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Student makes history in history class

By **Dawn Pauli**, staff writer

Ninety-four-year-old Edward Pintzuk is enrolled in a history class this fall, making him the oldest student ever to attend classes at Oakland University. While fellow classmates are taking classes to earn enough credits to graduate, Pintzuk is in class for one reason: to expand his knowledge.

"I am interested in the history of the radical areas, and I wanted to learn more about the areas I am weak in," he said of his class, the U.S. Early National Period 1787-1815. "It's adding depth to what I already know."

Pintzuk, a political activist since the depression, participated in union organization and the civil rights movement. "When you're involved in learning history and making history, history becomes part of your life," he said. Pintzuk is the author of "Reds, Racial Justice, and Civil Liberties: Michigan Communists during the Cold War."



Edward Pintzuk

"I also wanted to see if I could hack it," he added. "I'm enjoying the class and I'm learning what I was looking for."

A lifelong learner, Pintzuk earned a doctorate in podiatric medicine in 1950, and practiced medicine in the Detroit area for 30 years before retiring. He became the oldest person to earn a doctorate from Wayne State University (WSU) when he earned a Ph.D. in history in 1993 at the age of 79. Pintzuk taught as an adjunct instructor for a special program in WSU's Labor Studies Center, until funding ended four years ago.

Pintzuk was born in Philadelphia and moved to Michigan in 1950. He currently lives in a retirement community in West Bloomfield. His wife of 68 years, Reba, was "one of the best sculptors in the region," said Pintzuk. After her death in April, he started playing his clarinet again and recently began taking refresher lessons.

Reflecting on his 60-year span as a student, he notes two distinct differences. "College costs a lot more than it used to," he said. "And when I was in college at Temple University in Philadelphia, I don't remember a woman ever being in Mitten Hall, the student lounge."

SUMMARY

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