

For immediate release
October 26, 1999

**A GERMANY IN US lecture will review the
life and works of German prisoner of war artist**

Dr. Donald S. Wolfe, associate professor of German at University of Southern Indiana, will remember a World War II prisoner of war with the slide lecture "Daniel Mayer: German P.O.W. artist of Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky" at 7 p.m. on Monday, November 8, at the Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences in the Main Gallery. A reception will be held in the gallery immediately following the presentation.

Daniel Mayer arrived at Camp Breckenridge in May 1953 as one of nearly 400,000 German prisoners-of-war scattered in camps throughout the U.S. during World War II. Although he had been wounded twice and was in ill health when he arrived there, this self-taught artist left behind a prodigious number of wall murals in the prisoner barracks and dining halls.

Today, approximately 30 landscapes remain on the walls of the former American non-commissioned officers' mess hall as a testament to the joy and beauty that he brought to friends and foe alike.

Mayer himself, however, was never again to see the homeland that he so lovingly portrayed with his brush. He was barely able to complete his major work, a 10-foot by 30-foot mural of Castle Werneck in Central Germany. Sickness and his nagging wounds made it impossible to continue to climb the ladder to paint and he died in October 1945, just as those whose lives had been sustained by his art were beginning to return to Germany.

"The remarkable thing about this man is that he painted in terrible ill health, dying right after completing his ultimate work. Mayer created beauty for the rest of the prisoners - images of their homeland - and sacrificed himself to do it," said Dr. Wolfe.

Dr. Wolfe will show slides of Mayer's work and share Mayer's family correspondence.

NOTE: Mayer's daughter is still living. She and Dr. Wolfe began corresponding after he sent her enlargements of photos taken of the painted murals; she had never seen her father's work. For her part, she sent Dr. Wolfe copies of all letters her father had written home to the family during the war and provided him with the details of her father's life as she knew them.

On Wednesday, November 10, Dr. Ulrich Littmann will discuss postwar relations between Germany and the U.S. when he presents "Partners distant and close - The U.S. and Germany" at 7 p.m., in Mitchell Auditorium, Health Professions Center, at University of Southern Indiana.

For more information about either lecture, call Dr. Wolfe at 812/473-9018.

GERMANY IN US is a statewide initiative of the Indiana Humanities Council, made possible through participation of Lilly Endowment, Inc. and more than 80 partner organizations across Indiana. One of three Hoosiers is of German descent, and GERMANY IN US reflects this broad and deep heritage. The program explores the interest in contemporary German language, culture, and significant commercial ties between Indiana and Germany.

GERMANY IN US offers a traveling centerpiece, exhibitions, performances, film series, readings, and discussion groups integrated with public programs and projects in each participating community.

For more information about GERMANY IN US Southwest, contact Dr. Thomas Wilhelmus, associate dean of the School of Liberal Arts, at 464-1787. For more information about statewide GERMANY IN US initiatives and IHC international grants and programs, contact Ms. Ann Whitlock Swedeon, director of International Programs, Indiana Humanities Council, at 800/675-8897.