

They were an extraordinary group in an extraordinary time. So many are gone. But the Class of '33 isn't quite ready for an epitaph.

By Kevin Cool



The Last

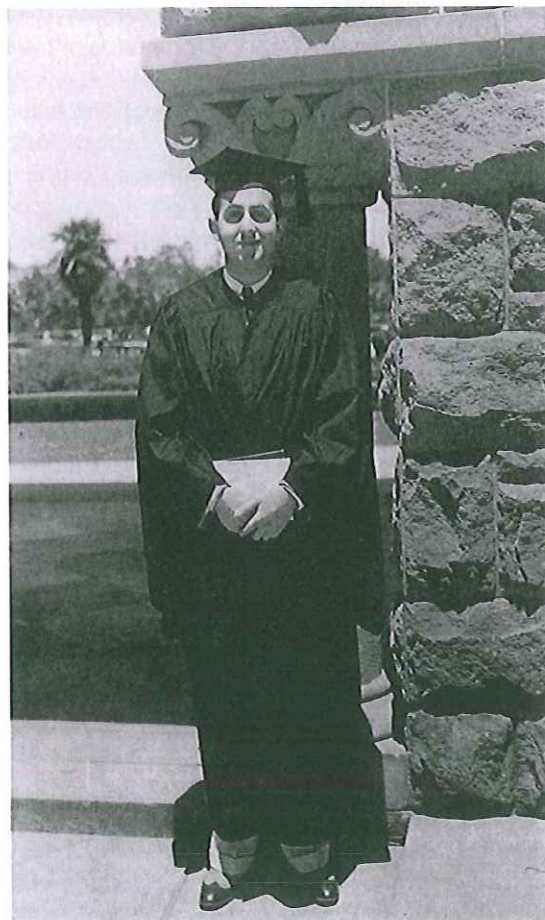
When invitations go out this spring encouraging alumni to attend Reunion Homecoming, only one will be necessary to accommodate the Class of 1933. It will go to a modest house on Sycamore Avenue in San Mateo. Ephraim Engleman's house.

Engleman, who will be 102 years old in March, is believed to be the sole remaining member of the Class of '33. He and a handful of other centenarians are the only ones left from Stanford's Depression-era classes, chosen by fate to be the final witnesses of a tumultuous time.

Their lifetimes span the most transformative century of human history—they were born at a time when horses were more common than cars. They came of age on the Farm when Babe Ruth was a star and Joe DiMaggio was a teenaged outfielder for the San Francisco Seals. Pretty Boy Floyd and John Dillinger terrorized Middle America. Silent movies got sound. And Stanford's only alumnus U.S. president, Herbert Hoover, Class of 1895, was in the White House.

One month after the Class of '33 arrived as freshmen in 1929, the stock market plunged, recovered briefly, and plunged again, setting in motion the Great Depression. By the time the class graduated, Franklin D. Roosevelt had been elected and the New Deal launched. In Germany, Adolf Hitler gained power, and "Nazi" entered the lexicon.

Eighty years have passed. The Class of 1933 is down to one. This is his story, and theirs.



READY FOR LAUNCH: Diploma in hand, Engleman went on to medical school.

COURTESY EPHRAIM ENGLEMAN



of a Class

STANFORD 1933 YEARBOOK (TOP IMAGES);
STANFORD UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Most people would view living long enough to put a third digit on your age a large accomplishment. Ephraim P. Engleman insists it isn't a big deal. "When I was 99 years and 11 months it never occurred to me that I was old," says Engleman, sitting in his office at UCSF Medical School. "As soon as I turned 100, suddenly everyone took notice."

Director of the Rosalind Russell Medical Research Center for Arthritis, Engleman still works three days a week, administering the program he founded 34 years ago and occasionally seeing patients.

He has made a few concessions—a cane, a hearing aid—and he jokes that he "walks like an old man," but Engleman is as vigorous and healthy as most people 20 years younger. Retirement is not an option, he says. "What would I do?"

Play the violin more, perhaps.

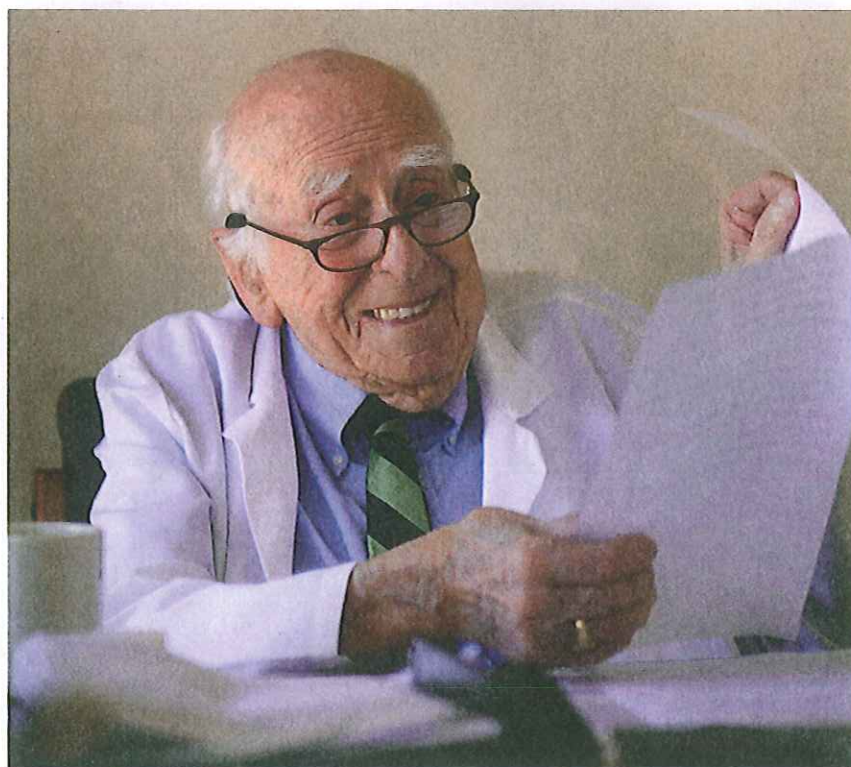
Music and medicine are his twin passions, and it was music that first put Engleman on Stanford's path. A violin prodigy, he was performing concerts in his hometown of San Jose at age 6 and drew the notice of Stanford psychologist Lewis Terman. Terman invited Engleman to participate in what would become a decades-long research project on gifted children, originally called *The Genetics of Genius*. (See "The Vexing Legacy of Lewis Terman," *STANFORD*, July/August 2000.) Engleman is one of the last of the 1,444 "Termites" still living.

Engleman graduated from high school at age 16. He entered San Jose Junior College and got a job as a violinist in the orchestra at San Jose's Fox California Theater. The orchestra played background music for the then-silent films and vaude-

ville acts that appeared there. He made \$75 a week, "big money in those days."

By 18 he was serving as master of ceremonies and conductor. He was in the audience when the first movie with sound, Al Jolson's *Jazz Singer*, played at the theater across the street. "I knew right away that silent movies were on their way out, and so was my job."

Encouraged by his parents, he enrolled at Stanford intending to be a doctor. But he



was a weak student, he says. "The transition from vaudeville and chorus girls to serious academia was a difficult metamorphosis."

He lived in Sequoia Hall, the oldest residence on campus at the time and the

PATIENT MAN: Engleman has worked in rheumatology for more than 70 years.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY EPHRAIM ENGLEMAN; TONI GAUTHIER; GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY HOOVER ARCHIVES



MARCH 4
Herbert Hoover, a member of Stanford's "Pioneer Class" of 1895, is sworn in as the 31st president of the United States.



SEPTEMBER 3
The Dow Jones Industrial Average culminates a nine-year bull market, closing at an all-time high of 381.17.

OCTOBER 29
A record 16,400,000 shares are traded on the stock market, which closes at 230.07, more than 30 percent below the market's peak eight weeks earlier. Known as "Black Tuesday," the market plunge heralds the beginning of the Great Depression.

site of extravagant mischief. Engleman's classmate, Clyde Smith, recalled one particularly elaborate prank in an interview before his death last August at age 100. "While my roommate was out on a date, some friends and I chucked all of his furnishings out the window and led a cow up there. It was easy getting the cow up those stairs, and another business getting it down."

The student knack for improvisation sometimes found more useful application. The Depression was hollowing out the country, and Stanford was strapped for cash. Building projects were put on hold and maintenance delayed. The engineering building where Smith toiled—along with lab partner William Hewlett, '34—had a roof that leaked so badly students placed tar-papered catch basins throughout.

The *Stanford Illustrated Review*, a precursor of *STANFORD* magazine, appealed to alumni for help in employing recent graduates. "These men and women... face a far harder and down-at-heel world than

that which welcomed you."

But among students, says Engleman, the mood was generally upbeat. "We were a happy bunch."

Campus traditions ruled—prior to Big Game, the *Daily* ran a series of front-page articles instructing freshmen on how to cheer. (Tip #4: "Save your voice by pitching it up and forcing the sound against your teeth.")

Classmate Ben Eastman was celebrated for his exploits on the track—he owned the world record in both the 440- and 880-yard

run, and anchored the men's mile relay team that also set a world mark. In the summer between his junior and senior year, Eastman won a silver medal at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. (He died in 2002, at age 91.)

Engleman was a member of Ram's Head and was emcee for Gaieties in 1932. He performed a song he'd written especially for the production. As he related the anecdote in his office recently, he paused, trying to remember the full title.



BUILT TO LAST: Jean and 'Eph' married in 1941 and are still sharing laughs.



The roof of the engineering building leaked so badly students placed tar-papered catch basins throughout.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY EPHRAIM ENGLEMAN (2); STANFORD UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS; COURTESY THE BETTMAN INSTITUTE



MARCH 12
Mahatma Gandhi begins 241-mile walk to the sea to protest British monopoly on salt. After making salt in defiance of British law, he is arrested and imprisoned.



APRIL 3
A group of Stanford students, some posing as newspaper photographers, snatch the Stanford Axe, which had been in Cal hands for 31 years, and return it to campus. Hailed as heroes, they become known as the Immortal 21.

JULY 31
"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?" The radio program *The Shadow* airs for the first time.

Engleman serves up a short list of inventions younger than he: 'Radio. Television. Computers.' Not to mention bubble gum, Cheerios, the New York Yankees.

He closed his eyes and quietly sang a few bars to jog his memory. Then he had it: "You'll Never Know What Heaven Is Like Until You've Kissed a Red-Headed Girl." What inspired that? He shrugged, and smiled. "I suppose there weren't many red-headed girls."

Around this time he met the woman who would change the trajectory of his life. She was Lucie Stern, renowned arts patron and philanthropist for whom Palo Alto's community center, as well as Stanford's Stern Hall, is named. Stern held dinners at her home each Sunday attended by half a dozen Stanford undergraduates interested in music and theater. Engleman was a regular. "We became friends, and she supported me in many ways."

Although he was never told directly, he is certain Stern—an alumna of Columbia—somehow influenced his admission to medical school at the New York university. He has no other explanation for how he got in. Every other medical school to which he applied, including Stanford, had rejected him—and with good reason, he says. "My grades were terrible."

At Columbia, Engleman's passion for music again opened a door. Hans Smetana,

the grandnephew of Czech composer Bedrich Smetana, was a professor of pathology at the medical school and struck up a friendship with Engleman. "He saved me," Engleman says. "Without him I don't know whether I would have made it as a doctor."

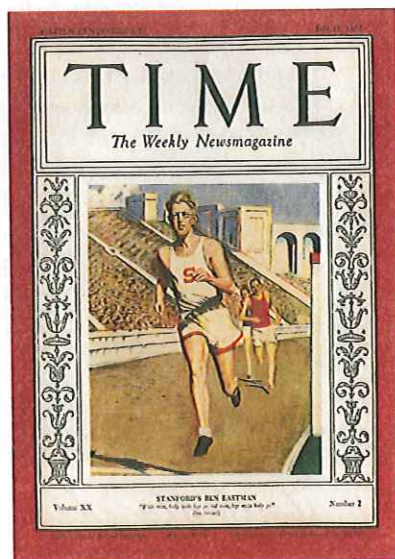
Engleman finished his degree in 1937

and later snagged a fellowship with Harvard's Walter Bauer, a pioneer in the study of rheumatic disease, which set in motion Engleman's long career in the field.

Back in the Bay Area for his residency in 1938, Engleman met a pretty and engaging recent graduate of Mills College, Jean Sinton, on a blind date arranged by Sinton's cousin. "It was a charity ball at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco," Jean recalls. "He was tall and handsome and a good dancer. I've loved him every day since."

Jean, 97, took up poetry writing a few years ago but suffers from macular degeneration, which has stolen her eyesight. The couple have three children: Phillip, 68, a retired physician; Edgar, 67, a professor of medicine and pathology and head of the blood center at Stanford Medical School; and Jill Roost, 65, a homemaker in Burlingame. Jill's daughter Jenny, one of the Englemans' six grandchildren, did postdoctoral research at Stanford and is a gastroenterologist at Palo Alto Medical Foundation.

On the heels of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, eight months after he and Jean



COVER BOY: Eastman was a world-record holder in two events while still a student.

GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM RIGHT)



MAY 1
The Empire State Building, then the world's tallest building, opens in New York City.

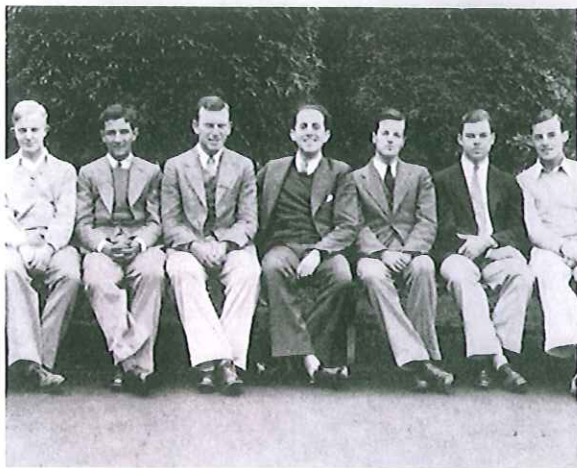
SEPTEMBER 19
Stanford's first president, David Starr Jordan, dies at age 80.

OCTOBER 17
Gangster Al Capone is sentenced to 11 years in prison for tax evasion.



MAY 20
Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to complete a solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

JULY 8
The stock market drops to 41.22, its lowest level of the 20th century, and 89 percent below its peak in 1929.



SWEET SOUNDS OF YOUTH: Engleman (center) with Ram's Head members in 1932 and warming up for a chamber music session at his home last November.



married, Engleman enlisted for military service. He was appointed—by none other than Walter Bauer, who was serving as the Army's director of medical activities—to head a treatment center for servicemen suffering from rheumatic fever. His assignment was quite a ways from the front lines. "I joked that I fought the battle of Palm Springs," Engleman says.

During the next 40 years, Engleman became one of rheumatology's leading practitioners and research advocates. He was president of the American College of Rheumatology and the International League Against Rheumatism, won numerous accolades, and in 1975-76 chaired the National Commission on Arthritis, a congressional task force that was instrumental in establishing a series of research centers across the country. It was then that he met Rosalind Russell, an actress best known for her roles in *Auntie Mame* and *His Girl Friday*, who

was severely disabled by arthritis. She testified at the congressional hearings and became a stout supporter of arthritis research. In 1979, at age 68, Engleman was named director of the Rosalind Russell Center at UCSF, a position he has never relinquished. "I told my colleagues that if they ever detect that I'm losing it up here"—he taps his head with a finger—"they should get someone else. So far, so good."

He still plays the violin, hosting weekly chamber music sessions at his home. He has owned several Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesu instruments, some of which were exhibited in shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and in Cremona, Italy, Stradivari's birthplace.

At 101 years and counting, Engleman is a walking history channel. He serves up a short list of inventions younger than he: "Radio. Television. Comput-

ers." Not to mention bubble gum, zippers, Cheerios, the New York Yankees. And the Internet, about which he concedes, "I am presently bewildered."

Though it's a distinction he'd rather not dwell on, Engleman is stoic about his status as the last member of his Stanford class. "I guess I'm it, then," is his response when asked what it means to him. He goes somber momentarily, considering all of his contemporaries—classmates, colleagues, friends—who are gone. "Jean and I talk about it. And we realize we're next. That's the way it is."

He confesses that without Jean, living on without so many whom he's lost would be much harder. "If she goes, I'll be ready to go," he says softly.

Meanwhile, there are plans to be made, patients to see, violins to caress. He still drives wherever he wishes. The DMV renewed his license when he turned 100.

Engleman grins. "It expires in 2015." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: STANFORD 1933 YEARBOOK; TONI GAUTHIER; COURTESY FDR PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM; STANFORD 1933 YEARBOOK



DECEMBER 5
 Legendary Stanford football coach Glenn "Pop" Warner resigns after nine seasons in which he compiled a record of 71-17-8.

MARCH 2
King Kong, starring Fay Wray, opens in New York City.



MARCH 4
 Franklin Delano Roosevelt inaugurated as 32nd president.

MAY 11
 Stanford Board of Trustees removes enrollment cap of 500 for women.