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• *IN EUROPE, his .30 caliber M1 carbine slung over his shoulder, a younger Elmer Girten poses for a World War II souvenir photo with actress Ingrid Bergman. Girten, who has since traded the M1 for a saxophone and calligrapher's pen, is the subject of Clif Boutelle's profile, beginning on page 2.*



• *Vice President Albert Colom.*

BGSU's enrollment 'energizer' on May 9 program

THE University's vice president for enrollment management, Albert Colom, who is responsible for all new and continuing-student enrollment strategies, will be the speaker at the May 9 luncheon of the BGSU Retirees Association at Stone Ridge Golf Club, Muirfield Drive.

Colom's broad range of oversight includes recruitment and marketing, admissions and retention, financial aid, registration and records, scholarships and tuition discounting, advising and academic success.

He also has oversight for initiatives for the University's regional campus, adult degree completion, academic technology and distance learning programs.

In addition to admissions, financial aid and the registrar, Colom also oversees Northwest Ohio Educational Technology and the BGSU career center.

Prior to joining BGSU in January 2009, Colom was vice president for enrollment management at Oklahoma State University. He also worked in a

variety of enrollment management roles at other large, public institutions including Florida Atlantic University and the University of South Florida.

Colom received a bachelor's degree in international studies, a master's degree in educational leadership, and was a doctoral candidate in higher education administration, all at the University of South Florida.

Proven ability

"Albert has proven his ability to tackle tough challenges, embrace change and take on these significant new responsibilities," said former BGSU President Carol Cartwright, when she promoted him to vice president from vice provost in August 2009.

"Enrollment is the key to fulfilling our mission. It is critical that we align our resources with our priorities. Albert will continue to energize our enrollment efforts," she added.

Cost of the luncheon, the last of the academic year, is \$15. Socializing begins at 11:30 a.m. and serving begins at noon. □

On the road again . . .

HELEN DERMER's annual trip to watch a Mud Hens baseball game will be Monday, June 25, at Fifth-Third Field, Toledo. The game begins at noon. Deadline is May 20 to reserve one of the 40 seats blocked out by Dermer, seats which she says are "shady and dry." Tickets are \$7 each. As in prior years, a TARTA bus will leave from the Levis Commons area at 11 a.m. For more information, Dermer may be reached at 419-352-8822. □



• *Dermer*

Lunch reservation form is on page 6



• *Elmer Girten played sax with the BG Area Community Band in concert March 24 in the Community Center.*

A musician's star-spangled career

Elmer Girten has enjoyed a rewarding life as a music teacher, calligrapher and wood carver

Story and Photos by Clif Boutelle

FOR Elmer Girten, life began 90 years ago in an Ohio River community near Cincinnati and it's been an event-filled ride since.

Spend some time with him and one can't help but be impressed with all that he has been able to accomplish. Listening to his enthusiasm as he recalls the details of his life is part of the fun of talking with Girten, who taught at BGSU for 27 years. Even at his advanced age, his eyes light up when he relates his stories.

"I grew up in a tough neighborhood and loved to play baseball and basketball but had to pass an initiation rite before the other kids would accept me and let me play on their teams. They wanted me to swim across the river and I was not a good swimmer."

An uncle taught him the side-stroke and rowed alongside as young Girten made his initiation swim. "Not only did I swim across but I also swam back. After that I was one of the gang and had a great childhood," he recalled. But he was interested in more than sports. At the age of five his mother intro-

duced him to music and he learned to play the flute.

At Cincinnati Withrow High School (where current BGSU basketball coach Louis Orr went to school), Girten played saxophone and clarinet and never turned down an opportunity to play in a band.

When he enrolled at Miami University, he did not sign up for band thinking he had too much to do his first semester. But that changed one night shortly after arriving on campus when the band director knocked on his dorm room door. The upshot of that visit was he joined the band. "He was pretty persuasive," Girten said. Looking back he says it was a decision that helped set the course of his life.

"I loved the band and also joined a dance band and we played all over southwest Ohio. That was when dancing was popular," he said.

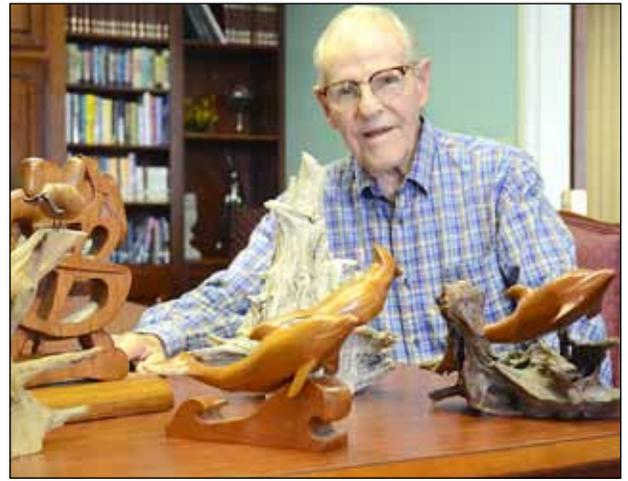
He was drafted into the military after graduating with a music education degree, which he did in three and half years. While waiting to enter the service, he did some teaching at the Wurlitzer Music Company

(continued on next page)



• *Elmer and Mavis Girten*

• *Elmer Girten on patrol as a ranger at Forrest Creason Golf Course; in Washington on an Honor Guard flight with BGSURA President Dave Chilson; and with samples of his woodcarving skills at home.*



Girten *(continued)*

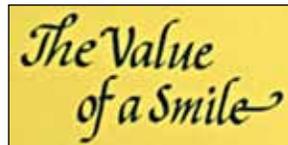
in Cincinnati and at the same time took some lessons from some accomplished musicians there. “I also was in a dance band that performed on the radio,” he said.

After getting out of the service in 1946 (see accompanying story about Girten’s military experience), he was offered two high school teaching jobs. “One was in Swanton and when I passed Valleywood Golf Course on my way to the interview, I knew that was where I wanted to be,” he said.

His love of golf began as a youngster when he caddied for his father. “He taught me to play and it’s been an important part of my life since.”

He still plays as much as he can and is pleased that three times last year he shot his age (90), although he considered it a bad year. “I just can’t hit the ball as far as I used to,” he complained. Which is true, but his short game has lost none of its touch. He also finds time to be a starter at Forrest Creason Golf Course.

Before he started teaching at Swanton, he went to Columbia University to study toward a master’s degree in music education. Dwight Eisenhower, who became Columbia’s president following the war, signed his diploma. “I saw that one of those diplomas sold on eBay for hundreds of dollars but I am not interested in parting with mine,” he said.



Meeting Mavis

He got more than a degree at Columbia because that is where he met his future wife, Mavis, a Canadian who was teaching modern dance. “We met at a dance and were married in 1949 and that was the best thing that ever happened to me,” he said. They have two daughters, Linda, and Ann, who is the director of the Sylvan Learning Center in Bowling Green. In fact, it was his marriage to Mavis that led him to remain in northwest Ohio. “Miami offered me a job in the summer of 1949 and I told them I could not accept it because I was getting married. So, I stayed at Swanton.”

He taught music for 19 years at Swanton and also was the golf coach and helped with the football team as a punting instructor. “I started a dance band and we played at proms and other events all over northwest Ohio. I remember the University of Toledo wanted a band for a major event but were not convinced a high school band would be good enough. I invited them to a practice and they could not believe the musicians were

high school students. Once they were convinced, they hired us,” he said. Money earned from the gigs went into the band fund and anything left over was distributed to the students.

In 1960 he moved to the Rossford schools as band director and music teacher. He also started the golf team at that school. In 1975 he began part-time teaching a course in instrument repair at BGSU. Because of the demand from students and at the urging of Mark Kelly, director of bands, Girten joined the staff and conducted classes for 27 years until retiring in 2001. “I had small classes and I loved the students,” he said.

He is still involved in music and is a charter member and saxophonist in the Bowling Green Area Community Band.

At BGSU, he did more than teach students how to care and repair for their instruments. Because of his skills as a calligrapher, the Continuing Education program recruited him to teach calligraphy classes, which he did for 17 years. “In grade school I was recognized for my handwriting, which is something I’ve always worked hard at,” he said. He regrets that schools no longer emphasize handwriting. “Young people are good at typing texts, but they don’t know about good handwriting.”

There are hundreds of northwest Ohioans who learned calligraphy from Girten, many of whom stay in touch with him. He still does some freelance calligraphy work lettering certificates and special documents for the athletic department and businesses. Former BGSU President Carol Cartwright heard about him and made a personal trip to his home to ask him to do a special family project. “She must have really liked what I did because she paid me more than my bill.”

And for the past several years he and Mavis have been invited by the owners of the Inn at Honey Run in Millersburg to teach a calligraphy course that has become quite popular.

The Girten talents go beyond music and calligraphy. He and Mavis are accomplished painters and their work is prominently displayed in their apartment at Heritage Corners, where they now live. He is especially proud of Mavis’ paintings and takes great delight in showing off her artwork to visitors.

When a friend introduced him to woodcarving, Girten became so fascinated that he began taking courses and has produced some magnificent woodcarvings. “When something interests me, I really try to learn as much as I can about it,” he said.

And that’s the way life has been for Girten. He has a thirst to learn new things and likes the challenge of adding to his considerable list of skills. □

You're in the Army now

WHETHER IT WAS A RIFLE OR A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IN HIS HANDS, ELMER GIRTEN MADE THE MOST OF HIS MILITARY EXPERIENCE

IN DECEMBER of 1942 when Elmer Girten graduated from Miami, the military was waiting. Given the option of joining the Air Force or Army he chose the Air Force and was sent to Greensboro, NC for training. There he made what he calls "a colossal mistake." He qualified as an expert marksman. "I just wanted to do the best I could on the shooting range and had no idea where a good score would lead, but I soon found out. I had learned to shoot with a BB gun and got so good at it I remember shooting things out of my brother's hand," he said.

The Air Force in all its wisdom sent him to a base in Mississippi to be a mechanic. "I had no aptitude to be a mechanic but that's what they wanted me to do. I even tried to fail the tests I was given," he laughs. He soon learned there was a band on the base and pestered the officers to let him join. "I finally wore them down and later was assigned to a band at McCook Air Force base in Nebraska because they needed a clarinet player."

That's when his expert marksmanship ranking caught up with him. "I was pulled from the Air Force and assigned to General Patton's 90th Infantry Division and sent to Texas for six weeks of training. "It was the worst six weeks of my life. I was told they needed a rifleman and not a musician," he said.

Barbed wire and mud

"The worst part was crawling under barbed wire through a muddy obstacle course at 2 in the morning with live machine gun bullets being fired over my head," he recalled.

While on the troop ship crossing to Europe, Girten, always one to find assignments that kept him away from the drudgery of military life, became a reporter writing stories about the soldiers, drawing cartoons and covering boxing matches.

When it was learned he could play a clarinet, he was recruited to join a small combo that entertained the soldiers.

"I had a pass that gave me access to many parts of the ship. I remember waking one night to loud explosions and thought our ship had been struck by a torpedo. We soon learned a submarine had been spotted and they were dropping depth charges on it. Since I was below the water line on the ship I wanted to get to the top deck as soon as possible. An MP blocked my way but my

pass enabled me to get to the top so I could watch."

It was a three-week crossing and they finally landed in England. It was 1945 and the war was winding down. "But they still had plans for us and we were taken to France and loaded into tiny boxcars and shipped across Europe to Patton's headquarters in southern Germany."

Along the way they camped for three days at the Maginot line and later crossed the Rhine River in a truck floating on a pontoon boat. "It was scary. I thought we were going to capsize. It was a miserable trip and we ate canned spaghetti most of the time."

ONCE he reached Patton's headquarters in Weiden, Germany, Girten managed to keep himself busy volunteering as a reporter for the unit newspaper. "I still wanted to play in the band but was told they needed riflemen more than they needed musicians. The closest to music I could get was as a chaplain's assistant leading the singing at the services. I kept pestering my superior officers about joining the band and, like before, I wore them down and was assigned to Patton's infantry division band.

"Patton loved the band and found many opportunities for us to play," he said.

"Although the war was technically over there was still shooting as some SS troops refused to surrender, and took it upon themselves to shoot as many Americans as they could. So we had to be careful," he said.

As he was getting ready to ship out for home, his duty tour was extended when he was chosen to study at the American university in Biarritz, France "I took courses in art, music and conducting and had some wonderful instructors, including Mark Hindsley, the famous leader of the University of Illinois band and one of the most important figures in the history of the American band movement. His innovations in marching band techniques and drill writing were decades ahead of the time, and I felt so fortunate to have him as one of my teachers. I was greatly influenced by him," he said.

While in France he played in a dance band and orchestra, performing on the radio and at benefits for French orphans. He returned to the United States in 1946 to begin his 58-year music teaching career. □

• *Elmer and Clif Boutelle, who retired from BGSU in 1999 as associate vice president for University Relations. clif5761@frontier.com.*



BGSURA Newsletter

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We hope you'll join us for our programs . . .

2012-2013

BGSU
Retirees Association



• *Nicholas Hennessy, sustainability coordinator, Office of Campus Sustainability, May 8, 2013.*



• *Monica Moll, director of Campus Safety, Nov. 14.*



• *Katerina Ray and Ron Shields present the Wolfe Center for the Performing Arts. Sept. 12.*



• *Stan Korducki, president of Wood County Hospital, March 13, 2013.*

• *Joint meeting with University of Toledo Retirees Association, April 10, 2013, in Toledo.*



Stay in touch. Don't let your BGSURA membership lapse.

* Name _____

* Mailing Address _____

* City _____ * State ____ * ZIP _____

* Phone _____ - _____ - _____ * E-mail _____

Check: OPERS STRS No. of years at BGSU _____

Check: Classified Faculty Admin. Year you retired _____

Dept./Office from which you retired _____

Sign me up as a :

Full member, until June 30, 2013 . . . \$16

Associate member

(Spouse/widow/widower of retiree), **1 year \$8**

Life Member \$200

Associate Life Member \$100

• **IMPORTANT:** The information in bold type preceded with an * asterisk will be used to compile the 2013 BGSURA Directory to be published in January. Please circle any information you do NOT want to appear in the Directory. For a copy of the 2012 Directory, call or Email Jim Gordon at 419-352-8175 or jgordon@bgsu.edu.

Make check payable to BGSURA and mail with this form to:
BGSU Retirees Association
attn: Gaylyn Finn, BGSURA Treasurer
966 Deer Ridge Run,
BOWLING GREEN OH 43402-4487

Dear Members,

THANKS: Thank you for your valuable membership. Your membership status appears on your mailing label's top line. If your membership ends June 30, we hope you will renew.

MORE THANKS: And thanks to the officers and board members of BGSURA for their dedication and support of the Association . . . and to those members who have agreed to be nominated for BGSURA officer and board positions.

LAST ISSUE: This is the last issue of the 2011-2012 school year for the *BGSURA Newsletter*. The September issue

will be mailed about Sept. 1.

GO DIGITAL: In the meantime, stay tuned with BGSURA's digital newsletter, the BGSURA LISTSERV, delivered as a PDF e-mail attachment from time to time. If you're not now receiving our digital newsletter — we have more than 350 LISTSERV subscribers — and want to subscribe, please send an e-mail to retirees@bgsu.edu.

David Chilson, BGSURA President

Passings

■ **ALYCE P. ALEXANDER**, 93, of Pemberville, March 5. She had worked in BGSU Food Service for seven years.

■ **JAMES BEAUPRE**, 75, March 14, at his home in Bowling Green. He started and drove the first BGSU shuttle service for students. He retired in 2002.

■ **PATRICIA A. BROWN**, 84, March 9, at Bridge Hospice. For 22 years, she served as Sociology Department secretary. She was the mother of Harold Brown, city editor of the Sentinel-Tribune.

■ **VERONICA GOLD**, 64, died March 20. Dr. Gold was emeritus professor of special education at BGSU and had served as chair of Faculty Senate. She was a recipient of a

Faculty Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Gold worked with the State Department of Education to initiate the first public school based program in Ohio for students with behavior disorders. She retired in 2001.

■ **DELORES M. HEINZE**, 66, died April 9 at Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Perrysburg. For more than 21 years, she worked as a records management officer at BGSU, retiring in 1997.

■ **MERLYN "BARNEY" MICHAELIS SR.**, 90, died Feb. 26 at Bowling Green Manor. He was superintendent of buildings for BGSU, retiring after 32 years. He also drove team buses for 14 years for the Athletic Department.

■ **REKHA MIRCHANDANI**, 48, an associate professor of sociology, March 8 in

Bowling Green. Dr. Mirchandani's husband is Dr. Albert Dzur, BGSU associate professor of political science.

■ **THOMAS H. PAGE**, 56, of Ottawa Hills, Dec. 31, 2011, of complications from chemo. A CPA, he was a BGSU graduate and had served BGSU and other colleges and universities as a financial consultant.

■ **BETTE J. SMITH**, 84, Feb. 18, at Hospice Care Center, Olmsted Township. She retired in 1988 and had worked in Student Residence Life at BGSU. At one time she was deputy clerk at Toledo Municipal Court.

■ **MARILYN M. TITKEMEIER**, 87, March 9, at Blakely Care Center, Bowling Green. She was employed by BGSU as an office worker and had been a first-grade reading tutor at Pemberville Elementary School. □

NOTE TO PAID MEMBERS OF THE BGSURA

Please check your membership status on the top line of the envelope carrying the printed version of this newsletter, which will be distributed by the U.S.P.S. during the week of April 23.

One-year memberships expire on June 30.

Reservation - BGSURA Full-Service Luncheon at Stone Ridge Luncheon Wednesday, May 9

Reservation deadline Friday, May 4

11:30-Noon: Check-in, socializing. Noon: Full-service Luncheon. \$15 per person

Name(s) _____

Number of reservations _____

1. How to pay by mail:

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$_____ PAYABLE TO BGSURA.

Send Reservation Form and Check to:

Gaylyn Finn, BGSURA Treasurer,

966 Deer Ridge Run, Bowling Green, OH 43402.

2. Reservations by e-mail: gfinn3@woh.rr.com. Pay by cash or check at the door.

Deadline for reservations Friday, May 4

Hot Served Luncheon
Beef Lasagna
Corn
Parsley Buttered Red
Skin Potatoes
House Salad with
Golden Italian
Dressing
Rolls and Butter
Iced Tea and Lemonade
on Alternating Tables
Coffee and
Hot Tea Station
Water Service