

# The German Society of Maryland



239<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

Honoring

*Hans K.W. Steffen*

NOVEMBER 5, 2022

Sheraton Baltimore North  
Towson, Maryland



*The German Society of Maryland*

### **FRÜHES DEUTSCHES GEBET**

Gott im Himmel, der uns stärkt und füttert,

Gib uns heute unser tägliches Brot.

Erlaube uns, frei und friedlich zu leben.

Vergib uns, daß wir etwas Negatives gegen jemanden sagen.

Laß uns nicht streiten sondern voller Freude unsere Freundschaften genießen.

Wir bitten dich um all das, Lieber Gott

Amen

### **EARLY GERMAN PRAYER**

God in Heaven, who strengthens and nurtures us,

Give us today our daily bread

Allow us to live freely and peacefully.

Forgive us if we say something negative against another person

As we forgive those who say something negative against us.

Let us not argue but enjoy our friendship happily,

We ask all this from you, Dear God

Amen

Submitted by Mary Upman, October 28, 2022.





*The German Society of Maryland*

## *Greetings from the President*

Dear Members and Guests / Meine Damin und Herran:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 239th Anniversary Banquet and Awards Ceremony of the German Society of Maryland. We gather this evening at the Sheraton in Towson Maryland to celebrate our Society and to honor someone who like our organization, has over the years made significant contributions to promoting and preserving the German language, heritage, culture, and history in Maryland.

I'm sure you remember; this Society was founded in 1783 and received a corporate charter from the Maryland legislature in 1818. The original function of the Society was to help and support new German immigrants in need, to match new arrivals with jobs, and to improve their lives. Among the incorporators were General John Stricker, the hero of the Battle of North Point, and Jacob Small, the mayor of Baltimore. When the Society was founded, it included persons of German-speaking ancestry from many areas of Europe.

This year we are honoring Hans Steffen. Our German Community needs to celebrate men like this fine gentleman. We are certainly lucky to do so this evening.

Now that Covid seems to be behind us, it sure feels good to me that we could put together this Anniversary and Awards Banquet. As in the past few years, this past year has been an adventure. Many thanks again to the Banquet Chairman William Kommalan and his committee for another great event. I'm sure everyone will enjoy this truly lovely location, wonderful food, the music, and of course the company of family, friends, and other Society members while supporting Herr Steffen's achievements.

Always be mindful that the purpose of the German Society of Maryland: is to preserve and promote the German heritage, language, and traditions through educational, social, and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in our State of Maryland where we are a non-profit, charitable corporation under the provisions of §501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are always welcomed and are fully tax deductible.

*Kraig A. Dean*

GSM President





### *Officers of the Society*

***President***

Kraig A. Dean

***1st Vice President***

Steven Harper

***2nd Vice President***

Wm. Hay Kommalan

***Treasurer***

Anton Smoot

***Secretary***

Amy Unverzagt

***Office Manager***

Lynette Dean

***Counselor***

The Hon. Gerald Wm. Wittstadt, Sr.

### *Board of Directors*

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Sherry Veith

Noreen Herbert  
Gen. M. Hall Worthington

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Gerhard Meinzer  
Betty Niemann  
Paul Gerhard Otto  
Theo. J. Potthast, Jr. Esq  
Dr. James Schaub\*  
Dr. Mary Upman  
Hon. Gerald W. Wittstadt

\* Past President

### *Ex-Officio*

Eva Maus Kelleher, President, Women's Auxiliary





## *Head Table and Honored Guests*

**German Society of Maryland**  
President Kraig and Lynette Dean

**St. Andrew's Society of Baltimore**  
1st Vice President Christian B. Wilson

**St. George's Society of Baltimore**  
President Daniel Fisher

**Hibernian Society of Baltimore**  
Vice President Thomas B. Kelleher and  
Mrs. Kathleen Rittenhouse Kelleher



**Distinguished 2022 Honoree**  
**Hans Kurt Wilhelm Steffen & Mrs. Maria Steffen**



# *Program*

*5 -6 p.m. - Reception in the Warfield Room*

## *Wilkommen*

Wm. Hay Kommalan, Chair

*Introduction of Head Table Guests*

## *Greetings*

Kraig A. Dean, President

## *National Anthems*

Barbara Harper

## *Invocation*

Rev. H. J. Siegfried Otto

## *Dinner Served*

*7:30 p.m. - Program*

*Presentation of Citations and Comments*

Bernard Penner, Esq.

Dr. Mohamed Esa

*Presentation of Honoree*

Hans K.W. Steffen

## *Closing Remarks*

Kraig A. Dean

*Dancing until 10 p.m.*

“Sounds Good”

Gute Nacht u. Kommen Sie Gut Nach Hause





# 239<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Speisekarte

## *Ein kleiner Vorgeschmack*

Käse U. Beeren

## *Salat*

Spargelsalat mit gerösteten rote Bete und Senf-Vinagrette

## *Hauptgericht*

Schweinebraten mit DeutschenBier-Senf-Glasur

Knödeln mit sautierten Zwiebeln und Kräutern

Deutsche Grünebohnen

## *Nachtisch*

Schwalderkirchetorte

Heissen Kaffee, order Tee



## 2022 Honoree Hans Steffen

Congratulations to our 239th honoree of the German Society's 'Distinguished Service Award', Hans Steffen.

Born, Hans Kurt Wilhelm Steffen in Karow, Hinter-Pommern (now part of Poland) on April 6, 1939 to Robert and Frieda Steffen, the middle child of three, joining brother Fritz and later sister Ilse. The family was forced to leave their home by the Russian army in 1946. The inhabitants of their small village knew they would have to relocate after being overrun by opposing forces in 1945. They packed their belongings and prepared for the move. They did not prepare for the edict that they leave in "10 minutes" taking NOTHING. They left with the clothes on their backs, no food, no money, and nothing to make a living. After a grueling trek to Segeberg, they were put on cattle cars and shipped to the western coast of Northern Germany, to the Isle of Sylt. For three years and 3 months they lived in 1 room at an ex-military base, with communal sanitary facilities and a mass kitchen operated by the German Red Cross. The times were tough and food scarce. Hans parents often walked to the bridge to the mainland to beg for food so that they could feed their family. In 1948, Hans' father, Robert was able to use a small patch of land north of the camp and here he grew enough potatoes to get them and some others in the area through their last winter before being relocated. In 1949, the family was moved to Schwabia and life in general improved. The German Red Cross provided 4 rooms for them on the 3rd floor of a private home in Pliezhausen; food was becoming more plentiful and his parents found jobs. Robert began working in the construction industry and Frieda in the knitting factory. The children returned to school and continued in trade schools. It was at this time that Hans became a retail sales manager trainee. At that time, the trade schools required 4 days of work and one day (paid) at a formal class associated with that trade.

In 1957, after several interviews with a representative of the American Red Cross and the sponsorship of Charles E. Miller, a Chevy dealer in Ellicott City, the entire Steffen family emigrated to a farm outside of Ellicott City. Mr. Miller was a public spirited man who donated the land for both the First Lutheran Church, as well as the Gray Rock Library, both in Ellicott City. He put Hans and his brother, Fritz, to work at the dealership. It was here they learned English. Hans became an apprentice Cabinetmaker.

Hans was drafted into the American Army in 1962. He served two years active duty, serving 12 months in South Korea in the Emergency Room of a MASH hospital. Then served 2 years as an active National Guardsman. Following his four years of service, he began his career as a NATO driver for the German Armed Forces Command USA/CA. Hans worked at Dulles Airport in Sterling in the motor pool, driving all types of motorized equipment as well as chauffeuring many types of personnel, from Ministers, Generals, Attaches, etc. Hans worked in this capacity from 1966 until his retirement in 2004.

It was in 1958, after settling into their new home and new life, that the family began searching for kindred spirits. They found this in the Baltimore Kickers (founded 1953). Both Hans and his brother Fritz were avid soccer players and joined immediately to play soccer and to socialize with fellow Germans. Unfortunately, living in Ellicott City and not having a vehicle prohibited the Steffens' from traveling to Baltimore for the many events. This changed when the family purchased a vehicle from Mr. Miller and they became fully immersed in Soccer. Hans played on

*(Cont'd on page 9)*





*(Cont'd from page 8)*

the 1st team for many years, Blobs' Park team and the Baltimore Kickers Oldtimer's Teams.

Hans met his wife, Maria Rute Dias, at a Kickers' dance in 1967 at the old Alcazar. They married on November 30, 1968. They have two daughters, Sonia, born in 1970 and Sandra, born in 1974. Hans and Maria are also the proud grandparents of Olivia (age 15) and Adam (age 13). Hans enjoys spending time with the children as evidenced by the photograph of Hans with Olivia's Kindergarten class. Hans presented the children with a little German culture and some tasty German culinary delights.

Hans has been an active supporter of the German-Maryland community for more than 64 years. Besides being a successful player and referee for the Baltimore Kickers he served in multiple positions including the Financial Secretary, Membership Chairman, Treasurer and as their President from 1983 to 1986. As the club's Cultural Chairman, a position he still holds, he was instrumental in organizing the German Language classes, served over 25 years arranging their overseas trips for members, and continues planning their cultural events, such as Schlachtfest, Schutzenfest, Crab and Shrimp feasts, etc. Hans is ever-present at the German Festival and if you have ever had Schnitzel at the festival, you have experienced some of Hans' best work.

Besides the Kickers, Hans is a member of Fidelitas and the Zion Church (serving on their Finance Committee). In addition, he was instrumental in initiating the partnership with Zion and providing us with their shared annual, and quite successful, Christkindlmarkt in the churches beautiful Adlersaal. He also served for many years on the Oktoberfest Committee and provided support to the community's legislative efforts to have October declared German American Heritage Month, which was successfully passed in 2013.

Besides being the German Society of Maryland's 239th honoree, Hans was awarded the 'Federal Republic of Germany Friendship' award by Gunther van Well, the German Ambassador in 1986, and an 'Honorary' membership by the Baltimore Kickers.

Hans has been a dedicated servant of the German Maryland community for many years and hopes that others will continue to strive for programs that will entice and sustain young people in our community. He urges strong leadership, vision, outreach, and growth to keep our heritage alive and well in the future.









## *Hans Steffen Joins our Distinguished Past Honorees*

Randall Donaldson, Ph.D.	Dr. Rosemary Wittstadt &
Thomas A. Werner	The Honorable Gerard Wittstadt
Gerhard Meinzer	The Honorable Robert Ehrlich
Shelley "Dolch" Arnold	The Honorable William D. Schaefer
Christel Hilger Van Der Berg	Theodore J. Potthast, Jr. Esq.
Brigitte & Nicholas Fessenden	Lisa Fitzpatrick
The Ruck Family	Dr. Armin Mruck
Eva Maus Kelleher	Wolfgang Oehme
Alfred Zeller	Louis L. Goldstein
Nancy Grasmick	Paul Schaefer
Hilary Hahn	Joseph S. Sellinger, S.J.
G, Krug & Son	Dr. Robert Heyssel
Dr. David Denisch	Frank & Mary Ellen Gunther
Dr. Carol Traxler	The Rev. H. J. Siegfried Otto
Dandridge Booke	Paul Luedtke
Katherine Eggerl Peters	Donald Tillman
Dr. Hanna Gelfrich-Leffman	Maureen McCarthy Helinski, Ph.D.



## *Patrons*

Madeleine Kraemer Bryant

Linda and John Butt

Claire & Joe Chovan

Forrest & Michelle Shull

Kraig and Lynette Dean

Dr. David A. Denisch

Brigitte & Nick Fessenden

Bro. Charles Filberg, F.S.C.

John A Goebeler & Maureen O'Donnell

Steven & Barbara Harper

Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Helinski

Mrs. Hilary H. Klein

Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Hay Kommalan

Bob & Diane Moore

Vito & Shirley Santora

James & Abbie Schaub

In Memory of Thomas Werner

Sherry Veith

Judge Gerard Wittstadt

Dr. Rosemary H. Wittstadt



## *Presidents of The German Society of Maryland*

Dr. Charles F. Wiesenthal	1783-1789	Henry P. Thau	1984-1986
Christian Meyer	1817-1820	Theodore J. Potthast, Jr.	1986-1987
Justus Hoppe	1821-1832	William E. Ferguson	1987-1988
Charles W. Karthaus	1833-1840	Donald E. Tillman	1988-1993
Albert Schumacher	1841-1871	Theodore J. Potthast, Jr.	1993-1996
Herman von Kapff	1872-1878	Michael J. Nieberding	1996-1998
Claas Vocke	1879-1886	John K. Aymold	1998-2000
Louis P. Henninghausen	1887-1913	Michael J. Nieberding	2000-2002
Robert M. Rother	1914-1923	Dr. James D. Schaub	2002-2005
Karl A. M. Scholtz	1924-1941	Brigitte V. Fessenden	2005-2008
Lewis Kurtz	1942-1951	Dr. James D. Schaub	2008-2010
Otto H. Franke	1952-1959	Rev. H.J. Siegfried Otto	2010-2012
Francis W. Pramschüfer	1959-1961	Thomas A. Werner	2012-2014
Herbert F. Kuenne	1961-1964	Anton G. Smoot	2014-2017
Henry J. Thau	1964-1966	Kurt D. Wittstadt	2017-2018
Charles J. Stein, Jr.	1966-1970	Anton G. Smoot	2018-2019
Kurt H. George	1970-1973	Dr. James Schaub	2019-2020
Vernon H. Wiesand	1973-1976	Shelley Arnold	2020-2021
Dr. Morgan H. Prichett	1976-1981	Kraig A. Dean	2021-
Frederick H. Wehrenberg	1981-1984		



*Founded 1783*

*Incorporated by Act of the General Assembly of Maryland*

*Chapter 100*

*February 3, 1818*

*The purpose of the German Society of Maryland is to preserve and promote the German heritage, language and traditions through educational, social, and benevolent programs; and to develop the unity and continuity of the German American community in the State of Maryland.*

*The German Society of Maryland*

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“Wer schreibt, der bleibt.”  
 (“He who writes, remains”)

In memory of  
**Theodore J. ‘TED’ Potthast, Jr.**

Members of the German Society of Maryland will always remember Ted. To me Ted was an outstanding leader of our Society. Like no other did he direct and influence the affairs of the Society. He was a lifetime member, former president, treasurer and newsletter editor. He contributed with many articles, just as he wrote and edited his own family newsletter “which totaled 1200 editions during his lifetime” (daughter Marialena ‘Mia’ Walsh).

Even as treasurer Ted inspired and convinced members of the board to spend almost \$50,000.00 for the creation of a bronze statue of Brigadier General John Stricker (1759-1825), hero of the Battle of North Point, war of 1812, Vice President of the German Society of Maryland (1817-1825), now located on the grounds of Zion Church of the City of Baltimore. At a time when historic monuments are being removed due to the association of those representing the curse and shame of slavery, the German Society remembers General Stricker as one of her own, a prominent historic American statesman and citizen.

Ted had a strong love for history and was proud of his German heritage. He kept in touch with his family and relatives in Germany. His son Mark remembers the fun his father enjoyed when fishing rockfish with his cousins from Germany during the time when rockfish were considered an endangered species. Ted returning the small fish into the water again explained to his cousins: “In America we only take the big fish.”

Ted had the gift of command and the patient power of persuasion. Exercising leadership in our Society is no small task since many of us do not hold back with our suggestions and opinions. Ted was a kind, considerate and generous leader – the creation of the statue of General Stricker will always be associated with Ted Potthast.

Frederick N. Rasmussen had a fine article about Ted in the Baltimore Sun - you can read the full version by googling “Obituary of Theodore Potthast by Fred Rasmussen on August 25, 2022”

I considered Ted a good and loyal friend. He was Roman Catholic, a strong believer who received weekly communion at home. The attendance at this funeral mass was an expression of the many people Ted touched. Ted for me represented the brain of the German Society as well as its heart in generous support for the outreach ministry of the Society, in support of students learning German and keeping in touch with people in need of emotional and personal support. In my own 36 years of association with the German Society Ted Potthast has been a most outstanding leader.

“Wer schreibt, der bleibt.”

Pastor H. J. Siegfried Otto





*Club Fidelitas  
Congratulates our Member,*

***Hans Steffen***

*2022 German Society of Maryland Honoree*

*From the Board of Directors and Members*

*Wm. Hay Kommalan, President*

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**The Society For The History Of The Germans  
In Maryland**

Founded in 1886

Congratulates

**Hans K.W. Steffen**

**2022 German Society of Maryland  
Distinguished Service Awardee**

Thank you Hans for your contributions and preservation of our  
German-American heritage!

[www.shgm.org](http://www.shgm.org)





# Congratulations

**Hans Steffen**

**with appreciation for your contributions to the**

**German Community in Maryland**

**Bärbel, Siegfried und Paul-Gerhard Otto**

 *Danke!*



HONORING

# THEODORE JOSEPH POTTHAST, JR.

MAY 3, 1931—AUGUST 18, 2022



The family of Ted Potthast would like to thank the German Society of Maryland for their loving support of our father over his many decades of voluntarism and leadership in the Society. GSOM was an essential part of his life, in which he made lifelong friendships and enjoyed innumerable social activities honoring his German heritage and culture. He was proud to serve as a Lifetime Director and Past-President. Ruhe in Frieden.

Congratulations to Hans Steffen!



## *National Anthems*

### *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit  
für das deutsche Vaterland!  
Danach lasst uns alle streben  
Brüderlich mit Herz und Hand!  
Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit  
Sind des Glückes Unterpfand;  
Blüh' im Glanze dieses Glückes,  
Blühe, deutsches Vaterland.

Unity and law and freedom  
For the German Fatherland  
Let us all strive for that  
In brotherhood with heart and hand!  
Unity and law and freedom  
Are the foundation for happiness  
Bloom in the glow of happiness  
Bloom German Fatherland



### *The United States of America The Star Spangled Banner*

Oh, say can you see,  
by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed  
at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose bright stripes and bright stars,  
through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched  
were so gallantly streaming.  
And the rockets' red glare,  
the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there.  
Oh, say, does that  
Star-Spangled Banner yet wave  
o'er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave.

*\*Note: "The Anthem of a foreign country is usually given first, followed by 'The Star Spangled Banner'. It would be correct for the audience to stand during the singing of both anthems."  
From letter Ref. No. P2711.06/8-954 dated August 30, 1954,*



