

Writer of UT's alma mater held 10 patents

By **JIM SIELICKI**

BLADE STAFF WRITER

Former Maumee resident J. Gilbert Mohr, a research engineer, musician, and amateur songwriter who wrote the University of Toledo's alma mater "Fair Toledo," died May 3 in Swan Creek Retirement Village, where he'd lived since 1992. He was 98.

The cause of death was not known, but Mr. Mohr had suffered congestive heart problems and was under hospice care, his daughter Karen Conrad said.

The song "Fair Toledo," written in 1959, was one of eight entries submitted in a contest sponsored by the Student Senate and Alumni Association to replace an older tune, according to the University of Toledo.

His submission earned him and his wife, who wrote the lyrics, \$100. The song made its debut at halftime of the Marshall-Toledo basketball game in 1959.

In 1986, Mr. Mohr and a friend, Tom Dussel, collaborated on a song for the celebration of Maumee's sesquicentennial.

Mr. Mohr studied piano and violin, but played mostly brass instruments.

He was skilled on the trombone and occasionally sat in on sessions with Toledo's Cake Walkin' Jass Band, daughter Gretchen Page Pomeroy said.

As a senior research engineer for Johns Manville fiber-glass division, he used his knowledge of the product to design and build a 12-foot fiber-glass alpenhorn in 1975, Mrs. Pomeroy said.

He played the instrument in area nightclubs.

His musical interests began in high school in Pennsylvania, where he was born and raised.

He played in symphony, dance, and Dixieland bands, Mrs. Conrad said.

Mr. Mohr was born Sept. 25, 1913, in Philadelphia.

He studied ceramic sciences at Pennsylvania State University, where he graduated in 1937.

He was a researcher for Corning Glass Works in Corning, N.Y., before joining the fiber-glass division of Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co. in Toledo in 1947.

His career stops included the Johns Manville fiber-glass division in West Virginia, Allied Chemical Corp. in Toledo, and Johns Manville in

Waterville until his retire-

ment in 1978.

In retirement, he opened his own consulting shop and sold testing equipment that he had invented.

In 1974 he was named editor and senior author of the second edition of a 396-page handbook intended for engineers of reinforced plastics and composites, and he wrote other publications related to his field.

He held 10 patents for fiber-

glass products. In 1984 he was elected a fellow in the British Society of Glass Technology.

He married Jean Strout in 1948, and she died in 1987.

"He made the decision he was going to live life to the fullest," Mrs. Conrad said of her father's outlook despite his grief over his wife's death.

Mr. Mohr was an avid golfer. At one point, he and a group of friends decided to build a nine-hole course on land that now is part of Side Cut Metropark.

Hickory Hills was used mostly by friends, although members of the public occasionally played there, son Bill Mohr said.

Mr. Dussel, a longtime friend who wrote the words to the Maumee ditty, called Mr. Mohr's musical talents "just amazing."

Mr. Dussel said he wrote the lyrics, "but not knowing anything about music, I went to Gil. He could take something and run with it."

In 1992, he became one of the "pioneers" of the newly opened Swan Creek Retirement Village.

There, he helped create a walking trail, organized a choir, started a fitness group, and helped develop a reading program for residents with diminished eyesight, his daughters said.

He also composed a song for the retirement home.

Mr. Mohr is survived by daughters Gretchen Page Pomeroy and Karen Elizabeth Conrad; son William Mohr; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

His body was donated to the University of Toledo Medical Center, the former Medical College of Ohio.

A memorial service is scheduled for today at 7 p.m. in Reed Chapel of Swan Creek Retirement Village.

Tributes are suggested to the Life Care Fund at Swan Creek.

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