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# Harper honors WWII veteran and student Bernie Bluestein

*Harper College News Bureau*

*July 18, 2022*



Harper College celebrated World War II veteran and longtime Harper student Bernie Bluestein on Saturday, July 16. Bluestein and his fellow veterans in the Ghost Army – which employed tactics such as inflatable tanks, sound effects, radio trickery and impersonation to deceive the enemy about the strength and location of American troops – were recently awarded the [Congressional Gold Medal](#) by both houses of the U.S. Congress and President Biden.

At the campus event, Bluestein, 98, was honored for this achievement, his service, and his 33 years as a student at Harper. Rick Beyer, president of the Ghost Army Legacy Project, hosted the event and provided background on the U.S. Army's 23rd Headquarters Special Troops' accomplishments. It is estimated that the efforts of 1,100 enlisted men saved the lives of between 15,000 and 30,000 U.S. troops. Their work wasn't declassified until 1996.

Others on hand to celebrate Bluestein included U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Yasmeen Bankole from the office of U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, and Bernie's son Keith Bluestein, who read a letter of commendation from U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth. Dr. Avis Proctor, Harper College president; Pat Stack, chair of the Harper Board of Trustees; and Professor Jason Peot spoke about Bluestein's three-plus decades as a Harper art student. Peot also announced that Harper's sculpture classroom will now be known as the Bernie Bluestein Sculpture Studio.

Bluestein, who will turn 99 next month, is set to return to Harper as a sculpture student in the fall. View photos from the event below.



Bernie Bluestein was presented with a letter of gratitude from President Joe Biden.



Rick Beyer, president of the Ghost Army Legacy Project, detailed the importance of the Congressional Gold Medal and the accomplishments of Bernie Bluestein and the Ghost Army.



Harper College President Avis Proctor spoke about Bernie Bluestein's 32 years as a Harper art student.



Pat Stack, chair of the Harper College Board of Trustees, presented Bernie Bluestein with an official resolution honoring his service as part of the Ghost Army.



Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) celebrated Bernie Bluestein's legacy of service during World War II.





Yasmeen Bankole from the office of Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) read a letter of commendation from the senator.



Bernie Bluestein's son Keith read a letter of commendation from Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).



Ghost Army Family Ambassador Madeline Christianson presented Bernie Bluestein with letters from those who sponsored the Ghost Army's Congressional Gold Medal..



Harper Professor Jason Peot presented Bernie Bluestein with the sign for the newly named Bernie Bluestein Sculpture Studio.



A reception ended the celebration, with Bernie Bluestein receiving visitors such as these boys who asked him to sign their Ghost Army book.

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### Harper College

1200 West Algonquin Road

Palatine, IL 60067

Phone: 847.925.6000

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