

Gus Manders, A Man Nobody Doesn't Like

By Shirley Semow

Actually, there is more to Gus Manders than just his pleasant manner. He has led an interesting, remarkably productive life, about which he modestly says very little. He was born in Germany, but left the country in 1937 and traveled to New York. After a brief stay in New York he moved to Tennessee where he took a position with Ernst and Ernst, a national CPA firm. While Ernst and Ernst trained him in efficiency engineering (now known as management services) he attended the University of Tennessee (formerly Chattanooga University) and earned his degree.

In 1942 Gus, not yet an American citizen, thus not subject to the draft, volunteered for service in the U.S. Air Corps. Gus still remembers the judge who swore him in saying that he hoped Gus would one day be able to enjoy the privileges of democracy as much as he was about to fulfil its obligation.

Gus, a great asset to the military as he was fluent in three languages—German, Italian and English, was assigned to Air Corps intelligence where as he put, "We did all kinds of funny things like intercepting enemy telephone conversations and things like that." When the war ended in 1946, he was assigned to the U.S. contingent of the Allied Disarmament Commission, consisting of six men from each allied country. The objective of the Commission was to find salvagable German scientific institutes and relocate them in Britain or the U.S.

Gus returned to the U.S. in 1947, married Ricky and together they raised a family which now consists of three grown daughters and two grandsons. He brushed up on his accounting at UCLA and in 1949 started his CPA practice which was the first computerized office in the San Fernando Valley. The firm grew steadily and lasted 45 years.

Conventional wisdom tells us this would be ample achievement for one lifetime; however, Gus is the notable exception to such wisdom. From 1962 to 1963 he returned to CSUN to participate on a parttime basis in setting up its first computer system. Also, during this time, he earned a second degree in economics. And over 40 years or so, he held many different positions, in various professional organizations.

Once he made the decision to retire, Gus began phasing out in 1993 and in 1995 totally retired. During the phase-out period, he returned to CSUN as a graduate student in political science beginning what he calls "my greatest excitement" Since then, he has taken one course each semester. He not only enjoys the courses but delights in his friendships that have evolved over time with the various professors in the department.

Gus also volunteers with the Small Business Administration's SCORE, where he serves with other retired executives counseling people who are getting started in business. Gus specializes in how to use the Internet to get started in business or how to give an ongoing business a boost. It is also worth mentioning that he plays tennis two or three times a week.

In 1993, he joined SAGE and still loves it. He says that SAGE, SCORE and CSUN are a threesome that makes him happy. He enjoys knowing what he will do each day of the week. Gus says that the camaraderie that he had in his work, which is what retired people miss most, has been replaced by SAGE where neither status nor history stands between knowing the people themselves and where small talk is not required because there is always something interesting to talk about.

Gus believes that this may be the best part of his life.