

# Former NU athletic director, Big 6 co-founder dies at 100

By Ieva Augstums  
Senior staff writer

For Col. Herbert D. Gish, a former University of Nebraska athletic director, life wouldn't have been complete without seeing his 100th birthday and Cornhusker football.

"With Dad you never knew what was going to happen next," said Mary Jo Anderson, Gish's daughter. "He loved to keep all of us on our toes."

Gish, who helped form the Big 6 college football conference, died of natural causes Dec. 28, 1998. He was 100 years old.

As NU athletic director from 1925 to 1932, Gish worked with athletic directors from the Universities of Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa State, Kansas and Kansas State to form the Big 6 college football conference. The Big 6 later became the Big 8 and is now the Big 12.

"I will remember Herb for who he was — a gentleman," said Don Bryant, NU sports information director emeritus. "He was a team leader and a personable man — an all-around nice guy."

Along with his administrative

duties, Gish worked as a starter and an official at many NU track events. In 1931, Gish traveled to South Africa as the coach and manager of the U.S. nine-man track and field team.

Gish was born in rural Abilene, Kan., and moved to Lincoln in 1916 with his family.

He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1922. While at the university, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and ran varsity track from 1920 to 1922, where he set a record in the high hurdles.

Gish entered the insurance business in 1932 and was the co-owner of the Day-Gish Insurance Agency of Lincoln. A year later he joined the Army Reserve. In 1940 he joined the Nebraska National Guard and was called to active duty to serve in California, Hawaii and New Guinea. When his tour of duty

ended in 1947, Gish became the director of insurance for the Veterans Administration at Fort Snelling, Minn.

With 29 years of service, Gish retired from the military in 1956 and from the VA in 1968.

Bill Etmund, a Sigma Alpha Epsilon alumnus, said he often spent summers with Gish at their family cabin. The Etmund family and the Gish family both have cabins north of Brainerd, Minn.

"The man was very jovial in his ways. He always loved to tell stories," Etmund said.

Anderson said her father had two ambitions in life. The first was to live until he was 100 years old; the second — to live until he was 102 years old.

"It's not like he didn't have other goals in life, he just wanted to live in three centuries," Anderson said. "But we all know Dad was happy with just two out of the three."

Gish is survived by his son, Herbert G. Gish, of St. Paul, Minn., and daughters Anderson, of Omaha, and Phyllis I. Gerlach, of Sugarland, Texas; 11 grandchildren; and 23 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Irene.



Gish (photo courtesy of UNL Archives)

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Application forms are available at the Student Organization Financial Services office, Room 222, Nebraska Union; and the ASUN office, 115 Nebraska Union. Applicants should return the form in person to 222 Nebraska Union or 300 Nebraska East Union. Students must bring their UNL student ID cards when returning the application. Students who are unable to return their application in person to the Student Organization Financial Services office should contact Dan Paez, 222 Nebraska Union, 472-2154, on or before February 5, 1999, to make arrangements.

Students who complete a refund application and return it on or before February 5, 1999, will be mailed a check for the amount of the refund claimed. Refund checks will be mailed between the dates of February 8 - 12, 1999.

Fund "A" refund amounts:	
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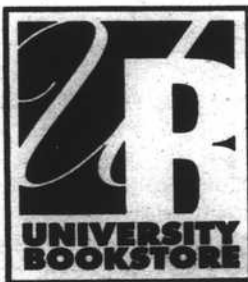
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7pm - Culture Center - Upper Multi-Purpose Room
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7pm - Abel Hall Ballroom
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