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Presentation by Raimund Goerler on January 5 “OSU’s Most Famous Murderer: Professor James Howard Snook”

On June 14, 1929, two boys found the body of a young woman in a field on Fisher Road near McKinley Avenue. She had been badly beaten and her throat had been cut. The Ohio State University was in the national spotlight when one of its professors, James Howard Snook, was accused of murdering this student, who had been his lover. The murder would shock the nation for a time as the case involved adultery and drugs, as well as violence. It preoccupied the press for months. Later, books and a play were written about the murder.



Raimund Goerler

Raimund Goerler, a member of the Columbus Torch Club since 2014 and currently president-elect, will recount this crime and the subsequent murder trial in his Torch paper to be presented on Thursday, January 5.

“This presentation will focus on the historical context, the evidence of the case, and the people involved — the accused, the victims, and their families, as well as the judicial process,” Rai says. “Particularly remarkable was the speed of the trial and appeals, which lasted only a few months, and the indiscretions of the press, and criminal justice at that time.”

Rai has a Ph.D. in U.S. history with a specialty in archival administration and a master’s degree in library science. In 2011, he retired from Ohio State’s faculty after a career of more than 30 years. During that time, he was university archivist and led a department that identified, preserved, and made available university records and information of continuing interest. With other faculty, Rai developed an undergraduate course, “OSU: Its History and Its World,” that is still taught. In 2000 he accepted appointment as assistant director of OSU Libraries with administrative leadership of all special collections and archives.

Rai has appeared as an expert in several documentaries, including WOSU’s “Birth of Ohio Stadium.” His most recent book is *The Ohio State University: An Illustrated History* (OSU Press, 2011). In 2016, Ohio State presented to him its Distinguished Service Award.

Torch Club's program committee invites papers for 2023-24

The Torch Club's website says: "Join us for intelligent and respectful discussion in challenging, even chaotic, times." The starting point for discussion has always been a presentation by a member of our Torch Club.

Columbus Torch has assembled a program committee for October 2023 through May 2024. Members are: Chris Atzberger, Rai Goerler (chair), Don Larson, Paul Niswander, Bob Stephenson, and Susan Tilgner (ex-officio). If you would like to deliver a Torch paper next year, please contact Rai Goerler (goerler.1@osu.edu; 614-459-4213). At this early stage, many dates are available.

Former member Otha Gilyard died in December

The Rev. Dr. Otha Gilyard, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, died in early December. He originally joined the Columbus Torch Club in 1995 and then rejoined in 2012. Born and raised in Arkansas, he served in the Army in Vietnam and later earned his bachelor's degree from Rhodes College. He then earned a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Master of Sacred Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, and a doctorate from Chicago Theological Seminary.

After serving Baptist churches in New Jersey and Michigan, Rev. Gilyard became pastor of Shiloh in 1993. He was a former president of the board of the Ohio Council of Churches and was immediate past president of the Ohio Baptist General Convention.

Rev. Gilyard is survived by his wife, Frieda. A celebration of his life was held at Shiloh Baptist Church on December 17.

Fellowship Committee will arrange rides for members to Torch meetings

If any Torch Club member needs a ride to a monthly Torch meeting, or if you are willing to provide transportation for a member, please contact the club's Fellowship Committee. You may reach the Fellowship Committee through its chair, Diane Selby, at (614) 571-4226 and Dianeselby@gmail.com.

Tips for recruiting new Torch Club members

Please help us recruit new members to the Columbus Torch Club. Potential new members may attend one of our monthly dinner meetings without charge. Here are several recruitment tips:

- Recruit from other organizations where lifelong learners congregate (i.e., colleges, cultural and arts organizations, other civic clubs).
- Establish an informal mentoring relationship for younger recruits with a seasoned member. Such relationships are of value to both parties and to the club.
- Wear your Torch Pin. People will often ask about the logo, giving you the perfect opportunity to talk about your club. Develop your own "Torch elevator speech."
- When you invite a visitor to a Torch meeting, send a thank you letter or email message afterward. If you've not already done so, include a membership application.

Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach

Club secretary Thom Seelbach has sent you via electronic mail an Evite to attend the Torch Club meeting on January 5. Respond promptly to the Evite so he will have an accurate count of meals needed. You also may respond to him at tseelbach@gmail.com or (614) 499-3090.

The directions for responding to the Evite are:

1. After you click on the email from Evite, it will bring up a new window on the Evite website. You must click your response in this new window for Evite to register your response.
2. The guest count is the actual number of attendees. If only you are attending, the count will be 1. The cost for a guest is \$30. A potential member may attend one dinner meeting without charge.

Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2022-23

October 6, 2022: **“Walking the Way: El Camino de Santiago de Compostela”** by the Rev. Dr. Susan Warren Smith

November 3, 2022: **“Climate Change in Ohio”** by Jennie McAdams, Franklin County Public Health

December 1, 2022: **“An Irregular Christmas,”** a holiday gala with Nate Terry, composer and publisher, Major 7 Publishing

January 5, 2023: **“OSU’s Most Famous Murderer: Professor James Howard Snook”** by Raimund Goerler

February 2, 2023: **“Recent Advances in Medicine”** by Dr. Gary Hinzman

March 2, 2023: **“The Columbus Economy”** by Bill Lafayette

April 6, 2023: **“The Sort-of-Great Columbus Trivia Quiz”** by Joe Blundo

May 4, 2023: **“The Challenge of Consensus on a Humane, Pragmatic Policy on Drug Abuse”** presented by Steve Sterrett

Torch Club’s monthly meeting agenda

4:30-5:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting
5:30-6:15 p.m. Cocktails and conversation
6:15-6:35 p.m. Business matters
6:35-7:30 p.m. Speaker
7:30-8:45 p.m. Dinner and table discussion

Board of Directors for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2022-23

President – Susan Tilgner

President-elect – Rai Goerler

Immediate Past President – Nancy Wardwell

Secretary – Thom Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Diane Selby

Treasurer – David Lenz

Assistant Treasurer – vacant

Fellowship Chair – Diane Selby

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell

Nominating Chair – Nancy Wardwell

Region 5 Director – Nancy Wardwell

Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett

Website Editor – Rai Goerler

Director-at-Large – Christina Atzberger (2024)

Director-at-Large – David Hansen (2024)

Director-at-Large – Paul Niswander (2023)

Director-at-Large – Dorothy Driskell (2023)