AAIP executive director releases book on the music of World War II

By Lori Winkler Kesselman

When Dr. Sheldon Winkler retired from Temple University in January 2006 as professor emeritus, where he previously served as chairperson of the department of prosthodontics and dean of research, advanced education, and continuing education, he started a second career as an author and speaker on the music of the Second World War. Winkler attended public school during America’s participation in World War II. During music classes, students at that time were required to learn the lyrics to war-related songs. If the memorization of lyrics was not required, the continual playing of war songs on the radio, on records, in the movies and on loud speakers in and outside of stores contributed to the remembrance process.

Winkler’s mother started teaching him piano when he was very young. He formed a band in high school that played at college dances, social functions and in Catskill Mountain hotels in New York State and Orange Mountain hotels in New Jersey until he completed college and dental school. Occasionally, Winkler appeared on the radio as a soloist. While his band sometimes played music from World War II, his bandmates strongly resisted efforts to include war songs in the band’s repertoire.

Winkler’s love of music stayed with him all of his life. He started collecting information on the music of World War II a number of years before his retirement and had several articles published in World War II History magazine. His ultimate goal was to prepare a free-standing book on the music of the war years. After his retirement from academics and research, with the encouragement of his family and former colleagues at Temple University Schools of Dentistry and Medicine, he achieved his goal.

“The Music of World War II: War Songs and Their Stories” was released in March 2013 by Merriam Press, a publisher of military history with an emphasis on World War II.

Some memorable and enduring popular music of the 20th century was written during the Second World War. With patriotism at an all-time high, the war effort became an integral part of the entertainment industry, creating an emotional wartime dream world of heroes, love, remembrance, reflection and introspection. “The Music of World War II” tells the stories behind the origins of many of these musical compositions, some of which have survived to become standards and are popular to this day.