

33RD ANNUAL COUNCIL OF 1000 AWARD AND FUNDRAISING GALA  
OF THE GERMAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF THE USA®

# *Gala Program*

Honoring Erich Ast, Frederick H. W. Hansen,  
Helmut Krüger and Hank Stoffel

2019 Distinguished German-Americans of the Year™



**German-American  
Heritage Foundation** of the USA®

**GERMAN-  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE  
MUSEUM** OF THE USA™

**Cover: Cloister on Lake Constance, 1943, by Fritz Faiss**

A selection of his works, including this painting, can be seen at the German-American Heritage Museum until April 2020.



Distinguished Guests, Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® (GAHF), it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to our **33rd Annual Council of 1000 Award and Fundraising Gala**.

Every year, since 1987, GAHF has recognized outstanding leadership and achievement by an American of German-speaking ancestry in business, the arts, education, science, politics, and society. Our **Distinguished German-American of the Year™ Award** is the only national honor of its kind.

Tonight, we bestow this special distinction upon four prominent individuals, from our very own ranks, for their decades-long distinguished record of service to our organization and to the German-American community across the country:

- **Mr. Erich Ast** (Pennsylvania)

Entrepreneur, philanthropist, and businessman, one of the great supporters and benefactors of our organization. Former long-time Treasurer of GAHF and an uninterrupted, decades-long member of the Board of Directors.

- **Mr. Frederick H. W. Hansen** (New York)

A charter member at the formal inception of GAHF in 1977, former repeat-Secretary of GAHF and an uninterrupted member of the Board of Directors since. Played a key role in establishing the German-American Friendship Garden in Washington, DC.

- **Mr. Helmut Krüger** (New Jersey)

One of the original founders of GAHF who served in several key capacities in the early years, including thirteen years as president. Worked with President Reagan to pass the bill to establish German-American Day on October 6th and the German-American Friendship Garden.

- **Capt. Hank Stoffel** (California)

USAF veteran, engineer, Pan Am and TWA pilot, long our Regional Vice President for Northern California, 2nd Vice President, and an uninterrupted member of the Board of Directors since joining the organization.

Our honorees are fitting representatives of Americans whose ethnic and cultural heritage is rooted in German-speaking lands, and who share an epic story that stretches from the very beginnings of European settlements in North America to the great migrations of the 19th and 20th centuries, all the way to the present day.

On behalf of everyone at GAHF, we thank you for your continued support which makes our programs possible and allows us to carry on our mission of sharing the inspiring saga of generations of Americans of German-speaking ancestry and their contributions to the building and advancement of our great nation.

We warmly welcome all of you and thank you, sincerely, for your distinguished presence tonight on this special occasion celebrating German-American heritage and friendship.

John M. Manoyan, Ph.D., President

*Letter  
from the  
President*

# The Award

Since 1987, the Distinguished German-American of the Year™ Award has provided national recognition for outstanding leadership and achievement of an American of German-speaking ancestry in business, the arts, education, science, politics and society.

## Previous Recipients of the Distinguished German-American of the Year™ Award

1987	Mr. Karl Ehmer †, NY	2004	Mr. Albert Wurz, PA
1988	The Hon. Ruth E. Denk, NY	2005	Dr. Günter Blobel, MD, PhD †, NY
1989	Mr. Werner Fricker †, PA	2006	General H. Norman Schwarzkopf †, & Mrs. Brenda Schwarzkopf, FL
1990	Mr. Eric Braeden, CA	2007	Mrs. Margrit B. Krewson †, DC
1991	Mr. Albrecht Maier, NJ	2008	Dr. Jesco von Puttkamer †, VA & Mrs. Wilma L. Schmidt †, posthumously, PA
1992	Mr. Heinz C. Prechter †, MI	2009	The Hon. William R. Timken, Jr., OH
1993	Dr. George J. Beichl †, PA	2010	The Hon. Paul A. Volcker, NY
1994	Ms. Doris Meissner, WI	2011	Mr. Robert B. Zoellick, MD
1995	Mr. William Hetzler, NY	2012	Chef Walter Staib, PA
1996	Mr. Bruno Karnas, PA	2013	Mr. Bern E. Deichmann †, PA
1997	Mr. Gerald R. Kainz †, DC	2014	Mr. Helge H. Wehmeier, PA
1998	Prof. Dr. Otto L. Walter, Esq. †, NY	2015	Mr. Doug Oberhelman, IL
1999	Mr. C. John Muller †, PA	2016	Mr. Philip Frederick Anschutz, CO
2000	Mr. John Patrick Schmitz, Esq., DC	2017	Mr. Robert M. Hitt III, SC
2001	Mr. Detlef "Ted" Hierl †, NJ	2018	Mr. Peter Thiel, CA & Germany
2002	Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, OH		
2003	Mr. Walter Brand †, CA		

## Distinguished German-Americans of the Year™ Award

2019



### **Erich Ast**

Mr. Ast is the embodiment of the American dream. He came to the United States as a young man, and together with his brother, Arnim, he built the A&E Manufacturing Company in Levittown, PA.

The business produces precision sheet metal components and assemblies for a variety of industries, while blending new technology with old world craftsmanship. Erich is not only a successful businessman, but has

also been an active philanthropist and volunteer. His service on GAHF's board includes two three-year terms as treasurer, multiple terms as a director of the board, and as a Council of 1000 member. In his spare time, he likes to spend time with his wife and family, and to travel to his beach homes in Ocean City, NJ and Marco Island, FL.

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### **Frederick H. W. Hansen**

Mr. Hansen was instrumental in the acquisition of the foundation's home, the former Hockemeyer Hall, in Washington, DC's Penn Quarter which also houses the German-American Heritage Museum. Fred was a part of GAHF from its early days, having attended the first meetings in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and signing the charter papers that established the foundation in 1977.



He also played a key role in the creation of the German-American Friendship Garden on Constitution Avenue, across from The White House, and a number of other projects of importance to the German-American community. For several years, he served as secretary on the board of directors, and continues to be an active board member and a Council of 1000 member.

## Distinguished German-Americans of the Year™ Award



### Helmut Krüger

Mr. Krüger has dedicated his life to ensure proper recognition for German-Americans. He and his twin brother, Hartmut, were born in Altenhagen, Germany, now Poland, in 1938. At the age of 18, in 1956, the boys came to the United States with their mother and grandmother. Helmut acquired a High School Equivalency Diploma to study business management at Farleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

He soon took a keen interest in German-American club life, while operating a gas station with Hartmut. Later, they opened a Subaru dealership in Westwood, NJ. Helmut was a co-founder of GAHF, and served as its president for 13 years. His dedication did not stop there, and he also worked with President Reagan to pass a bill for the development of the German-American Friendship Garden in the capitol, and German-American Friendship Day. Helmut is a recipient of the Bundesverdienstkreuz, and met with a number of American and foreign leaders.

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### Hank Stoffel

Mr. Stoffel has been a GAHF member and foundation board director for more than a decade. In addition to his important work as the regional representative for Northern California, he has also been the second vice president for many years during which he firelessly promoted German-American culture and traditions. As a son of German immigrants from Wuppertal, Hank embodies discipline, dedication and hard work.



During his youth, he served in the U.S. Air Force, and later became a pilot for Pan Am and TWA. Hank remains an active member of several local German-American clubs, including the Sacramento Turn Verein.



# The Menu

## **Reception - 6:00 pm**

### Butlered Hors d'Oeuvres

Wild mushroom ratatouille in cucumber cup

Mini crab cakes with Chesapeake Bay remoulade

Herbed grilled chicken skewers with grape tomatoes

Three-cheese tortellini pesto skewers with tomatoes and mozzarella

## **Dinner - 7:15 pm**

### First Course

Potato, leek and carrot soup in a vegetable base

### Main Course - Selection

Dual entree of peppercorn crusted beef filet and seared seabass in garlic, lemon and herbs with roasted root vegetables and garlic mashed potatoes

Rigatoni pasta in Gorgonzola cream sauce

### Dessert

Apple crisp in a mini mason jar

Coffee and tea service

*Guten Appetit!*



## From the Black Forest to the California Desert: The Life and Work of Fritz Faiss

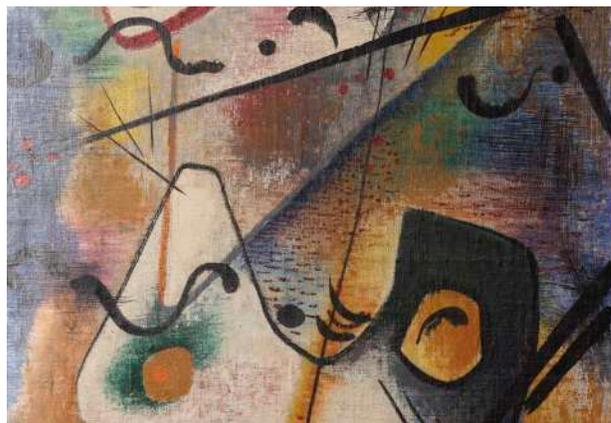
**Open Until April 2020**

Never before has artwork been shown at our museum, and for our very first art exhibit we have something exceptional to share! Featuring some 50 works by German-American artist Fritz Faiss (1905-1981), from woodcuts to encaustic (wax) paintings, Faiss' unique blend of Expressionism and abstract — named Faissism by art critics due to the impossibility of placing him within one category — ensures there is something among his works for everyone.

Born in the idyllic Black Forest, Faiss' peaceful childhood quickly turned into a chaotic young adulthood. After studying at the Bauhaus, his work was declared "entartet", or degenerate, by the Nazis in 1937, and he was forbidden from painting or exhibiting his work. In spite of this, he continued to paint in secret. Faiss' artistic expression and his inability to hide his disapproval of the Nazi regime led to his detention in a labor camp during the war, which caused lifelong physical issues.

Unable to leave the country, Faiss remained in Germany until 1951, at which time he was able to receive sponsorship for a travel visa to the United States. He moved to California, became an American citizen, and created a new life for himself.

***The GAHM wishes to extend a very special thank you to Dr. Kathryn Wullner Thomas, who donated these paintings to the museum in honor of her late sister, Janet Wullner Faiss.***



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 8, 2019

German-American Heritage Foundation  
719 Sixth St NW  
Washington DC 20001

Dear Gala Attendees;

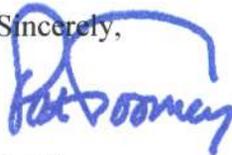
It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to Philadelphia as you celebrate the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Council of 1000 Award and Fundraising Gala. This year's Gala will honor 4 deserving individuals with the Distinguished German-American of the Year Award, one of them a fellow Pennsylvanian, Mr. Erich Ast.

The German-American Heritage Foundation (GAHF) promotes German language, culture and heritage in the United States and through its outreach efforts, GAHF seeks to deepen cultural understanding and cultivate a greater understanding and appreciation of the history of Americans of German ancestry who have contributed to American society.

I would like to recognize the honorees for this evening, Mr. Erich Ast, Mr. Frederick Hansen, Mr. Helmut Kruger and Mr. Hank Stoffel, all of whom have made a tireless commitment to the Foundation and are deserving of the great honor they will receive this evening.

My very best wishes to all for an enjoyable and successful Gala, and congratulations to the honorees.

Sincerely,



Pat Toomey  
U.S. Senator



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Washington



**Message of Greeting from  
Ambassador Emily Haber  
on the Occasion of  
The 2019 Distinguished German-American  
of the Year Award Presentation  
November 8, 2019**

Washington, November 8, 2019

Today we celebrate the many contributions of four distinguished men who have been working hard to strengthen German-American friendship over the last decades. It is a great honor for me to offer my warm congratulations to all the members, friends, and supporters of the German-American Heritage Foundation, which today recognizes these four long-time members with the *Distinguished German-American of the Year* Award. The fact that the Foundation has been awarding this prize for more than 30 years demonstrates its own deep commitment to honoring the ties between Germany and America. I am delighted that these men have committed themselves to highlighting America's German roots and fostering German-American friendship.

Erich Ast, Frederick H.W. Hansen, Helmut Krüger, and Hank Stoffel have made notable contributions to the German-American Heritage Foundation in recent years, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude for that.

**Erich Ast** of Pennsylvania came to the US as a young man and became a successful businessman here. He has been a strong supporter of the GAHF for more than 10 years and is actively involved, among other things, as treasurer on the GAHF Board of Directors.

**Frederick H.W. Hansen** of New York has been active since the GAHF's founding in 1977 and will be honored for his long-standing commitment to strengthening German-American relations. He was significantly involved in the purchase and financing of the German-American Heritage Museum of the USA, which opened in 2010 in the heart of the old German quarter of Washington, DC.

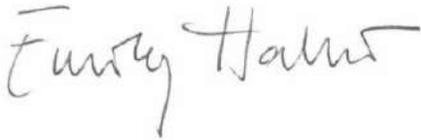
**Helmut Krüger** of New Jersey has a long and fruitful relationship with GAHF as one of its founding members. During President Ronald Reagan's administration, he served as an advocate for German-American Day and the German-American Friendship Garden on the National Mall.

**Hank Stoffel** of California is a former TWA pilot and son of German immigrants. He has been a proud representative of the German-American partnership in northern California for more than a decade and also serves as second vice president of the GAHF Board of Directors.

I would like to thank these four accomplished men for their many years of service and leadership within the German-American community. They all demonstrate the importance and success of German-American relations and are actively committed to strengthening this friendship. The celebration on the historic premises of the German Society of Pennsylvania, which is the oldest German society in the US, tracing back to the year 1764, underscores the significance of this award.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the German-American Heritage Foundation for its tireless efforts and commitment to inform and educate the American public about the history and roots of German-speaking immigrants. The Foundation plays a central role in maintaining the valuable contributions that German-Americans make and preserving our common cultural heritage. I deeply appreciate your continuous dedication to your mission of strengthening our mutual ties.

My warmest congratulations to Mr. Ast, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Krüger, and Mr. Stoffel on their awards and my best wishes to all of you for a memorable and meaningful ceremony.



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## **THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DIAMOND SPONSOR**

Gary Lee Koerner

## **THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS GOLD SPONSORS**

Gudrun and Hardy von Auenmüller

## **THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS BRONZE SPONSORS**

Frederick H. W. Hansen  
Susan and Dr. John M. Manoyan & CarolJean Siegert King



*Gary Lee Koerner*

I am honored to be able to share my contributions and achievements alongside fellow German-Americans for the benefit of the United States of America and the international community. I am actively retired and living in downtown Historic Vienna, VA, and participate in the GAHF, Washington Saengerbund, Germanna, Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, Unit Owners Association of Park Terrace Condominiums, Vienna Wireless Society, Amateur Radio Research Corporation, Koerner Familien Reunion, and a Spiritual Congregation.

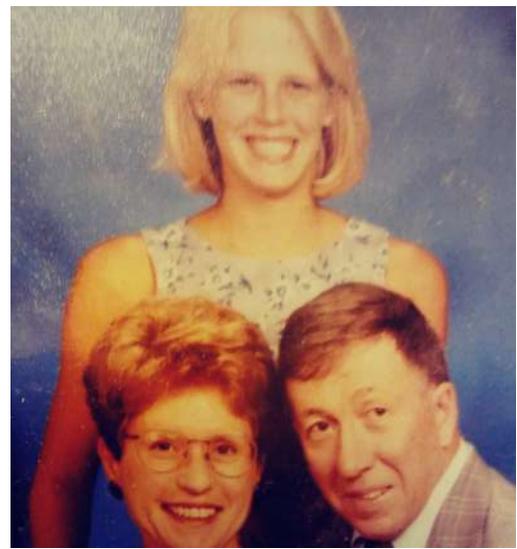
My daily life centers around these activities and attempting to do some traveling to the Middle East, Caribbean and Pacific as well as genealogy and philanthropy. Currently, I am seeking assistance in locating the migration route, ca.1810 from the pre-Grand Duchy of Baden, Winnenden to Pennsylvania ca.1820, Paradise Township-Valley, the lovely Pocono Mountains, where my ancestors found community with the Leni Lenape inhabitants! After railroads and the U.S. Civil War, some of my family moved nearby from the Poconos, settled, and are still living in Scranton, PA. My childhood, teen years, and some of my adulthood were centered here. My development activities were hobbies such as hunting, fishing, gardening, biking, scouting, amateur radio operations, and tinkering with electronics, golf and caddying, sports, delivering newspapers, and spiritual activities.

My early education was from the Scranton Public Schools, where I was a member of the National Honor Society, and was awarded scholarships to attend Keystone College. Then advancing to and graduating from Pennsylvania State University; I also attended Temple and Marywood Universities. During the Vietnam War, I graduated from USAF Officer Training School and served in three military services.

My professional career began in electronics for Communications Systems and for Information Systems Engineering. I worked in radio and TV broadcast transmissions, university laboratories, military bases and tactical units, domestic and foreign manufacturing facilities and governments, public technical schools, and with government contractors.

My professional and personal travels were to post-World War II and Cold War Europe, the current EU and Eastern Europe, North and Central Africa, Southwest and East Asia, Latin America, and working in Mexico, Arabia Saudia and Jordan, and Cold War Europe! I appreciate the Hosteling International, Inc. domestic and international network of hostels/Jugendherbergen facilitated by WWI trench soldier, Richard Schirmann, whose vision of international understanding has given us a means of peaceful coexistence! A thanks to foundations, like Rockefeller and Independents, who supported this endeavor for more than a century! I learned several languages during my travels and stays in these lands.

**I salute the many contributions of my current countrymen; our German ancestors taught us how to do it.**



**2015 - Honoree Doug Oberhelman at the National Press Club**



**2016 - Honoree Philip Anschutz at Anderson House**



**2017 - Honoree Robert "Bobby" Hitt III at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce**



**2018 - Honoree Peter Thiel at the Organization of American States**





## German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA®

Established in 1977, the German-American Heritage Foundation of the USA® (GAHF) is dedicated to preserving, educating, and promoting the cultural heritage of Americans of German-speaking ancestry. The foundation serves as the only national membership organization for German-Americans. Since 2010, we have been proudly presenting our rich heritage as the first national German-American Heritage Museum in our nation's capital.

We are committed to:

- Sharing a positive image of Americans of German-speaking heritage by focusing on their historical contributions to American society;
- Strengthening the ethnic awareness and diversity of German-Americans;
- Promoting the German language and culture; and
- Furthering German American relations, cooperation, and friendship.

### **GAHF Board of Directors**

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Donald Thureau, 1st VP  
Hank Stoffel, 2nd VP  
Hardy von Auenmüller, Treasurer  
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Katja Sipple, Executive Director  
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Megan Beth Lott  
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Hans Stein

# The Museum



## The German-American Heritage Museum™

The German-American Heritage Museum of the USA™ opened in March 2010, in a building once known as Hockemeyer Hall. Renovations were completed by the GAHF after acquiring the building in 2008. Located on 6th Street NW, in the heart of the old European-American section of Washington, the museum sits in what is now a thriving commercial neighborhood. The Heritage Museum's mission is to collect, record, preserve, and exhibit the rich cultural legacy of Americans of German-speaking ancestry, and make their contributions to American history available to audiences of all ages.

info@gahmusa.org | www.gahmusa.org | facebook.com/gahmuseum | twitter.com/gahmuseum

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