

# A dog and pony show

Bill Bear, '52, says the current Delta Upsilon chapter house is on the site of the home of the owner of a dog and pony show. Bill's mother was a native of Bloomington and her sister often stayed in the Gentry "mansion," the house that later served as the DU chapter house.

Bill now lives in Madison, Ind., and sent a 1990 article from the Madison newspaper about the Gentry dog and pony show. Henry Gentry went to work for a circus animal act when he was 16 and traveled with the circus for seven years until the circus owner tricked Gentry out of all his savings. Penniless, Gentry returned to Bloomington and started collecting and training stray dogs. The article reports that he said "he spent more time on his knees than a preacher, teaching the dogs to walk upright, push baby carriages, and drive wagons." In 1887, Gentry's dog show had its premiere performance in the Bloomington Opera House. He feared the audience did not like the show, but word of mouth gave him a sold-out house for the following evening's show and he was a success. He promptly took his show to Bedford and Bloomfield, and in 1890, his show had 53 dogs and nine ponies and later added an elephant. Henry's three brothers joined his enterprise, and he soon had four circus troupes that simultaneously toured the country as the Gentry Brothers Circus. The circus was sold in 1916, but Henry remained involved with other circus organizations until the 1930s. He was inducted into the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, Fla., in 1940 following his death. The 1990 article Bill sent described a revival of the Gentry Circus in Bloomington that year as



a benefit for the Stone Belt Arc, an organization serving people with developmental disabilities.

One of Henry Gentry's brothers built his "mansion" at 1204 E. Third St.; this is the house where Bill Bear's aunt played as a child. The building was used as a fraternity house by Delta Tau Delta prior to its use by DU. The house burned while being occupied by DU, and the current chapter house replaced the burned structure. Prior to locating on East Third, the DU chapter house was at the corner of Lincoln and Kirkwood. This was its location when the Wrangler colony affiliated with Delta Upsilon. The Monroe County Library is now on that site and a plaque at the site commemorates its historic significance to Delta Upsilon. Virginia Tyte, a descendent of the Gentry family

who presents historic programs about the Gentry Circus, was consulted for this story. She knew the house at the corner of Ballantine and Third was not the home of Henry Gentry but was not sure which of the brothers had the house built. She was quite sure the house occupied only the existing lot and did not include the land where the Lambda Chi house is located; there has been speculation over the years that DU sold some of its land to Lambda Chi, which built its house at the same time the current DU house was built.

Bill's letter suggests that the chapter have a "dog and pony party." While many undergraduate members may consider themselves to qualify as stallions, we hope Bill is not suggesting that the women our members currently date qualify as "dogs."

— Ronald Kovener

## *IU in the history books: Doc Councilman as athlete, coach, author*

Many of those coached by "Doc" Councilman brought honor through victory to IU; Councilman, himself, made history. When he set foot on the sand at Wissant, France, on Sept. 17, 1979, 58-year-old Councilman became the oldest person at that time to have swum the English Channel. The feat of having made the journey in 13 hours and seven minutes at his age was all the more remarkable given a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease four years earlier.

By the time he set his record, James Edward "Doc" Councilman had been making history as head swim coach at Indiana University for more than 20 years; he had been teaching in the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation for

almost as long. The Birmingham, Ala., native led the IU men's swim team to a total of six consecutive NCAA championships and 20 consecutive Big Ten titles. Councilman coached the two most successful Olympic swim teams — for the 1964 games in Tokyo, and again in Montreal in 1976. Among the world-class athletes he mentored was swimmer Mark Spitz, whose seven gold medals in the '72 Munich Olympics represent another record.

Having earned a doctorate in physiology, Councilman brought his expertise in the science of movement to bear on his coaching style. His experiments and innovations in underwater photography facilitated understanding of the swimmer's body to an unprecedented extent.

Councilman's 1968 text, *The Science of Swimming*, has enjoyed 22 subsequent editions. The Councilman Billingsley Aquatic Center was dedicated on the Bloomington campus in 1996. The legendary coach died in 2004 after a long battle with Parkinson's.

The first person recorded to have swum the English Channel was Captain Matthew Webb, in August 1875. Although Councilman's record as the oldest Channel swimmer has been surpassed at least twice since 1979, those master swimmers did not best his time. (This article is an adaptation of "Moment of Indiana History," a production of the Indiana Public Broadcasting Stations in association with the Indiana Historical Society. Writer: Yaël Ksander.)