

The Founders & Other Special Members

The Founders – Of course we know the story of how three college friends wished to continue their friendships after college and into the future, and how, after gathering a few additional friends together, formed a club that became Gyro. The three were Paul Schwan, Gus Handerson and Ed Kagy. They were students in the Arts Department at Western Reserve University – enrolled in the fall of 1907, and all three graduated in 1911. Paul changed his course from literary to law in 1908 and attained an L.L.B. degree. Handerson continued his studies in the pursuit of a business education; however, in his last year he devoted his time to a combined Literary-Law program, earning an A.B. degree. Kagy was quite the leader in many aspects of his college years – excelling in athletics, his fraternity and oratory and working in a number of jobs to make enough money to enjoy the good life as best he could. The trio, having established a firm friendship in their first year, never wavered from their camaraderie.

Edmund L. Kagy – probably the best known because of his long association with Gyro, was born 21 April, 1889 in Cleveland Heights, Ohio -- one of seven children. He worked at a myriad of jobs, always striving to earn money. His athleticism showed early in high school, and he excelled in college, playing three years at right half in football and captaining the team; three years on varsity baseball and one year of varsity basketball. Following college he played semi-pro baseball for several leagues.



While still in college, he formed a three-man team that lectured on human relations at various college Y.M.C.A. and in his senior year captured first place in an oratorical Peace Contest earning him election into the honorary forensic fraternity.

Following graduation, he joined the faculty at South High School where he taught physics and was in charge of all athletic teams. His college called him back, and for two years he was head baseball and basketball coach and assisted with football.

With the outbreak of war, he, along with two other friends formed a Gyro training company, wherein the members gained valuable experience. Shortly, he was accepted in Officers Training School and became a second lieutenant in May, 1917. By May of 1918, he was now a first lieutenant

and shipped overseas, first to England and then France. Within three weeks, he was one of two selected for the “Army School of the Line” and promoted to Captain. He spent much of his time studying military offensives and their results. Later he was posted as a liaison assistant in charge of all A.E.F. athletics.

Returning to the US, he started a dealership in oils and greases, and acted as Gyro International S-T on a half-time basis for two years, eventually becoming the full-time secretary in 1925. It has been stated that with his resume, he likely gave up leading a prosperous life for his love of Gyro.

It was said that he was married to his Gyro dream in the beginning, but he took a wife later in the 1920s and sired two children. He died in 1960.

It was also noted that he answered all problems with the question “Is it best for Gyro?” He was admired for his inflexibility of purpose, his devotion to duty, his kindness and his ability to appreciate the other fellow's viewpoint.

Clarence H. Handerson – more familiarly known as Gus (the root of the nick-name is unknown) was born on the 23rd of February 1889 in Cleveland - the son of a doctor and one of three children.

His early ambition was to become a doctor like his father, but was dissuaded from choosing the medical profession on advice of his dad. He worked at several jobs while in high school – a druggist's assistant and later as a deck hand on a lake boat.



Apparently he was a “bear for work.” Any project he took on was a success. He organized the “Sock & Buskin” club, made it a financial success and thus gave his university the best dramatic club it ever had. He became a monologist for the Glee Club and it was reported he was always the life of the party.

Upon graduation, he like Kagy, was lured by business. At first as a private detective for clothing manufacturer, he was involved worming his way into strikers' meetings, one of which in the guise of a newspaper reporter, and when discovered, he had to leave by a side window of the theatre in haste. He then served as an advertising investigator and later

"Their names will be enshrined in the hearts of all Gyros"

sold office space. He finally ended up in advertising – his true calling. During this busy life, he found time to get married in April 1915. He went on to various advertising positions, finally being the ad manager for the largest bank in the world. He was member and officer of many advertising clubs and other civic groups.

He was a Republican, a Mason, an Episcopalian, and interestingly enough, he authored a published book "The Ladies from Hell." He was fond of saying: "We have a daughter, dog, canary, a Grant, consumptive Ford, mortgage and a radio."

Unfortunately, his health failed him in 1941 and he died in 1942 of heart problems.

Paul Schwan – was born in Cleveland on 27 July 1889, the son of a minister and one of four children. Raised in the atmosphere of the parsonage, he attained respect and appreciation for the handiwork of his Creator – the glories of the sunset, the wonders of nature, and the violence of storms found harmony in his soul.



It was said that Paul exhibited the "spirit of the hive" – a constant striving within his soul to make the world a little better place to live – a longing to exemplify friendship and to educate his associates, and the public, to an appreciation of the benefits of friendship. His philosophy by this time was deep rooted, more of an analyst, an absorber. He spent considerable time in his sanctuary, a large room in his house that was part bedroom and part library. Lined on three sides with overflowing bookcases.

After attaining his law degree, he went into association at his uncles' law firm, but he never lost contact with his college chums, meeting often for dinners at Webbers Café and lunches at Boehkes. It was during these meetings that he gave voice to his convictions on friendship which crystallized into Gyro. He was never considered the life of the party, but when he left a meeting, it was a different meeting.

Little is known of his later years except that he was married in March 1918, and after a honeymoon of one week reported to the army on April 1. His life in the military was colorless and brief. He contracted influenza and three weeks later he died on April 17.

Others, quoting from Shakespeare's "As You Like It" noted that Paul heard the "sermon in stones," listened to "tongues in trees," he read the "books in brooks," and he saw "good in everything."

In retrospect it might be considered that Kagy was the affable stalwart, Handerson the cheerleader, and that Schwan was the true instigator of Gyro.

Albert Kern – a charter member and member of the executive committee. Club secretary and then International Secretary from 1917-1919 while the executive was off to war.

Orville "Orrie" Peterson – charter member and a real live-wire. His droll wit was instrumental in the early days. As First Lieutenant, Artillery, in France 1917-1818 he went through numerous engagements unscathed, but developed pneumonia in his last week and died in France.

Leon K. Jordan – Entirely responsible for forming the Buffalo club and played a big part in starting Chicago and Cincinnati. Elected to a two-year term as first International President 1917.

"Doc" R.L. Jett – A sanatorium physician who enlisted Gyros to use his hospital grounds for rookie military training. He didn't wait for call up, but hurried over to serve with a medical unit attached to the Serbian Army. Killed while on duty at an advance field hospital. The first Gyro to die for his country.

James L. "Jimmie" Hubbell – the last of the original group in 1912 before the organization was named. He had a fascination with study of the gyroscope (*as did many others see pages 12 & 13*) and when others were facetiously discussing names like Peerless Perspirers and Ready Radiators - because their summer meeting location lacked modern air conditioning - managed to advance his ideas related to the gyroscope - hence the name GYRO and the Power, Poise & Purpose description came into use. He and Gus published the club bulletin until 1917 when it became an international publication. After 5-6 years of editing for Buffalo, Toronto and Cincinnati, he became editor of the GyroScope in 1923 and continued until 1934. He was a singer, songwriter and peppy worker. A captain in WWI, he tried to go back in WW II, but had to remain as an official of the Ohio Civilian Defense organization.

Other Charter Members – were Peter Hopper, Webb Handside, George Forbes, and R.B. Hopper. Nothing has been recorded or is known about the charter members except as noted above.