buchclub, Friday Film Fest, GSP Wellness, and the Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival continue to flourish. Bierfest has become a premier regional event.

- Our **Library Team** is working diligently on conservation, documentation, and making our invaluable Library and archive accessible through events like Treasure Tours and lectures.

- **Stiftungsfest:** This year's Stiftungsfest raised over \$24,000 and introduced a new leadership award given to the Philadelphia Union's Ernst Tanner.

- **Scholarships:** We awarded \$27,000 in scholarships this year to students studying German – a new record.

- **New events:** Our author events, Eurovision Dance Party, Global Quizzo, language instructional workshops, and soccer viewing events have drawn significant new audiences and new members.

- **Memberships:** We are seeing the number of memberships rising again – approaching 600 (700+ members total) again for the first time in many years.

- **Annual Fund and Gifts:** This year saw giving to our Annual Fund hit a new recent high of more than \$90,000

Challenges Ahead

Key to our success will be:

- Creating sustainable planning cycles for events and programs.
- Maintaining and building relationships with partner organizations.
- Building new audiences for existing and new programs.

SAVE THE DATE

260th ANNUAL *Stiftungsfest*

OF THE GERMAN
SOCIETY OF
PENNSYLVANIA

**NOVEMBER 2
6:00 PM**

Tickets
\$195 each

Full table reservations and sponsorship opportunities available.



- Developing a membership structure that maximizes new members and supports volunteers.
- Addressing needs of our historic home on Spring Garden Street, including fundraising for our façade project among other initiatives.

Looking Forward

In the coming year, it's time to undertake a new strategic planning initiative. Together, we can ensure that the German Society remains the home of German and German American heritage, language, and culture, and a vital bridge between our region and German-speaking Europe.

Thank you to our incredible volunteers, committee chairs, staff, and dedicated members. Here's to another year of growth, community, and cultural celebration!

- Mark McGuigan, President

U.S. Presidents Who Knew — and Appreciated — the German Language

The oft-repeated legend that German nearly became the official language of the United States is a myth that has persisted for centuries. It is true that in 1795 the U.S. Congress was discussing whether federal laws should be printed in English as well as German. But that measure was stopped by one decisive and dissenting vote cast by the first Speaker of the House, **Frederick Muhlenberg**, who was bilingual. He felt all immigrants should learn English to better assimilate into their new country. On the other hand, there have been four U.S. presidents who could read and understand the German language with ease.

Serving from 1825 to 1829, President **John Quincy Adams** earned both bachelor's and mas-



The four U.S. presidents who mastered the German language; from left to right: John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt

ter's degrees from Harvard University, but was not required to become proficient in German. However, in 1797, when he was appointed U.S. ambassador to Prussia, Adams endeavored to master the language. It is said he was enthralled by the complexities of German and, during his time in Prussia, translated into English *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution, Compared with the Origin and Principles of the French Revolution* by Prussian-born diplomat Friedrich Gentz.

Theodore Roosevelt became president at the dawning of the twentieth century, serving from 1901 to 1909. Born into a wealthy family, he traveled to Europe as a boy and later earned a bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* from Harvard University, where he had studied French as well as German. Thus, he knew the German language very well and kept in his personal library numerous books written in German. Referring to the *Nibelungenlied* in speaking with a friend, Roosevelt is known to have said, "I like the German rhythm — that rhythm — better than I do the French."

Woodrow Wilson, one of two U.S. presidents burdened with the harrowing responsibility of leading the nation during a world war, was fortunate in 1883 to become a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University, a new institute modeled after Heidelberg University in Germany. To successfully complete his degree, Wilson studied the German language extensively. Indeed, he was known to cite German sources, both as president of Princeton University and later as U.S. president during the lead-up to America's entry into World War I.

Like his fifth cousin Theodore, President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** was to the manor born. His early education was comprised of private lessons at home with European governesses and a summer of schooling in Germany. Later, as a student at Groton School and Harvard University, he attended classes in the history of Germany as well as in the German language. Thus, Roosevelt, who led the nation during the Second World War, could speak German fluently — but always with a New England accent.

- Lynne Breen

PhillyKinder Year 2023/2024 - It's a Wrap

Another eventful PhillyKinder year has come to an end. At its onset, we were looking forward to a normal year, with a focus on re-establishing our traditions in a post pandemic world. The enrollment was good, our classes started off well, and events like the St. Martin's lantern parade and the *Adventssingen* were well received and enjoyable. However, in January, a fire in the Overbrook sanctuary disrupted our plans. Thankfully, the French International School generously accommodated our urgent need for space. With the flexibility and support of our families and teachers, we managed to finish the year strong.

After a successful trial run in spring 2023, the older students spent the last six weeks of classes in project groups, choosing from a wide array of topics: (1) a Culinary World Journey, (2) Bridge Construction, (3) Growing Up In The GDR, and (4) Musical Theater.



With no access to an auditorium for the end-of-the-year celebration, we were blessed with good weather, allowing our group performances to go ahead in the courtyard of the French International School, while the group projects were presented exhibition-style. The project groups excelled in their presentations to the visiting adults in their respective classrooms, and the younger groups performed *Sportinator* and *Alle Vögel sind schon da* as a short play with much enthusiasm, while the musical theater group presented a short scene from the book "*Fritzi war dabei*"¹ with an excellent demonstration of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

¹ *Fritzi war dabei* is a children's book by Hanna Schott about a family of four in Leipzig and their shared experiences of the events leading up to the fall of the wall in 1989.



We enjoyed the final PhillyKinder hour of the year in the company of our families. The presentations and performances, the happy faces, and the enthusiasm surrounding us highlighted why we are so invested in the PhillyKinder program. The success of our program is a testament to the team effort behind it and the unwavering support of our community. Each week, over 20 adults and teenagers are engaged in the program. Generous donations from our direct community, the German Society, and various groups and individuals who responded to our call for support helped us finance our interim home this year. We are deeply humbled and incredibly grateful for the support we received.

As we approached the end of the year, more challenges arose. Another interim home — for the 2024/25 year — had to be found. Once again, the kindness we encountered during our search for a new temporary location was overwhelming. At the end of our search, we are pleased to announce that PhillyKinder classes will be taking place at Ardmore United Methodist Church during the upcoming school year.

Looking ahead, we have a trove of ideas for next year. It will also mark 35 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, a historic event that has been part of our curriculum for many years. To commemorate the anniversary, Sonja Srama-Souder will revive her musical theater based on "*Fritzi war dabei*". Rehearsals will be part of our classes, and a performance is scheduled to take place at the German Society in November. Stay tuned for the exact date — we hope to see you there.

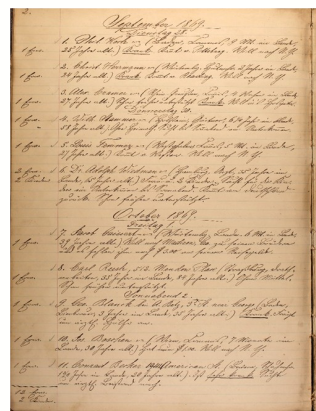
- Birgit Splitt



A Century of Immigrant Aid – Now Available Online! The German Society of Pennsylvania’s “Agentur” Ledgers, 1847–1947

This past April, I traveled to Austin, Texas for a presentation at the annual Symposium of the Society for German American Studies (SGAS). My topic was the German Society’s *Agentur* collection – readers of the *Staatsbote* might remember an earlier article on the project of digitizing these important holdings at the Horner Library. Ten years ago, I had already given a talk on the same subject at the SGAS Symposium in Newark, Delaware after writing the online finding aid for the collection, but digitizing the collection represents the kind of major development that warrants a second look! Especially given the fact that today’s AI environment holds the promise of finally overcoming the special challenge of handwritten German-language materials up to the middle of the 20th century: the use of *Kurrentschrift* (and no, I’m not talking about Sütterlin!).

But first things first – you can take a look at the digitized *Agentur* ledgers by visiting the [PA Power Library](#) – just click on the link in the left sidebar of the Horner Library’s catalog page – the *Agentur* leads off the list of GSP records stored on this website. You’ll notice right away that it’s easy to recognize the names and the dates, because those were always written in Roman script – but everything else is a different story.



The Horner Library is hosting a weekly *Kurrent* transcription group which helps tremendously in making handwritten records from the GSP archives accessible, but the sheer size of the *Agentur* collection will make it impossible to use that approach.

Instead, it might be an option to take advantage of developments like [Transkribus](#) (www.transkribus.org), where you can upload your files and a specialized software will tran-

scribe them – currently still with a lot of mistakes, requiring time and labor-intensive corrections by actual humans, but as we all know, artificial intelligence is progressing at a rapid pace, and already within the next few years the ratio of errors might go down to a level where only a minimum of quality control will be required. The German Society’s Library Committee is also considering an approach where we would only transcribe the alphabetical indexes: if those lists of names would become easily available online, genealogists could simply look up the name of the ancestor they’re interested in, and based on the reference information in the index, locate the corresponding entries in the *Agentur* ledgers. Then they would only have to transcribe the passages relevant for their search – but over time, if we collected all the transcriptions, we might end up with a ‘crowd-sourced’ transcript of large parts of the collection. And there’s a third approach which might be worth considering: beginning in 1876, Philadelphia had an immigration station on the Delaware River, comparable to Ellis Island but of course much smaller!



It could make for an interesting project to find out how many of the names recorded in that context then show up in the indexes of the *Agentur* – followed by transcribing those entries and maybe even trying to find out whether those immigrants stayed in or around Philadelphia! We could recruit current German Society members for this effort – no knowledge of German would be required in the first phase – and there are still enough German speakers around

to help with any language hurdles that might emerge in the second phase of working with the handwritten ledgers. If this sounds interesting to you, take a look at the [Pier 53 Project](#) (washingtonavenuegreen.com) for a description of the current undertaking of connecting residents of South Philly – i.e. the descendants of Italian immigrants – to the passenger lists recorded at the Washington Avenue Immigration Station.

If you want more information about this exciting digitization project at the Horner Library, please contact librarian Bettina Hess (librarian@germansociety.org). Hopefully, my progress report has been successful at showing that digitization is often only a first step – yes, it makes the digital files easily accessible, but transcription remains crucially important for handwritten records, because only transcribed records can also easily be translated – and knowledge of German will continue to diminish in the United States, so if we want the information contained in the *Agentur* collection to be accessible to non-Germans, we have to strive for as much transcription as possible. The *Agentur* ledgers have the potential of providing us with information on tens of thousands of applicants between 1847 and 1947, whether they were recent immigrants or residents of Philadelphia who had fallen on hard times, and hopefully we can open up and utilize this resource more and more over the next couple of years.

P.S. A big thank-you to everybody who has already supported the digitization of the *Agentur* financially, by participating in the most recent ‘Adopt-a-Rare-Book’ effort when we asked for donations to digitize the ledgers.

- Maria Sturm, Library Committee Member

Annual Meeting & Election

On Sunday, June 16, the German Society held its 2024 Annual Members Meeting and Elections of the Board of Directors, which drew 38 members of the Society to the Ratskeller. This year, six candidates ran for six open Board positions. The five candidates with the most votes would join the Class of 2027, and the candidate with the least votes would fill an open position in the Class of 2025. The Officer positions of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer were also up for election.

After a recap of the past year from President Mark McGuigan, the members cast their ballots, which were subsequently counted by two groups of volunteers while other members socialized and enjoyed a delicious array of coffee and cakes organized by Hella Volgenau. The votes yielded the following results.



Jackie Binstead was elected to serve as Treasurer. Helping to ease the transition in leadership is former Treasurer Lew Volgenau, who was elected to the position of Assistant Treasurer. For Directors, Monika Moyrer was elected to fill the vacancy in the Class of 2025. The Class of 2027 will be comprised of incumbents Hardy von Auenmueller, Stephanie Vogel, and Ed Cattell. They will be joined by new Directors Maiken Scott and Daniel Wiese.

Congratulations to our new board members, and thank you to the outgoing member of the Class of 2024 – Barbara Afanassiev – for your many years of service to the German Society!

- Liesl Jandrey

Development Report

Most comprehensive gift planning programs include opportunities to purchase charitable gift annuities (CGA). In fact, we first offered this investment option to members in 2016. In our case, several members have purchased annuities from the Philadelphia Foundation. The Foundation holds these funds as part of their investment portfolio and as per agreement, quarterly checks are issued to donors for the rest of their lives.

There are several reasons why we bring the opportunity to your attention. The payout rates for charitable gift annuities are at their highest rate in 16 years. The payout rates for individuals 65 to 85 years range from 5.7% to 10.1%, as per the American Council of Gift Annuities, January 1, 2024. They are designed to produce a target gift for a charity at the conclusion of the contract equal to 50% of the funds contributed for the annuity. They can be attractive vehicles to receive a predictable income stream for as long as you live.



Irmgard Martino purchased a series of CGAs from the Philadelphia Foundation starting in January of 2016. And after her death, we learned that the residual value of her annuities amounted to **\$306,227.60**. A wonderful and most generous gift by our good friend Irmgard to the Society!

These funds are being added to the GSP Irmgard Martino Endowment Fund at the Haverford Trust Company. This is a named account that has the same purpose and investment and disbursement guidelines as the General Endowment Fund. Annuities typically do not fall under the provisions of a will and are not part of the probate process.

You will read in the *In Memoriam* column for Charles Birnstiel, which is a part of this issue of the *Staatsbote*, that he purchased CGAs to support our General Endowment as well as Horner

Library. We have not been informed what the residuals are for these specific annuities; the executor of a will typically has to notify the Philadelphia Foundation to start the disbursement process.

In summary, if you are interested to discuss this giving option - to receive a predictable income stream as long as you live and to leave a legacy gift at a future date to the German Society of Pennsylvania - please contact our office. The Philadelphia Foundation continues to offer annuities, and we also have the option to work through an associated organization of the Haverford Trust Company; there are many others who offer this investment option as well. For example, another member of the Society purchased an annuity in California from a local community foundation to benefit the Society. If you have purchased or plan to buy an annuity where the beneficiary is the German Society, please let us know, as we would love to add your name to the legacy segment of our Linden Society.

- E. D. Weiler

Seeking Library Volunteers!

Do you love books? Are you interested in German-American history? Would you like to spend some time in a beautiful 19th century library? If so, please consider volunteering at the German Society's Horner Library! We are looking for a few volunteers who can commit to coming in on a regular basis (Tuesday or Thursday only) to help with a variety of potential projects, from creating enclosures for fragile items to scanning old documents to working with digital files. We have many possible projects and can find something that suits your talents and interests. German language skills are a plus, but not required. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Bettina Hess at librarian@germansociety.org.

- Bettina Hess, Librarian

German Society Scholarship Awards

Over the past fifteen years, I have been privileged to be part of our Society's Scholarship Committee. During this time, we have experienced an ever-growing interest in our support of high school graduates or college students in the Greater Philadelphia area interested in mastering the German language.

Initially, the funding for our scholarship awards came almost exclusively from the legacy of Conrad Linke, a long-time German Society member who died thirty years ago. In recent years, we have received additional monies to establish two new funds: The Leon H. Volgenau Scholarship Fund and the Elsa Schweikert Scholarship Fund.

While the COVID-19 pandemic understandably reduced the number of applicants over the past several years, this year we saw the highest number of well-qualified students applying for scholarship support. This makes sense when one considers the rapid rise in tuition fees. In fact, over the past twenty-five years, tuition fees have risen at three times the inflation rate!

A total of eighteen students applied this year for tuition support — ten of whom were recent high school graduates. After scrutinizing grades and academic records and reading their German essays (required of each applicant), the Scholarship Committee selected ten students for personal interviews at the German Society — or via Zoom if the student was overseas or otherwise unable to be interviewed in person.

Annalee Brant, a graduate of Conrad Weiser High School, Robesonia, PA, was awarded the top prize of \$5,000 from the Leon H. Volgenau Scholarship Fund. **Katherine Laitusis**, who graduated from Hopewell Valley Central High School in Pennington NJ, and **Abigail Harr**, a junior at Lafayette College in Easton, PA, were awarded prizes of \$4,000 and \$3,000, respectively, from the Elsa Schweikert Scholarship Fund.

Seven additional scholarship recipients received \$2,500 or \$2,000 in financial

support: **Nathanael Brown**, Swarthmore College; **Gabriel Butler**, Franklin & Marshall College; **Ethan Christman**, Bryn Mawr College/Haverford College; **Vera Andrea Kramer Rodrigo**, Temple University; **Nuha Mohammed**, Bryn Mawr College; **Kayla Reidenbaugh**, Ephrata High School; and **Connor Whalen**, Had-donfield High School.



The German Society's 2024-2025 scholarship recipients with Hardy von Auenmueller (left) and Scholarship Committee Chairman Don Rainey (right) at the AATG Awards Ceremony, April 21, 2024. Photo by Kelley Dahlen.

This year, the Awards Ceremony, hosted by the local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), took place again at the German Society. Our auditorium was filled to the brim with students of all ages who received AATG awards on multiple levels of language achievement. Many were accompanied by their parents, who were able to observe how their children were honored. Various individuals representing local philanthropic organizations were also in attendance.

Congratulations to each and every one! Also, many thanks to my colleagues on the Scholarship Committee — Angela Bacher, Thomas Buckley, Bill Heintzelman, Carol Olenschlager, and last, but not least, our indefatigable Chairman, Donald Rainey — for your diligent work. It was indeed a great pleasure to work with you.

- Hardy von Auenmueller

In Memoriam

Harold Glass



Harold Edward Glass, 77, passed away peacefully at home on April 28, surrounded by family. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Harold's early life involved frequent global moves due to his father's military service. This upbringing sparked Harold's lifelong love of travel, leading him to visit over 100 countries and swim in Lake Baikal and the Southern Ocean.

Harold was a visionary entrepreneur in the pharmaceutical industry, founding and selling multiple companies. His success earned him a spot on the cover of the *Wall Street Journal*.

In his later years, Harold embraced new challenges with zeal. He learned to ski at 40 and enjoyed annual trips with "The Gentleman's Ski Club." At 55, he took up the cello, finding joy in both solo and group performances. Harold's humor shone through when he joked with Philadelphia Orchestra's conductor, Nézet-Séguin, about their differing musical reception. Harold's passion for dance took him from the tango in Argentina to the salsa in Cuba and the Viennese waltz in Austria. He crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary more than once, always ready for a dance or a joke. A dedicated theatre enthusiast, Harold meticulously cataloged every playbill and saw all of Shakespeare's 38 plays live.

Harold treasured family moments, from Caribbean swims to trips down the shore with his grandchildren. He created unforgettable memories filled with love and laughter.

Harold was a lifetime member of the German Society since 1999 and served on its Board of Directors from 2016 to 2021, when he was elected to the position of VP of Strategic Planning. He served in this position until resigning in early 2024. The German Society welcomes donations to its Scholarship Fund in Harold's memory.

- Mark McGuigan

Margaret Darby



Margaret Darby passed away peacefully at home on April 15 at the age of 69, following a year-long struggle with lung cancer. Born in South Boston, Virginia, Margaret lost both parents by age 15, then forged enduring friendships at Chatham Hall boarding school. Post-graduation, she explored Europe, delving into languages and adventures, from mingling with Greek sailors to waitressing in Normandy. She pursued a piano major at Davidson College, where she was also active in theater.

Deciding against a music career, Margaret worked as a bilingual secretary in Birmingham before mastering simultaneous interpretation at the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies. She settled in Brussels, freelancing for the EC, then returned to the U.S., earning a master's degree in library science from Drexel University. She served at New Castle County Libraries and Cecil County public schools, nurturing young writers and reviving school newspapers.

Margaret co-founded the Delaware Arts Info blog, contributing on music and theater. After retiring in 2015, she relocated to Philadelphia with her partner, Chuck Holdeman, engaging in arts writing for Broad Street Review and participating in the German Society of Pennsylvania's literary discussions and chamber music events.

Margaret and Chuck sustained themselves playing the music of Bach during the pandemic; Margaret was able to lead a normal life most of the year after her diagnosis. Survived by Chuck, her siblings, cousins, and Chuck's family, Margaret's vivacity, independence, and philanthropic spirit will be remembered and cherished. Her ashes will rest at the family plot in Evergreen Burial Park, Roanoke, Virginia. A memorial event for Margaret at the German Society will be planned for the fall.

- Chuck Holdeman

Charles Birnstiel



Charles Birnstiel passed away on March 11, 2024. Charles was born on December 6, 1929, in Manhattan, NY, to German immigrants Karl and Margarete Birnstiel. He studied at Brooklyn Technical High School, and then at New York University, where he earned a Bachelor and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering as well as a Doctorate Degree in Structural Engineering. After graduation, he devoted himself to teaching and structural mechanics research as a professor at both New York University and Polytechnic University. After 20 years in academia, he transitioned into private practice, leading a multidisciplinary engineering firm specializing in the design, inspection, and testing of moveable bridge machinery. He continued to teach during this time, holding adjunct positions at Columbia University, Cooper Union, Manhattan College, and Pratt Institute. After another 23 years, in 1997, Charles joined Hardesty & Hanover as Principal Associate, where he practiced until his retirement in 2014. In retirement he continued to apply his expertise as a consultant and author. In 2017 Charles was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for Bridge Engineering by the NY Bridge Conference and the Bridge Engineering Association.

Charles maintained a lifelong pride in his German heritage, contributing to the German Society of Pennsylvania, helping to establish the German Institute at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, and with his sister Margaret, funding the Birnstiel-Heckel Scholarship there as well. Charles provided engineering consulting services on several projects at the Society, including drawings for a possible four-story structure in the vacant space next to the townhouse. He supported the Society financially with gifts the Annual Fund Drives, the endowments, and by purchasing annuities from the Philadelphia Foundation.

Our sympathy goes out to his sister Margaret and the extended Birnstiel family.

Fritz Peter Kohler, M.D.



Fritz Peter Kohler, M.D., age 95, of Bryn Mawr, PA passed away at his home on Monday, May 27, 2024. He was the beloved husband of the late Marjorie Mulder Kohler. Peter was born on December 22, 1928 in Stuttgart, Germany. He is survived by his three daughters; Karen Elbert, Susan Patterson, and Ellen Kohler; seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Peter attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania after graduating from Haverford College. For many years he was the Chair of Urology Department at the Lankenau Hospital, which many years ago was known as the German Hospital of Philadelphia.

Peter was proud of his German heritage and served the German community of Philadelphia in many ways. He was the Honorary German Consul and was an active member of the German Society's Board through the 1990s until 2003, serving on various committees and always providing useful and constructive input. He was the co-founder of the German Business Association, now known as the German American Chamber of Commerce. For his services to the German community he was awarded the *Verdienstkreuz* by the Federal Republic of Germany. He wore his medal proudly at formal occasions such as our annual Stiftungsfest. Each year Peter was one of the early contributors to our Annual Fund drive.

We have lost a true friend, and we extend our sympathy to his three daughters as well as the extended Kohler family.

- E. D. Weiler



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info@germansociety.org
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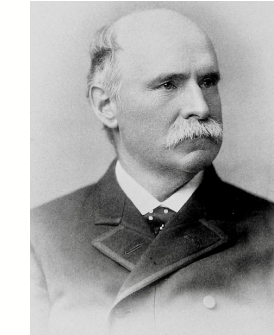
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Spotlight on Past Members: Drexel University Founder Was GSP Member



Anthony J. Drexel

Anthony J. Drexel was ahead of his time in 1891 when he founded Drexel University. The Philadelphia financier and philanthropist envisioned an institution of higher learning that welcomed students regardless of race, religion, gender, or socioeconomic status — the founding principle that guides the school to this day.

A member of the German Society of Pennsylvania, Drexel was born in 1826 in Philadelphia. He began working at his father's banking house of Drexel & Company at age thirteen, becoming an associate of the firm in 1847. By this time, Drexel & Company had grown to become one of the largest banks in the United States.

When his father, Francis Martin Drexel, died in 1863, Anthony took major steps to expand the Drexel banking enterprise, both within the U.S. and across the Atlantic. He eventually entered into a partnership with J. P. Morgan, forming Drexel, Morgan & Company. The new partnership played a leading role in financing America's railroads and, notably, underwrote the pay of the entire U.S. Army in 1877.

Francis Martin Drexel, born in Austria in 1792, emigrated to Philadelphia in 1817. He, too, became a member of the German Society of Pennsylvania. One of his original bank buildings stood next to Independence Hall. At eleven stories high, it was the largest building in Philadelphia at the time. The house where the first Drexel exchange office was established in 1838 still stands today on Third Street.



Top: Statue of Anthony J. Drexel on the campus of Drexel University. Bottom: Drexel Marker in Historic District, Philadelphia. Photos from Wikipedia: Anthony J. Drexel

- Lynne Breen