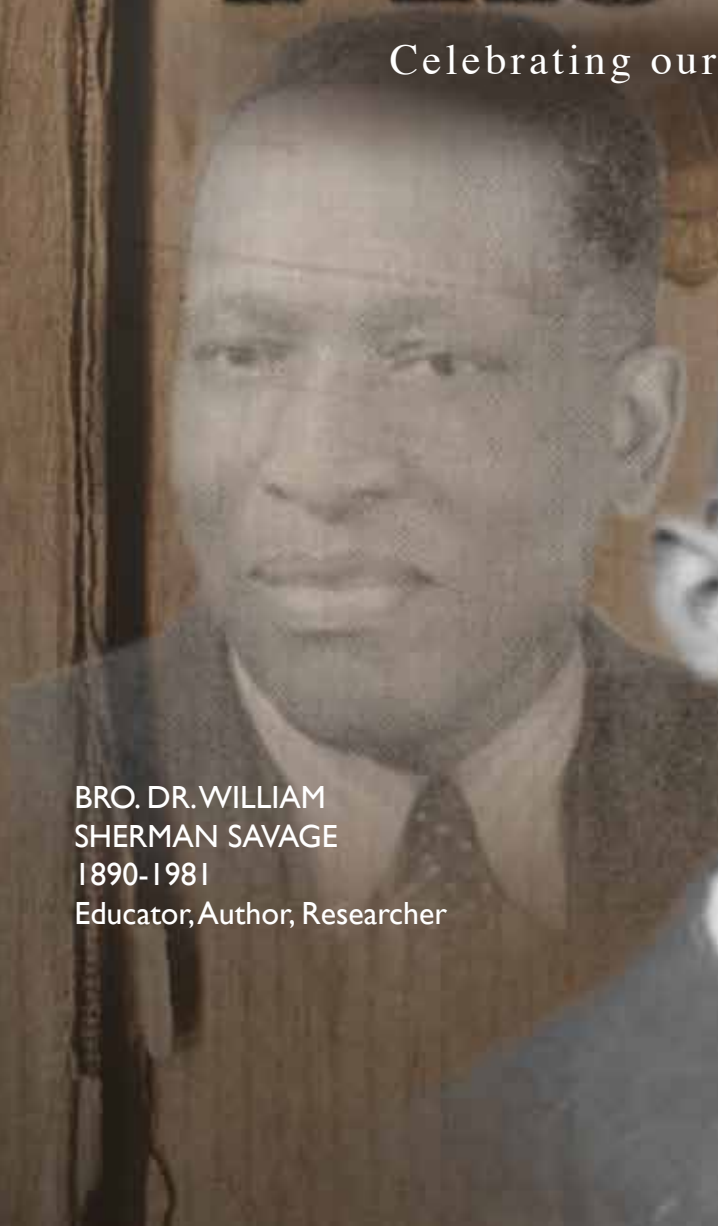


OUR CAUSE


THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE EASTERN REGION OF PHI BETA SIGMA FRATERNITY, INC. • VOL. 3 ISSUE 1

HISTORY

Celebrating our glorious, fraternal past

A black and white portrait of Bro. Dr. William Sherman Savage, an older African American man with a receding hairline, wearing a suit and tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

BRO. DR. WILLIAM
SHERMAN SAVAGE
1890-1981
Educator, Author, Researcher

A black and white portrait of Bro. Dr. Lawrence Dunbar Reddick, a younger African American man with short hair and glasses, wearing a suit and tie. He is looking directly at the camera.

BRO. DR. LAWRENCE
DUNBAR REDDICK
1910-1995
Educator, Historian, Author

SPRING 2012



BROTHERS OF THE EASTERN REGION,

Firstly, and most importantly, let me start off by thanking the brothers of the Region for allowing us to serve you. The past four years have been both rewarding and sometimes frustrating. However, with your support we continue to move forward in a positive direction.

When we began this journey, back in 2008, our goal was to improve both the frequency and quality of our regional publications. To address the issue of frequency, we decided to produce two different publications; the Our Cause Online Newsletter and OUR CAUSE Magazine. The issue of quality would be addressed by working with the Lewis Design Group (LDG), to both produce and publish the new magazine. LDG is owned by former Editor of The Crescent, Bro. Ron Lewis. I was familiar with Ron's work outside of Sigma, and had the privilege of working with him on our national organ. We knew we could count on a quality publication with Bro. Lewis on board, and he has not disappointed. We extend a special thanks to Ron for all his hard work and patience over the past four years.

Both publications have afforded us the opportunity to showcase the impact you are making within your respective communities, the business world and on campuses around the country and abroad. We encourage you to use these publications as a tool when speaking to others about Sigma, or lobbying for funding in an effort to continue your work in the community.

As we look back over our body of work we are pleased with our progress, but realize there is always room for improvement. We encourage you to assist the next Publicity Director, and his team, as they work to take our regional publications to the next level.

The list of those we wish to thank is far too extensive to include on this page. However, we would like to publicly acknowledge the following for their support, contributions, guidance and inspiration: Eastern Regional Board (2008--2012), Kansas State University Libraries, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and most of all you.

I would like to personally thank Brother Isaiah E. Barnwell, III (ΩΨΦ), Sister Nyema Pinkney (AKA) and the Hon. Brother Lonnie C. Spruill, Jr. (Founder / IΦΘ) for their contributions to our publication. It has been both an honor and pleasure to include your organizations within our pages. Thank you for sharing our vision to express unity and showcase your hard work and commitment to the community. A special thanks to our Editor, Bro. Gerald Smith, for coming on this journey with me. Thank you Bro. Gerald for your time, guidance and continued love for Sigma. Lastly, I could not have done this without the support and guidance of the History Team: Bros. Mark Pacich, Kevin Christian, Linden Houston, Craig Arthur, Phil Eugenio, Victor Cox, Garry Gordon and Willard Hutt. You guys were always there when I called on you, for this I am forever grateful. I look forward to continuing our journey into Sigma's past, and our efforts to share that history with the membership and the world.

In closing, we hope you have enjoyed the publications we have produced in your name. It was our intent to produce publications which you can be proud to call your own, and would also represent you in a positive light. March On, March On . . .

PEACE,
Todd D. Le Bon
Director of Publicity

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GREETINGS,

Brothers of the Eastern Region, I extend greetings on behalf of the Eastern Regional Board. We wish to extend thanks for your continued support of this Board and the exceptional service you continue to provide to your communities.

These are exciting times for the Eastern Region and the Fraternity. In April, Sigma men from across the Region will gather in Hartford, CT for the 98th Anniversary Eastern Regional Conference. At this conference, we will have an opportunity to elect those who will assist the Region in charting our course into the next century of Sigma.

As we work to take the Region to higher heights I share a quote from Bro. Dr. George Washington Carver, “Most people search high and wide for the keys to success. If they only knew, the key to their dreams lies within.” We possess the talent and vision to move this Region forward, it is only for us to pool those talents and ideas together to reach our common goals.

Brothers, with great pride, I present the fourth edition of our regional organ. We wish to thank the Eastern Region Publicity Committee for their hard work over the past four years. In these pages we honor **OUR HISTORY** by focusing on the legacy of our beloved founder Dr. Leonard F. Morse, through contributions by his son Decatur W. Morse, Sr. and grandson Ward Morse. Bro. Phil Eugenio discusses the birth and growth of BluePhi.net, a leading source of historical material of and about Sigma. We are introduced to our recently appointed Regional Historian, Bro. Craig Arthur. Soror Tilu Khalayi gives us a sneak peak into her soon to be released book “Finer Women”, which focuses on the early years of Zeta Phi Beta. And we are privileged to include a reflection of the first fifty years of Iota, by the Hon. Lonnie C. Spruill, Jr. (Founder/Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.).

In closing, as we continue to grow Sigma and work to better serve our communities, let us not forget those who laid down the foundation. As we move forward we must always strive to be the example future men of Sigma can look back on with pride, as they work to further the vision of Taylor, Morse and Brown.

Fraternally,

Hon. Bro. Leonard O. Lockhart

25th Eastern Regional Director



Over the past many months, I have proudly served as the Editor of your regional magazine, “Our Cause”. When Brother Le Bon asked me to serve, I immediately agreed for three strong reasons. Reason number one was because the position would give me yet another opportunity to uphold the oath I took to

Brotherhood, Scholarship and Service. Reason number two was to assist Todd, who like me, has taken on countless jobs that hold neither prestige nor a budget. Reason number three was to provide you, the members; and particularly the younger members with a sense of the history upon which we stand.

With this final issue of Our Cause, I challenge you to absorb and reabsorb the information that we have provided. And I challenge the next crew to step up and continue the high standards that we tried to maintain.

It’s been fun; but now we have to run. God bless to all of you and may God continue to richly bless Phi Beta Sigma and the region that started a fraternity.

Bro. Gerald Smith

Editor

Our Cause Magazine

BETA BETA LAMBDA CHAPTER



NASSAU, BAHAMAS - Beta Beta Lambda Chapter began to function independently (though always supported and advised by the graduate chapter) from Delta Epsilon Sigma Chapter in the fall of 2005. Our first elected officers were: Bros. Derek W. Smith II (President), Emille M. Hunt (Vice-President), D'Angelo Reid (Treasurer) and Gerardo Williams (Secretary). Even from the Chapter's initial inception, we had distinguished ourselves as a chapter of firsts. We are the first undergraduate chapter of any historically Black Greek Letter Organization to be chartered outside of the continent of America, and the first and ONLY Fraternity recognized at the College of the Bahamas. The Beta Beta Lambda Chapter consists of men of intelligence,

dedication and diligence who are devoted to furthering the cause of Sigma through Brotherhood, Scholarship and Service. The Delta Epsilon Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., was founded in Nassau, Bahamas on May 19, 1978. This chapter was chartered because Bahamian brothers felt they needed a local outlet (Graduate Chapter) for brothers who had recently graduated from college in the U.S.A. The five Charter Members were: Bros. Rev. Enoch Backford (renown Baptist Minister in The Bahamas), Kevin Hanna, (bank executive at The Bank of The Bahamas), William Dean (tourism official in The Bahamas Ministry of

Tourism), Danny Strachan and Freddie Munnings, Jr. The ongoing quest of SigmaBahamas is to serve The Bahamas as a leader in the local Greek world. This is being accomplished by providing and endorsing meaningful social activities, making available opportunities for scholarly endeavors, and most importantly, attracting and maintaining a collection of young business-minded men who possess high morals and socioeconomic standards. Without these dedicated men the organization would cease to exist and its ideals would perish.

Bro. D'Angelo Reid

IMAGE INFO:

Gerrard Sawyer (Bahamas State Director), Kareem Wallace, Ramon Pearson, Joseph Walker, Ray Smith (Southern Regional Director), Ashley Taylor, Antonio Johnson, Rachard Turnquest, and Christopher Thompson



2011 Bahamas State Conference, Nassau, Bahamas, Chartering of Omicron Pi Sigma

Island Expansion

OMICRON PI SIGMA CHAPTER

BRO. ADRIAN CAREY

Omicron Pi Sigma Chapter was chartered on November 19, 2011. Finally, after more than ten years, a dream was crystallized on the shores of Grand Bahama, Bahamas. The idea to form a chapter began in 1975 when Bro. Averell Mortimer returned home from college and met Bros. Haywood Romer and Martin Munroe. Bro. Mortimer recalls, "About ten years ago, give or take a couple of years, a police inspector showed up at my classroom door and demanded that I accompany him. I thought I was under arrest. Upon greeting me I realized he was a Sigma. Everyone knew Bro. Paul "Dingas" Thompson, Assistant Superintendent with The Royal Bahamas Police Force. The good brother indicated that there were more Sigmas on the island and he thought we had enough to start a chapter here. He sought the help of the Delta Epsilon Sigma Chapter in Nassau Bahamas. Bro. Dingas went about identifying all the brothers on the island and started the necessary paperwork to form a chapter. It was a slow process as many of the brothers had settled into their families and careers. Dingas pressed

on even though we could not get a formal meeting together. Several years ago, Dingas indicated that the brothers in Nassau would give us financial assistance and we only had to pay current dues. Unfortunately, on July 13, 2007, before the process could be completed, Bro. Dingas was called home to the Omega Chapter. Whatever paperwork he completed was never retrieved.

Dingas' efforts and desire to aggregate a group of brothers, some of whom were unknown to each other, will forever be ingrained in the spirit of the chapter. Though Dingas has

passed on, his message pressed on. Some asked why start a chapter? The island only has 60,000 residents, is it worth it? The answer is simple. The ideals of our wonderful fraternity must be ubiquitously known throughout the world. With the island's unemployment rate at a staggering 21%, men dedicated to the causes of Brotherhood, Scholarship & Service are needed more than ever. As more and more families feel the pinch, our free financial and health centered workshops will assist the community as they navigate through these tough times. Organizing a Sigma Beta Club, reading programs, mentoring at-risk high school males and sponsoring debates to foster critical thinking, are all programs which promote our national initiatives of Bigger and Better Business, Social Action and Education.

Recently, in less than three hours, members of the Chapter raised several thousand dollars to defray medical expenses for a 12 year old girl with a tumor in her mouth. Her mother is unemployed and does not have medical insurance. These acts of service to humanity, envisioned by our three illustrious Founders, are why we exist today. Omicron Pi Sigma Chapter will actively press on in the future. Our Cause speeds on its way!



Kansas State University

A CONTINUED PILGRIMAGE FROM THE EASTERN REGION

By Bro. Kevin Christian



Bro. Louis E. Fry, Sr.

MANHATTAN, KS - The campus of Kansas State University has a long and storied history in shaping the legacy of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., which on April 9, 1917, chartered the Delta Chapter. This chapter will soon celebrate its 95th year. What is most

significant is the chapter was the first Sigma chapter established west of the Mississippi at a predominately white institution.

The brothers who pledged Delta Chapter in the early 1920's went on to pave the way of history throughout their lives. Sigma Brothers like Wirt Walton, Glenn Fry, John Wilson, Sheridan Settler and countless others went on to become college presidents, university professors, doctors, veterinarians, lawyers, and Bro. Frank Marshall Davis mentored a young Barack Obama while the President was a teenager growing up in Hawaii. Their backgrounds, legacies

and footsteps should be told in a major motion picture. If young Black men could see what these men did just to get an education, their history would truly make a difference.



Soror Dr. Gladys Marie Fry and Bro. Kevin Christian enjoy a moment with the brothers of Delta Chapter at KSU (July 2011).

Last summer, at the request of Dr. Gladys Marie Fry, I returned to Kansas State University to accompany her (Alpha Chapter-1952-Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.) to learn more about the history of her parents, Bro. Louis E. Fry, Sr. (Delta Chapter 1922) and Soror Obelia Swearwigen Fry and to finally visit the place where her parents met and where her father established the

fraternal bond with some of his closest friends. This journey proved to be just as eventful as my other visits to the campus. Dr. Fry called her trip to Kansas State a “spiritual journey”. It was her first visit and one that she says she will treasure for many years to come.

Dr. Fry is a world renowned scholar on African Quilts and Folklore and was the first African-American to graduate from Indiana University with a Ph.D. in Social History with an emphasis in Folklore. A prestigious Guggenheim Fellow and Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland College Park, Dr. Fry is well versed in history and the significance of why it’s important to preserve history related to African-American culture.

Her father graduated from Kansas State University in 1927 and went on to be the first Black registered architect in Texas and the first to attend Harvard University’s School of Design. Louis Fry, Sr. went on to become an internationally renowned architect who has designed buildings all over the world and at a number of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In 1954, Bro. Fry founded Fry and Welch, which is currently the oldest continuously operating African-American architectural firm on the East Coast, located in Washington, DC.

One of the distinct highlights of the visit was Dr. Fry’s collective insight on the teachings of her parents and her own lessons in life. Dr. Fry states “I think the missing link is aspiration and inspiration for young

Black students”. Dr. Fry proposed to Kansas State to make a documentary about K-State’s Black graduates from the 19th century, with all proceeds going to the University for scholarships. She said, “it is important for Black students to see what can be done if they don’t give up”.

Members of the Kansas State University staff and student body welcomed Dr. Fry and I with warm greetings, and campus/community meetings and tours. “Being hosted by our Delta Chapter Fraternity Brothers and Zeta Sisters was truly an experience I will never forget”, said Dr. Fry.

Upon leaving the campus, Dr. Fry stated, “Mom and Dad talked fondly of Kansas State University and now that I have walked in their footsteps, I know why this place was so important in their lives.” Gladys Marie Fry currently lives and resides in Washington, DC.

As you can see the history and legacy of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity continues in the direct descendants of all of our brothers. – Bro. K. Christian (Alpha Sigma Chapter)

*To learn more about Soror Dr. Gladys Marie Fry and her father Bro. Louis E. Fry, Sr. you can read his self-published autobiography Louis Edwin Fry, Sr.: His Life and His Architecture and her most recent book *Stitched from the Soul – Slave Quilts from the Antebellum South*.*



BRO. Phil Eugenio

The Founder of bluephi.net opens up about his passion and commitment to preserving Sigma history.

WORLD WIDE WEB In the summer of 2002, I started a new experience at Yahoo! managing software development for their small business product line. We were encouraged to purchase each of the products to gain first hand experience of how customers use our offerings.

Each came with its own domain; so after exhausting options like my name, my kids' names, etc., I registered bluephi.net for a web hosting account.

I did very little with the site for the first few years. It was primarily used for work purposes and not intended to be a real presence at all. In fact, the Wayback Machine did not even crawl the site until 2003 and even then it was only because a default "under construction" graphic occupied the home page. As social networks gained in popularity, I started poking my head around

and re-posting event information, step show flyers, and various tidbits which came across my Inbox.

Things finally started to come together in the fall of 2005. I began to participate more and more in various Sigma pockets across the web, finding a wealth of information to cross post. I converted the site to a blog and became diligent about posting recent, relevant, and compelling information about Sigma. I focused less on the parties and step shows, and more on the Brotherhood, Scholarship and Service. It was also around this time

that I was put in contact with our National Historian, Bro. Mark “Mallet” Pacich; but more on that later.

It did not take long for content to start flowing my way. Over the years, I have been more open with posting information than most Brothers would like. In February 2006, I started receiving the “Today in Sigma History” emails from Bro. Kevin Christian. As we emailed back and forth about syndicating his emails, he suggested we use the website to stress a positive picture of Sigma and not air our dirty laundry. From there, things just took off.

Not unlike many brothers at the time, I was not aware of the extent by which Kevin and Mallet had developed the SIGMA Museum. But, armed with an array of content, I embarked on a daily publication of Sigma History. Bluephi.net became the online presence of the SIGMA Museum.

It did not take long for traffic to exceed that of the international website. So, I used Bluephi.net traffic to cross-promote services the international website failed to offer. By using free services from popular websites, I was able to quickly prototype Sigma-specific offerings and see if they would survive. Sure some things failed miserably, but successes like the LinkedIn group, connecting 2000+ Sigma professionals, made it all worth while.

It is hard to believe it has been almost 6 years since we have been publicizing Sigma History. With over 1000 posts and almost 3000 photos, the digital version of the SIGMA Museum no longer fits on a DVD. Over 20 Brothers have directly contributed articles, but I rely on the core team of Mark Pacich,

Kevin Christian, Craig Arthur, Linden Houston, Victor Cox, Garry Gordon and Todd Le Bon to share the rarest of Sigma History. And it is just the tip of the iceberg.

When I attended the 2009 Celebration of History II Conference in Orlando, FL; I viewed the SIGMA Museum in person for the first time. Finally being able to handle items I have only seen in pictures was eye-opening. In helping setup and take down the Museum, I can see there is so much more to share. This was also an opportunity to meet brothers who frequent the site, not to mention much of the aforementioned core team members themselves. But it was when someone asked Mallet to

introduce us all to the audience, and the resounding applause, that I felt my daily labor of love was worth the effort. Having Brothers approach me and tell me they visit regularly and enjoy the content, getting emails from Kevin saying he recently met

someone saying; “Hey I know you from Bluephi.net!” and so on lets me know we are on the right track. It was a humbling experience to finally have a personal interaction with many of you and it has inspired me to keep it going.

So, what is next for Bluephi.net? To be honest, it all depends on where digital communication and online social networking goes. Since the inception of the site, we have seen personal websites fall by the wayside, the emergence of Facebook and Twitter and huge shifts in the way people connect and communicate online. I will continue to keep the blog going until the next big thing comes along and adapt Bluephi.net accordingly.





Bro. Decatur Morse **REMEMBERING DADDY**

INTERVIEW BY TODD D. LE BON

When we decided on the theme of HISTORY for this issue, one of our challenges was to select a brother for the issue's feature interview. There are a number of brothers we could have chosen to place within these pages. We could have selected our oldest living member, a senior member of the Distinguished Service Chapter (DSC), our oldest living past President, a Civil Rights icon, a brother who was a "pioneer" in his chosen profession or a number of other worthy candidates.

But after speaking with members of the History Team we decided to approach Bro. Decatur Ward Morse, Sr., about conducting an interview for this issue. What better way to focus on the history of Sigma, than to speak with Bro. Morse, one of our closest links to our beloved Founders? Through the efforts of Bro. Kevin Christian we were able to secure an interview with Bro. Morse.

Colonel (US Army Retired) Decatur Ward Morse, Sr. is the youngest son of Dr. Leonard F. Morse, Sr., one the founding fathers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. He holds an Associate Degree from Edward Waters College, Jacksonville, Florida where he had two courses under Dr. Morse, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Architectural Engineering from North Carolina A & T State University, Greensboro, North Carolina, studied engineering subjects at New Mexico State University and did graduate studies at Florida Institute of Technology. He was commissioned through Officer Candidate School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His other military schools include: The Army Aviation School, The Army Air Defense School, The Army Psychological Warfare School, The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, The Centro Defensa Electronica Course,

Anzio Italy and the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Rising to the rank of Colonel prior to his retirement from a distinguished military career, he had commanded Army Air Defense (HAWK surface-to-air missile) units through Battalion level. His assignments took him to several U.S. installations and to Korea (twice), Vietnam and Germany. He spent his last eight years of active service in the Pentagon – as a Staff Officer for the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, and later as Deputy Director, Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Office, Secretary of the Army. A highly decorated soldier, his awards include: The Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, Combat Infantryman Badge, Army General Staff Identification Badge, Armed Forces Humanitarian Medal First Class, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, Overseas Service Bars (2) and the Legion of Merit.

In 1991, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the U. S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Decatur Ward Morse, Sr. “made Sigma” in 1956 through the Eta Chapter at North Carolina A & T (College) and served as Chapter President and Dean of Pledges.

He and his wife Esther have two children, Denise and Decatur, Jr., three grandsons, Keith Marshall, Jr., Marcus Marshall and Decatur Ward Morse, III and two granddaughters, Jasmine Marshall and Gabrielle Morse.



Founder Leonard F. Morse pinning Leonard F. Morse Jr. with Bros. Edgar Felton and Francis Hall looking on (Washington, DC 1957).

OUR CAUSE had an opportunity to sit down with Bro. Morse and discuss his personal experiences as a Sigma and reflections of his father. ENJOY!

OUR CAUSE (OC): Please share some of your earliest memories of your Father’s involvement in Sigma?

Bro. Decatur Morse (DM): Phi Beta Sigma was implanted in my memory from the time I could comprehend stories and read and understand newspaper and fraternity publications. I would guess I was around six or seven years old. Daddy’s Sigma activities were evidenced by local newspaper articles, photos, programs or publications like the Crescent. His

involvement in fraternity and community events was something we sort of took for granted. I remember living in four different neighborhoods in Jacksonville, Florida.

OC: Around what age did you finally have a full understanding of the role he played in Phi Beta Sigma?

DM: This is a difficult question for me personally. In March of this year of 2012 I will celebrate my seventy seventh birthday and honestly, I don’t believe that I can say that I fully understand his role in the past tense. Even though I’ve out lived him by seven years I am still trying to appreciate his parenting let alone all of the challenges and pledges in our great fraternity that he may have been instrumental in helping to formulate as a member of the triumvirate. As far as I am concerned, his impact as a contributor towards further growth of Phi Beta Sigma should be as great as ever, the same as the immortal A. Langston Taylor and Charles I. Brown.

OC: Did you ever have an opportunity to meet Founder Taylor?

DM: Unfortunately no. Leonard Jr., my oldest brother, did.

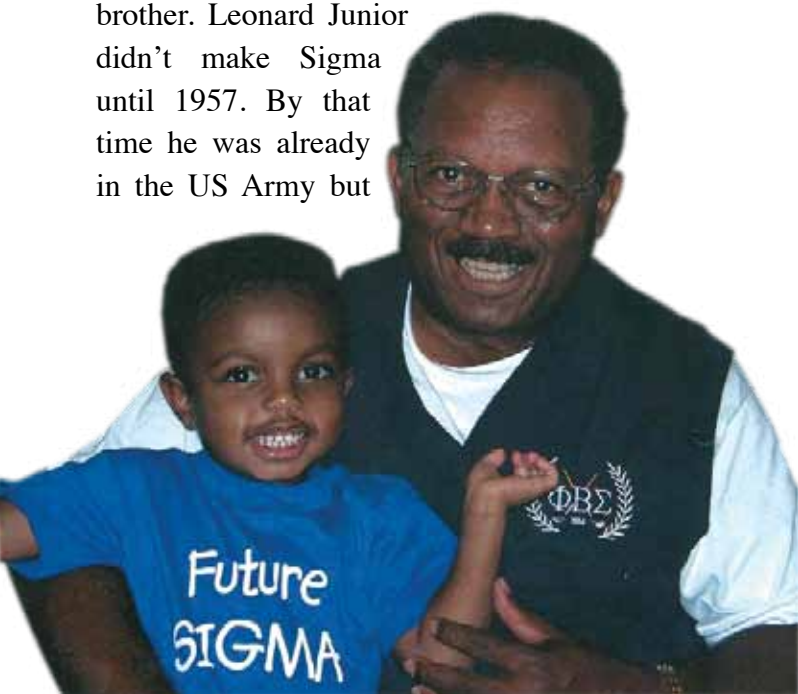
OC: Did your Father ever talk about Founder Brown?

DM: No, there was no verbal discussion between us about Co-Founder Brown. However, Daddy did all of his typing (I have his typewriter) at the dining room table during the time we lived at 1121 Price Street in Jacksonville and I vaguely remember that he wrote a piece in the early to mid-fifties called “As I Remember Them” which I know was reprinted since. My latest knowledge is a reprint in 1977. In that writing he gave what at the time was all that Sigma knew of the whereabouts of Bro. Brown. Back in the early 1980’s I was invited to speak at a Founders Day Observance in Raleigh, NC where two strange things happened. First, one of the brothers who was introduced to me was named Charles Brown. You can guess what my question was. Second, there was one of my Line Brothers in the

audience who didn't know I was going to be the Guest Speaker, and I had no knowledge that he was going to be there. In recent years I have heard that some of our researchers came up with some promising leads about what might have happened to Bro. Brown.

OC: Who became a member first, you or your brother Leonard. And, what motivated you in your decision to become a member of Phi Beta Sigma?

DM: Leonard Jr. (we use to call him Junior) who is eight years older than I am was always my role model. He enlisted in the US Army, fought and was wounded in the Korean War, later attended Officer Candidate School (OCS), Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was commissioned and retired in the grade of Lieutenant colonel. In my case, I finished two years at Edward Waters College - with two courses under "Dean Morse" (Daddy), with an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts; attended four years as an engineering student at North Carolina A&T College (now State University), dropped out of ROTC based on advice from my advisor, got drafted into the Army, applied for the same (OCS), was accepted, graduated and was commissioned in the US Army. I "made Sigma" in 1956 through Eta Chapter and went on to serve as President and Dean of Pledges. As it turned out I became a Sigma before my brother. Leonard Junior didn't make Sigma until 1957. By that time he was already in the US Army but



apparently had pledged Sigma much earlier when he was in his second year as an Electrical Engineering student at Howard University. For a neat piece of history I refer you to the 1958 Spring Issue (Volume XLII, Number 1) of the Crescent which features an article plus photos of Daddy pinning "Junior".

OC: Can you recall your Father's reaction when you told him you wanted to become a member of the Fraternity?

DM: Daddy and I never talked about what my intentions were with regards to joining any fraternity. Honestly, he never tried to influence my decision to join Sigma. I never talked to him before I committed to doing it. I never talked to anyone about my heritage until much later after I had made my decision. The Alphas, Omegas and Kappas were strong recruiters. After I told Daddy it was a different ball game. He was not the type to show outward emotions about anything, but he was most generous and supportive and sent me news articles, photos, etc. for my scrapbook. I still have them. Becoming a Sigma man was one of the greatest achievements of my life. There were two things that were mandatory going in – you had to order your Pin and a Sweater! We had a designated "Sweater day" when all brothers would wear sweaters with a shirt and tie – that was being "collegiate". Whenever possible, as many of us as we could muster would gather at the Sigma Plot and hang out or profile as we called it. We'd dress out for other occasions such as ball games, lyceum programs and events where other fraternities and sororities would gather. Sweaters could be and were worn at a member's discretion. In 1957 we invited Daddy to speak at our Founders Day Event at A&T. Phi Beta Sigma made the front page of The Register, A&T's newspaper, as a group of us, sweaters and all met Co-Founder L. F. Morse at the local train station. I got real sick in 1959, my senior year, and was hospitalized. That summer I was drafted into the US Army. I was in New York at the time and was inducted at Fort Dix, NJ. In two years, just five short years after

Decatur Ward Morse Sr. and his grandson Decatur Ward Morse III

I made Sigma the last of the three Co-Founders of Phi Beta Sigma, Inc. were no longer among us.

OC: Through your conversations with your Father about the early years, did the Founders have any idea Sigma would grow as it did over the first forty plus years?

DM: I can only speculate. The Founders and early leaders of Phi Beta Sigma made tremendous sacrifices and gave great devotion to keeping us viable through a lot of ups and downs. For sure, they did what they could to grow the “Wondrous Band”. History tells us that Daddy was responsible for a number of chapters being formed throughout the state of Florida. Amongst the photos, articles and other memorabilia that I have is evidence that some of those great Sigma names that I learned way before I became a Sigma did similar service in perpetuating not only the name but the deeds of the Fraternity.

Daddy served the Fraternity up to his last breath, I am sure. I have his copy of the Crescent from his last Conclave. That big house at 1121 Price Street was white trimmed in blue, Sigma colors.

OC: Share with us your memories of your Father’s time as a college administrator and in the church.

DM: Edward Waters College (EWC) was essentially two different institutions; a Theological Seminary and a College. Daddy taught at both of them and may hold some sort of distinction as the longest tenured faculty member. If you were a good student in either entity you were in his good graces. Many of his real good students were sort of adopted into the Morse family. He was instrumental in getting scholarships beyond Edwards Waters College for many, many students. If you were not a good student he would give you the pleasure of repeating a course. I had no idea that I would be going to EWC – I had thought that I would attend Howard, obviously. When I hit EWC ‘s campus some of those not good students, mostly athletes, were waiting for me. After they found out that I was a “regular guy”

everything was OK. Daddy did not have a church in his late years. While at EWC he was an Assistant Pastor at St. Paul’s AME Church (Jacksonville, FL) where we had his funeral. At the time of his death he was writing two books, one of which was a History of the AME Church.

OC: Founder Morse was an educator and clergyman, as well as being involved in Sigma and several other organizations. His responsibilities outside of the home must have taken him away quite a bit. Brothers often do not think about the sacrifices our families make so we can be active members. Please share some thoughts and memories about your Mother and the influence she had on you and your siblings as you were growing up.

DM: Mother was a Sigma Shadow and a Zeta Amicae, choir director, dramatic actress and a writer. She was one of the founders and first president of the Sigma Shadows, Jacksonville Chapter. I use to help her with costumes and props during recitals after I became old enough to do so. Mother worked very closely with Daddy whenever the “call” was made for him to pastor. Daddy was one of Mother’s instructors in high school in Mobile, AL where she graduated with the highest scholastic average in her class. She received a scholarship to Knoxville College in Tennessee. Mother served the AME Church in several different capacities at the local, district and Episcopal levels. Both parents were musicians. Daddy played violin, piano, organ and harp. Mother played piano and organ, and taught piano to students from our neighborhood. There were five of us Morse siblings two girls and three boys. Mary Helen Robinson, MD (deceased), who was named after Daddy’s sister, was the oldest and I am the youngest. There were eleven years between the two of us and Daddy was 44 years old when I was born. Frederick, who was named after Granddaddy Morse, and I were the only siblings at home from the time I was in junior

high school until I left to go into the Army.

OC: How did you feel when your son told you he wanted to become a member of the Fraternity?

DM: I don't remember recruiting "Ward" (he is named after me and we've always used our middle name when addressing him to avoid confusion) to become a Sigma Man. After I returned from my second tour in Korea in 1980, I reinstated my financial standing with the Fraternity and do remember taking Ward to a Father/Son function where I had been invited to talk about Daddy. I was more than proud when I got the news of Ward crossing. I vividly remember accepting an invitation to give an informal talk to Phi Beta Sigma Sigma Chapter in Atlanta which turned out to be almost an Eastern Region gathering. By that time I had also built a portable display case to house Daddy's jewelry and other family Sigma memorabilia. Whenever I could I would travel with the display to give brothers a chance to get a close up viewing of the items. If you've seen any photos of daddy more than likely you have seen the jewelry that I am speaking of.

OC: How has Sigma changed for you since the days when you first became a member?

DM: I am sure that every Sigma brother who came in thru an undergraduate chapter experienced an awakening of sorts when they joined a graduate chapter. My opinion is that in a lot of areas we still suffer the consequences of too little coordination between the two levels. When I was president of Eta Chapter there was only one joint function between us and Gamma Beta Sigma Chapter (Greensboro, NC) that stands out in my mind. Of course, when Daddy came to speak in 1957 the grad brothers were all over the place! I



Founder Morse circa 1916

don't remember them asking whether or not we needed help with anything. I have heard of and read of similar examples of this over the years. Once upon a time I would hear a lot of comments about the lack of important publications which caused undergraduate chapters to resort to reproduced or copied documents to conduct their business. I think that situation lead to too much autonomy and resulted in an organization that the immortals Taylor, Morse and Brown would hardly recognize. It appears that that is no longer the case. If so, that is a great change for the better! The changes I've seen over the years may very

well have been omissions when I was learning how to be a Sigma. There are more slogans, modifications to original designs and gestures that seem to be treated as if they were authorized.

OC: What would you like to see from Sigma as we move towards our Centennial Celebration in 2014?

DM: Growth and continued improvement in communication.

OC: In your opinion, what would be your Father's thoughts on Sigma today and its role in the community?

DM: Our family members and close friends and associates could always see Daddy's pride and approval burst through whenever Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. was in the news and living up to its motto in our communities. I am sure he is smiling down upon all of this Blue and White now with the same pride! He was never reluctant to call to your attention a mistake, and then teach you how to do something correctly. Now, he is expecting us to be intelligent enough to carry on in that same spirit whether under the auspices of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. or out of individual initiative. "BROTHERHOOD" is more than just a word.

Images courtesy of the Morse Family private collection

African American “Leathernecks” to receive Congressional Gold Medal



Bro. Floyd Alston

President Barack Obama. This legislation bestows the Congressional Medal of Honor to the Montford Pont Marines in a lavish series of ceremonies to take place August 25th – 27th, 2012 in Washington, D.C.

In the early 1940's, African-Americans wanted to join the Marines. To be in compliance with President Eisenhower's Executive Order 8802, signed in July 1941 preventing employment discrimination, the Marines created a small make-shift base for African-Americans to be known as Montford Point in 1942. Withstanding White officers and drill instructors, between 1942-1949, Montford Point would produce more than 20,000 leathernecks who would see combat in Spain, World War II, Korea and Vietnam to mention a few. During those battles they would receive many distinctions for their efforts. Brother Floyd Alston (Nu Sigma – Philadelphia) is one of probably many Sigmas to go through Montford.

“Floyd was extremely proud when he heard that they were receiving the Congressional Gold Medal,” shared Mrs. Marilyn Alston. The couple met when they were

Perhaps it began with President Bill Clinton acknowledging them on the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. On Wednesday, November 23, 2001; S. 1527 and H.R. 2447 (sponsored by Senator Kay Hagan [D-NC] and Congresswoman Democrat Corrine Brown [D-FL]) were signed into law by

both students at Fisk University. When the Tuskegee Airmen received theirs, there was a general belief it should not be long before the Montford Pointers were recognized. Unfortunately, Brother Alston's health has been failing recently and he was unavailable for comment about his recent honor. It is very possible, he will not make the festivities.

Brother Alston's legacy of championing for youth and the underserved in Philadelphia is iconic. He is a Past President of Nu Sigma and has held leadership positions with African-American Historical and Cultural Museum, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, Philadelphia Tribune, Sigma Pi Phi, and Frontiers International. He is a founding member of Tucker House and Jones Memorial Housing, both providing housing to the elderly and poverty-stricken. One of Brother Alston's major achievements was his role with Beech Interplex, Inc. Beech Interplex's mission was to revive North Central Philadelphia, which was ruined during the riots of 1960's. This was done by leveraging a twenty five million dollar grant from the William Penn Foundation into one hundred million dollars in community reinvestment funds. Bro. Alston also served as President of the Philadelphia Board of Education. His son, Craig, is also a member of Phi Beta Sigma.

B. BROWN



Phi Beta Sigma in 2012: History Makers



African Americans have a lot to gain and a lot to lose in 2012. The Republican debates have been froth with innuendo that, somehow, President Barack Obama represents the regression of American history and culture. That, somehow, he (and not factional obstructionism) is the reason America hasn't recovered beyond the false expectations set out by the pundits and the media, and the society hasn't progressed more than it has. Some are even prepared to blame the fall of America on his Presidency. If we're not alert and

careful, that's the way history will reflect it. Whose fault would that be? Those who closed their eyes to history. This debate is part of a larger construction.

The construction of the history of this time is what is at stake. For history is never written in real time. History is written in the aftermath of the battles. Yes, facts are what they are—but most often, context is lost. The conditions of the time, the back stories, the influences and support mechanisms, be they people, institutions, interventions or reprehensions—are often

or Sideline Players?

By ANTHONY ASADULLAH SAMAD

Photo from a Black Leadership Meeting held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in March, 2008. In the photo are former senator, now President Barack Obama, then California Assembly Speaker--now Congresswoman, Karen Bass and then San Francisco District Attorney--California State Attorney General, Kamala Harris.

lost to history. Relevant or not, the construct of history fits the chronicler's context and little else. What we know about history is what we're told, which is often far from what happened. The reason why America has written over 300 books about the Civil War is because context, or perspective, was left out of the construct. The context tells the story and expands or contracts the construct (subject of the story). To give you proper context of this analogy, let's discuss American history in the context of African Americans.

African Americans have been marginalized in American history. The only time in American history that this country fell apart, was over whether to keep African Americans enslaved. Really, enslavement wasn't really at issue. President Abraham Lincoln was prepared to accommodate slavery in the states and territories where it existed. He opposed the expansion of the slavery for fear that America would become "a slave nation" if the judicial opinion of the Dred Scott decision, ruling that the Missouri Compromise of 1821 was unconstitutional, was allowed to stand. Moral suasion only became a factor because of the presence and advocacy of Frederick Douglass. Early accounts of the reason for the sectional war was "states' rights" without attribution to slavery. Slavery, specifically—the expansion of slavery, was the reason for the Civil War. States' rights puts a different spin (context) on the justification for the war than trying to uphold an immoral institution. As time has gone by, the true context of the Civil War has come to light, however, the person or persons that caused it to come to light were written out of, or grossly marginalized in the construction of, American history.

For most of the 20th Century, school children, when taught about slavery, were taught about Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. They weren't taught about Frederick Douglass, the nation's leading advocate in the deconstruction of slavery, his intellect, his bold articulation of the moral and legal wrongs of slavery or his 50 years of advocacy in the public domain with bounty on his head for much of his pre-Civil War activism. Most didn't study the impact of Douglass until their college years (if they went to college). Frederick Douglass was, by and large, written out of the American books. Though Douglass was the change agent that changed America forever, you had to take black history in college to learn about the depth of Frederick Douglass' contribution to 19th Century social reconstruction.

The same occurred with respect to the life and legacy of W.E.B. DuBois, which has, by and large, been kept alive by Pan African scholars and sociologists. DuBois was one of the most brilliant social thinkers, black or white, of the 20th Century. The first black to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University, DuBois literally invented empirical sociological study on race, challenged America's race caste system, challenged Booker T. Washington philosophy of race subjugation and accommodation as a solution to achieving racial equality, promoted black intellectualism through the formation of the "Talented Tenth" theory, led protests against black male lynchings and called for Congress to pass Anti-Lynching legislation (it never did), mobilized black men to take action (the Niagara Movement) which led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Yet, when school

children were taught about black intellectualism in the 20th Century, they were taught about our Sigma brother, George Washington Carver, and the 100 plus uses of the peanut—which was an admirable contribution to science. However, in the context of DuBois’ contribution to the advancement of race relations and social justice in American society, Carver’s contribution isn’t as impactful. Carver was elevated to history book status because he was a passive, non-controversial, non-threatening figure who contributed quietly to science without challenging socio-political injustice. American social constructionists did not want future generations studying about the radical old man who never received a permanent teaching offer from a predominantly white institution (PWI) of higher learning—despite his credentials—because he challenged theories of social Darwinism and racial accommodation of the race caste system. DuBois was written out of American history.

DuBois and Douglass could easily be considered the two greatest Americans of African descent in the history of America. African Americans to follow, including Ralph Bunche, Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Colin Powell, stand on their shoulders. This brings us to the legacy of President Barack Obama, the construction of his rise to the Presidency and the context by which history will be written.

Whether you like President Obama or not, for whatever your reason, by any measure of accomplishment, one would have to say—if you are fair in your analysis—that he has done a decent job in his first term as President of the United States. Not being President of black America, but in being President of all of America. President Obama has tried to bring fairness and equity back to the American people. While being more war hawkish than we would’ve imagined, he has been pragmatic in his politics and has been more common sense in his approaches to policy resolution than any President recently. He is not an ideologue and his moderate ideology has appealed to more than it has offended. His politics is not divisive, and while



not always satisfying everybody, he does what is the best interests of the country. President Obama’s biggest attribute is that he has stayed focused while presiding through the one of the most partisan and divisive periods in American history. There has been an added meanness and disrespectful tone to the policy discourse than any other President, not even Lincoln—not even Lyndon Johnson—not even Clinton, has had to endure. We know the reason why. The obstructionist, the TEA Party and the Republicans know too. The question really is, will history know? How the Obama legacy is reflected will depend on how the story ends and who tells the story.

One thing is for sure, if President Obama is a one term President, the hope he inspired, the change in the global perspective of the United States, the accomplishments that were actually achieved in his first term, including the first President to achieve universal health care reform in 100 years, will be grossly distorted and fodder for fairytales. While it would be difficult



to write Obama out of the history books—though not impossible—his legacy can be significantly marginalized. If he is a one term President, Obama will be written off as a fluke to history and a one-term failure—neither which is the truth. President Obama is a history maker. However, he did not make history by himself. The millions of people who voted for him, who advocated for him, who believed in his message, showed a different type of energy, a different type of tenacity and a different type of determination to play past the misinformation and disinformation to hold to their conviction in standing with him. His critics have proven to be factitious and petty. President

Obama has earned the right to a second term. But he won't get there by himself. He will need history makers in the polls, in the streets, in the fundraising events, for him to make history again. Now is not the time to stand on the sideline and watch. We cannot sit down and expect progress to continue. If the economy is fragile, the job and housing markets struggling to recover and education under assault, what chance do they stand if the nation goes back to the Bush era policies? Little or no chance at all.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., as an organization of professional and college man, symbolizes what Barack Obama represents to the nation; idealism, intellect and a bold desire to change the realities of their communities. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity can move communities when it desires to. Moving mountains of obstruction and opposition is exactly what President Obama needs from organized groups, to counter the influence of SuperPACs that seek to fund his defeat. Brotherhood, Scholarship and Service is what we see in

Barack Obama—though not a Sigma—is a reflection of everything Sigma stands for. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity needs to play a MAJOR role in determining the course of the nation's history at this time. Phi Beta Sigma has been an organization of “history makers” for nearly 100 years, but there have been few moments in time like this one, and fewer opportunities to stand out in moments of courage and conviction. Phi Beta Sigma cannot let this moment pass with putting its signature in the sands of time.

Not a single Sigma should be on the sidelines for the 2012 Presidential Election. Every single Sigma, regardless of party affiliation (or non-affiliation), should make a contribution to the Obama re-election campaign. No amount is too small, but it is time for Sigmas to play LARGE. Now is not the time for “small ball,” not when two of our fellow black Greek fraternities have pledged to raise ONE MILLION DOLLARS each. Where will Sigmas stand in that challenge? We can't do it as an organization, but we can do it as members. Hopefully, there will be a “Call to Action” soon; coming from the national leadership—but if there is none, DO IT ON YOUR OWN. STAND TALL. STAND ON THE SIDE OF HISTORY, not on the sideline of irrelevance and indifference.

These are the times of our forefathers and fraternity founders lived for. We should live for them too. We are them as they were us. Or are we? Now is the time to ask ourselves, Are we history makers, or sideline players?

History will tell where we stood, or if we stood...

Bro. Anthony Asadullah Samad, Ph.D., is a national columnist, college professor, managing director of the Urban Issues Forum (www.urbanissuesforum.com), author of, REAL EYEZ: Race, Reality and Politics in 21st Century Popular Culture (2012, Kabili Press) and is the Editor of March On, March On Ye Mighty Host: The History of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (Centennial Edition, due out in Spring, 2013). He can be reached at www.AnthonySamad.com or Twitter at @dranthonyamad.

LIVING HISTORY:

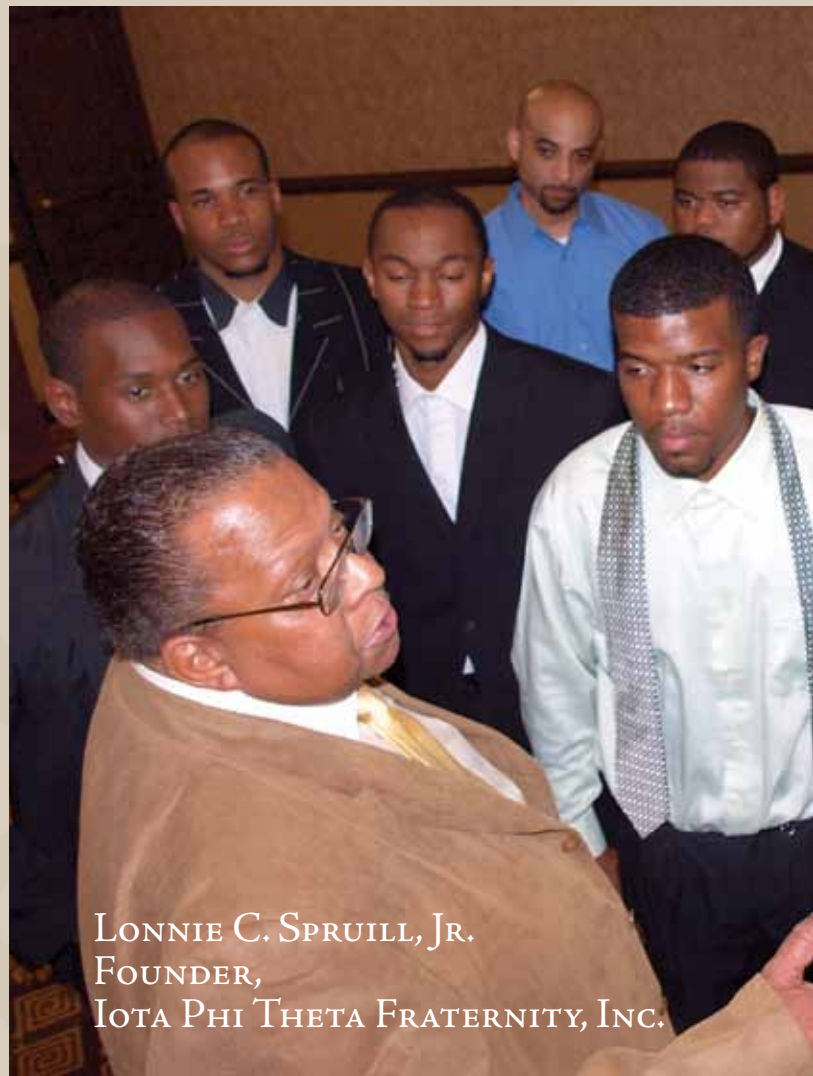
Our Cause Speaks to Iota Phi Theta's Founder Spruill About Iota's First Half Century

First of all; I would like to thank the Brothers of Sigma for giving me the opportunity to look back over the past years of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. which was Founded September 19, 1963 at Morgan State College (now University) in Baltimore, Maryland. There are twelve Founders of Iota: Albert Hicks, Charles Briscoe*. Frank Coakley, Elias Dorsey*, John Slade, Webster Lewis*, Charles Brown, Charles Gregory, Baron Willis, Louis Hudnell, Micheal Williams(?) and Lonnie Spruill. Our primary reason for Founding Iota can best be described in Ted Kennedy's paraphrasing of Bernard Shaw's Quote at Robert Kennedy's Funeral:

“Some men see things as they are and say, why; I dream of things that never were and say, why not?”

Iota was founded during the Civil Rights struggle which continues today. Many of our Founders and First Centaur Line Brothers participated in this movement along with members of the Greek community and non-Greek students. Many of whom were arrested for their efforts. The Greek leadership on campus was outstanding; Robert M. Bell (Alpha Phi Alpha), Tyrone Baines (Omega Psi Phi) and many others whose names escape me. The above played a significant role in our choosing to eventually become a member of the National Pan- Hellenic Council (NPHC).

Our vision for Iota was one of diversity. We felt as though some of the male Greek organizations on



Lonnie C. Spruill, Jr.
Founder,
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

campus had certain images which drew students to them. Such as the assumption of academic superiority, large percentage of athletes, party enthusiast and/or lady magnets. These organizations had a minimum of fifty years of proven experience. Yet, we felt as though we had the potential to compete through diversity. Our desire was not to have one image but to become recognized for all of the things mentioned above. We gained notoriety by winning the award for Best Float at the 1964 Homecoming Parade. The float was a mule driven wagon with Moms; Morgan's seventy-five year old Canteen employee, and Founder Charles Briscoe dressed in slave attire. Our float was a pleasant surprise



for the faculty, student body and guests. This provided Iota with some needed recognition.

We studied the Founders of all the NPHC member organizations (The Elite Eight) to determine their reasons for founding their respective organizations. This is where we learned of the commitment, tolerance, fortitude and accountability required to be successful in this endeavor. We developed a plan that would cover the following: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How are we going to get there? What resources do we need? Who will be responsible? When do we want to arrive? As time went on, through our efforts and the assistance of some of the NPHC member

organizations, we were admitted as a full member of the NPHC in 1997, changing the Elite Eight to the Divine Nine. During our beginning we received a great deal of support from the Brothers of the Gamma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma. These Brothers were not threatened by Iota; instead they chose to be a part of the growth in the Greek community. We will forever be grateful to the Brothers of Gamma Chapter.

Over the past forty-nine years we have experienced the pains of growth. I was not prepared initially for the death of Brothers, lack of commitment which some displayed, violations of campus rules and disregard for the Oath they took. Fortunately these Brothers were in the minority. However, a lack of financial responsibility of some members was very disappointing. In speaking with some of the leaders of other organizations; we find that the above is a problem for most of us. It seems to me that some of our Fraters and Sorors have chosen to be Card Carriers instead of Committed Members. As a Founder this perplexes me. I often think about the Founders of the other organizations and wonder how they would feel about the above. They founded these organizations to promote parity for Black people in our country. The racism which was prevalent in their era has changed in appearance but still exist. Even though we have a Black President; we have a law suit in Maryland dealing with the inequities of funding for HBCUs as compared to predominately White institutions. The Law Suit covers the period from 1937 to today. In 1981 I wrote a poem, "Hindsight" after some of our plans proved unsuccessful (see page 23). It was written after some of our plans proved to be unsuccessful.

As a result of the above; we modified our strategies to reinforce our goals and objectives. Each day, I continue to think of the Founders of the Elite Eight to keep in mind what they did and why we chose to follow their path. This seems to recharge my batteries to continue my dream of Iota.

The BGLOs should consider the possibilities

of sharing resources. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to represent Iota at an Alpha Kappa Alpha Regional Meeting and these Sorors honored an AKA who owned a bank in California with over 200 million dollars in assets. What if we were offered a BGLO discount rate for mortgages, automobile loans, etc.? This could be mutually beneficial to all involved. There are additional opportunities available to us through shared resources and promoting each other's businesses. This is food for thought.

I have been blessed to have experienced the dream of twelve men. Two of these men were older, non-traditional students. Four Iota Founders had served in the military and returned to school under the G.I. Bill; the remaining six were traditional students who knew each other since childhood. The above was an asset in the success of Iota's Founding; it provided us with a diversity of experiences and an understanding of the tasks before us.

I have a picture of my elementary school graduating class (1954 / see image); there are two Founders and two members of Iota's First Line (1964), "The

Fifteen Centaurs". As with the Founders of the other NPHC organizations, we were friends with similar experiences and goals. Five Iotas were in our Junior High School Graduation Class of 1957, and Five Iotas were in our High School Graduation Class at Baltimore City College (1960); Founders Coakley and Spruill; First Line Members Freeland*, Watson* and Wheatley. Founders Webster Lewis* and Louis Hudnell; First Centaur Line Members Jeff Johnson, Jerry Cullings* and Wesley Jennings who is the son of Iota's Eternal Sweetheart and Mother - Our Beloved Audrey Brooks*- also attended Baltimore City College. Baltimore City College is the second oldest public high school in the USA; integrated in 1956. It should be noted that Lt. James "Tony" Watson was the first Morgan graduate killed in Vietnam, on December 4th, 1965. It is interesting that Four Founders and Six First Line Members attended Baltimore City College. Many future Iotas went on to attend the school, including four International Grand Polars(i).

I would like to pay homage to the three outstanding men who founded Sigma. Founder A. Langston Taylor; "Culture For Service and Service For Humanity", Founder Charles I. Brown; "No Legacy Is So Rich As Honesty" and Founder Leonard F. Morse who displayed Sigma's sadness; "We Live In Daily Hope That We Shall One Day Learn The Fate Of Our Beloved Founder Charles I. Brown".

I had the pleasure of speaking with Sigma President, Brother Jimmy Hammock, at the Eightieth Anniversary of the NPHC. . We discussed the opportunities and problems facing our organizations. Brother Hammock and I plan to continue our conversation in the future. I was honored to be invited to administer the Re-Dedication Ceremony to the Divine Nine Presidents. I thought of Iota's deceased Founders and Brothers and I remembered the various trials and tribulations we had



IOTAS PICTURED:

2nd row, 4th from right Charles Watts* - First Line
3rd row, 3rd from right Founder Spruill
5th from right Ronald Wheatley - First Line
4th row 4th from right Founder Coakley

to overcome. Yet, we continued the dream and one day an Iota Founder administered an Oath to the Presidents of the Divine Nine. The above dampened the eyes of those Iotas who were present; including mine. I also thought of the twenty International Grand and Vice Grand Polaris(i); Board Chairmen and Vice Chairmen; National Iota Foundation Chairmen and Vice Chairmen over the years who were and are supported by staffs of committed Iota Brothers. They are my Brothers/Sons who made Our Dream a reality.

There were some similarities in the Founding of Sigma and Iota. We both were not satisfied with the status Quo. We both envisioned a Fraternity that would welcome all worthy Black students regardless of social status, wealth and/or the pigmentation of their skin. The words of your Founder Leonard F. Morse touch us deeply. We too do not know the fate of Founder Micheal Williams. He has not been seen or heard from since 1970. For a candid comprehensive view of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and the national environment during this period in history; read Founder John D. Slade's Book: "IOTA PHI THETA - The Founding and Ascendency".

In closing I would like to again thank the Brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and particularly Brother Todd D. Le Bon for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts relative to Iota and the BGLOs over the past forty-nine years. By the way, I have five nieces, three are Iota Sweethearts and one, Christina "Chrissey" Spruill is a proud new Soror of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. at Florida State University; I am a very proud uncle. Finally, I pray that we increase the percentage of commitment (financial responsibility) in all of our organizations and continue our commitment and support to our colleges and/or universities, communities, country and each other. May we all Be Blessed.

"Nothing counts but pressure, pressure, more pressure and still more pressure through broad organized aggressive mass action"

Asa Phillip Randolph
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

** Deceased*

HINDSIGHT

Perhaps its time for me to relax
And think about what I've done
But for some odd reason the truth appears
And eliminates all the fun
I pictured myself the Star of the Play
But things were moving so fast
In retrospect, it didn't turn out that way
I wasn't even a member of the Cast
Friends in the audience, watching the Play
Asked "Where were You?"
Staring down towards the ground
I said "I directed Scene Two"
They nod towards me; puzzled obviously and
Quietly walked out the Door
I was forced to accept (as quiet as it was kept)
The Climax was in Scene Four
The Moral is to Keep Your Eyes Open,
Each experience logged within
For how do you know where you are going;
If You Don't Know Where You've Been

Lonnie C. Spruill, Jr.

October, 1981



NU CHAPTER, VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY, 1928

From the moment I considered joining Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, I became consumed with the frenetic excitement that permeates intake season at Bethune-Cookman College. As I hurried to line up faculty members to write recommendations, I read everything I could find about Zeta, trying to satiate that side of me that craves a good story. I found information about the lives of Arizona Cleaver Stemons, Pearl Anna Neal, Viola Tyler Goings, Myrtle Tyler Faithful and Fannie Pettie Watts, but I couldn't find the sweeping narrative I was looking for. I eventually read *Torchbearers of a Legacy: A History of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., 1920-1997*, and some of the gaps in my understanding were filled in, however, what I was looking for without realizing



BY TILU KHALAYI

it, was the reality-tv confessional. Who was this Arizona Cleaver? Where is Pike County and why don't we know what town she was born in? Is it because she grew up on a farm? What kind of life did she dream of having? How did the five founders define themselves? What were those dorm room planning meetings like? How did they balance their studies and their organizational planning for Zeta?

I wish I could say I answered all of those questions in the book I've written, *Finer Women: The Birth of Zeta Phi Beta, 1920-1935*, but I can't. The absence of diaries and journals prevents that kind of intimate discovery - nevertheless, *Finer Women* builds upon Soror Ola Adams' 1965 publication and Soror Lullelia Harrison's 1998 publication, in that it focuses solely on the first

fifteen years of the Sorority and this has never been done before. I've concentrated on Zeta's infancy and provided a historical glimpse of the chapters charted during this period. I've also included biographies of the notable members of each chapter and paid special attention to the honorary members inducted during this period. We may all know that Madam Evanti was an early honorary member, but we may not know about Alice Dugged Carey, the first Black librarian in Atlanta and former principal of Morris Brown College. She was unusually active for an honorary member, and served as president of Atlanta's first graduate chapter, Epsilon Zeta from 1925-1926. I've spent nine years uncovering the stories of great Zeta women like Alice Dugged Carey because I think it's important their stories get merged into the greater story of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

One of the things that I was intent on doing was finding new things that I could share about Zeta. One intriguing discovery was New York City's Epsilon Chapter. Undoubtedly Zeta's most vibrant chapter during the twenties, Epsilon was chartered at the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance and the Chapter reflected the literary and artistic movement happening in their midst. They had routine artistic and musical performances showcasing the talents of their membership, and the talent of young performers

in the city they felt should be recognized and celebrated. One of the most popular figures of the Harlem Renaissance was Zora Neale Hurston, but before she took Harlem by storm, she was a student at Howard University where she joined Alpha Chapter. She would move to New York City in 1925 to pursue her writing and complete her degree at Barnard College. While in New York, she joined Epsilon Chapter and as Zeta's magazine, *The X-Ray*, was produced under the auspices of Epsilon, Zora's rich stories found their way into it. Epsilon was also able to solicit the work of another popular Harlem Renaissance writer, Eulalie Spence, the sister of three Epsilon Zetas. The Chapter was able to do something quite extraordinary in getting contributions from two of the most talented and popular Black women writers of the time, and in so doing they helped shape the image and trajectory of the Sorority.

One of the most inspiring stories I came across is that of Dr. Sarah Evelyn Lewis, 5th Grand Basileus. She grew up in Morristown, New Jersey and enrolled at Howard University, intent on becoming a doctor. After completing her undergraduate degree, she enrolled in Howard's medical school in 1924 and held the highest office in Zeta during her second year. When she completed her internship she searched all over the country for

employment but could find none. She eventually became a maid to support herself. Although her husband was upset by it, he could not help since he was still working on completing his internship in a different state. She remained determined to become a practicing doctor and open her own practice and she eventually did, in New York. One of the things I find most interesting about Dr. Lewis was the fact that she was married for all of her professional life and yet I never saw a mention of her married name. I came to learn that she was more passionate about being known and referred to as a doctor than as a wife. Her desire to have the ability to define herself raised eyebrows and became a point of contention with her husband. However, as much as she didn't want to be the traditional wife, she became the first grand president of the Kappa Silhouettes, an organization made up of the wives of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity members. She held that position for fourteen years.

Some of the challenges I faced in researching Zeta women came from the overall difficulty in researching women. Women's history during this period was largely ignored by male historians; and Black women's history, received far less attention. I know Sigma historians may disagree with me when I say researching Zetas is a harder endeavor than researching

Charles I. Brown, but it is true. One of the unique disadvantages in researching a Zeta verses a Sigma comes from the fact that it was common for women to simply be referred to by her husband's name, Mrs. John H. Samuel, and linking maiden names with married names is often times an impossible feat. Part of the reason why I was able to find so much information about Dr. Lewis was because she kept her name. There have been plenty of times when I have found a lot of information about the activities of a woman up until her late twenties and then, it flat-lines. When I can figure out her married name, then the door of information opens back up again and so I am constantly trying to figure out who did she marry? Now a problem Sigma and Zeta historians mutually share is the fact that there are several Black collections at public libraries, Black colleges and institutions which are not accessible due to budgetary cuts, indefinite restructuring, and sometimes a lack of interest in historical preservation and accessibility. It is an unfortunate fact that will only change if enough people take interest and take action.

In spite of all of the challenges, this project has made me fall in love with my sorority all over again. I've met some wonderful people along the way who have inspired me to press on. The family of Anita Turpeau Anderson, author of the Sorority Song, has been especially gracious to me, as well as Frances Faithful, founder Myrtle Tyler Faithful's daughter. I had the lovely experience of meeting the late Lullellia Harrison, 12th Grand Basileus and author of Torchbearers of a Legacy, who overwhelmed me with her hospitality, poise, acuity, and most of all her grandness. I was not

sure if I should call her soror or ma'am and although I was a flustered mess, she had so many stories. I just sat back and took it all in. There have been a few brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity who have been invaluable resources. Kevin Christian, Craig Arthur, Victor Cox and Todd Le Bon have shared rare documents and encouraging words, and their commitment to the preservation of Sigma's history is truly inspiring.

I hope this book will serve not just as a celebration of Zeta's enduring legacy, but also as an icebreaker for the larger discussion of our historical preservation process. There are so many Zetas holding onto tangible pieces of our stories such as old Boule programs, but there are also the oral histories out there that have yet to be collected and transcribed. I hope we can work together to eliminate the missing links in our midst by sharing as much as we can. Let us talk about our story. Let us flesh out our narrative as much as we can so generations to come can have the answers to the questions they will have about us. Let us encourage each other to sift through our closets and our minds and turn over materials with historical significance to the Sorority so it can be organized, archived, inventoried, processed and be made available for all to see. Let us talk about how we can use technology to make some of our collections accessible to a wider public, and let us encourage our national body to champion the movement.

Tilu Khalayi is an assistant film production accountant, and author of the upcoming book, [Finer Women: The Birth of Zeta Phi Beta, 1920-1935](#). Follow her on twitter @ihearttilu



Bro. Craig Arthur was recently appointed Eastern Regional Historian by our 25th Eastern Regional Director, Hon. Leonard O. Lockhart. He has served in the same capacity for the Iota Sigma Chapter (Richmond, VA) for a number of years. During that time he has assisted the chapter in organizing, researching, expanding and sharing their chapter history with those within the state and throughout the Region. Bro. Arthur has also worked with the History Team to share our history on a broader scale via Bluephi.net and other avenues.

OUR CAUSE had an opportunity to sit down with Bro. Arthur to discuss his goals while serving in this position. He gives us a glimpse of what to expect and how he plans to share our history with the brothers in the Region.

Bro. Arthur: Although I was appointed to this position just a short time ago, plans are already in place to ensure I will serve the Region to the best of my ability in this capacity. At present, Bro. Occasio Gee has created a History section on the regional website (www.pbseast.org). Postings will go live each Wednesday at 9:14 AM and on special dates as appropriate. While serving as your Historian, I plan to implement the following:

1- Supervise the creation of the Eastern Region Historical Committee.

(Any brothers interested in serving on this committee, please contact me at crarthur@vt.edu)

2- Determine long-term goals we will undertake as a committee based upon feedback provided by the Region.

3- On-going dedicated research into both fraternity history, as well as that of individual members whom have made significant contributions to this Fraternity and/or our communities across the globe.

As we approach our Centennial Celebration history should be a vital part of all our activities. Below are two history-related programs I would like to see use undertake as a Region. Feedback, as always, is desired and appreciated.

Regional History Presentation:

Moving forward, it is my sincere hope, Sigma history will not continue to be commodified to our brothers. The best way to inspire brothers to document the history of their chapter is to engage them directly. By the end of my tenure, I know we can create a presentation highlighting the history of the entire Eastern Region. To realize this goal, chapters will be asked to submit pictures and pertinent information (total number of brothers initiated, accomplishments, milestones, etc.) regarding both their charter lines and also their current chapter membership to the History Committee via email. This data will be compiled by the History Committee into a downloadable presentation which will be available to the

brotherhood via the Region's website.

For a much more limited example of what I have in mind, please see:

http://bluephi.net/crarthur/pbs_va_hist_pres.pdf

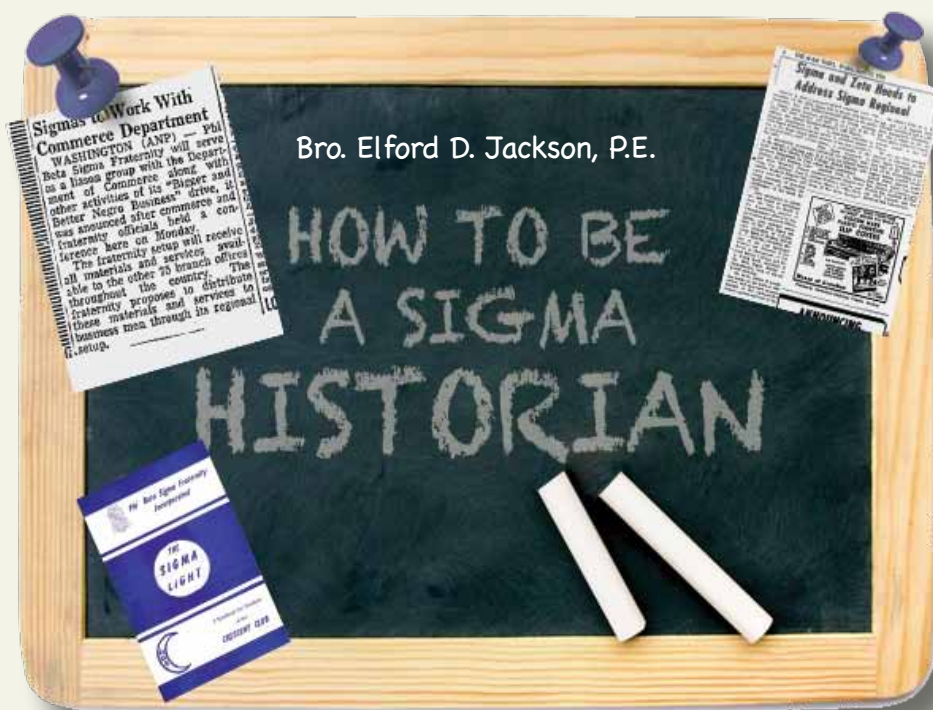
Video Interview Project:

Chapters that are blessed to have brothers in their ranks with fifty-plus years in the Fraternity will be implored to interview said brothers on film as soon as possible. With the rapidly increasing access to the technology necessary to make this happen, I feel strongly each chapter is capable of completing this project should they dedicate the time and effort which is needed. Unfortunately, it is far too common for the stories of our seasoned brothers to pass on to the Omega Chapter with them. This project is a humble attempt to ensure we safeguard our brothers' memories for future generations of Sigma Men.

For a successful example of this proposed project, please see: Summer/Fall '09 Our Cause Online Newsletter (www.pbseast.org).

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to serving and hearing from you.

C. ARTHUR
CRARTHUR@VT.EDU



Bro. Elford D. Jackson, P.E.

HOW TO BE A SIGMA HISTORIAN

basic tools required, such that, the average brother can confidently present himself as a Sigma Historian amongst the membership.

STEP 1 Look past the Sigma Light

Do not be fooled by your in depth and/or lack of knowledge of the Sigma Light. Many Crescents are lured into the false security that the Sigma Light is the official historical record for the Fraternity, and clearly the text is designated as a “handbook”. Every Crescent worth a grain of burning sand, is instructed with the passages which stem from the Sigma Light. If they are lucky, they may even be able to recite a couple of lines from the Perfection Scoop. I can recall during my younger years, fresh from the vigorous pledge process, just waiting for any ‘Ole School brother to ask me a Sigma related question, so I could demonstrate the thorough and comprehensive nature of my intake process. To this day, no one has every asked me to recite the first 5 Editors of the Crescent. So, for practical purposes, the Sigma Light is your introduction to the Sigma History. Hon. Brother Edgar B. Felton, the 1962 Chairman for The

Are you the Historian for your Chapter? The title by itself holds a very unique persona amongst our brotherhood. If bestowed with the title, one can easily be construed as; old school, sophisticated, intuitively cerebral, and at times three dimensionally brilliant. The average brother dare not call himself a historian for fear of being checked by one whom possesses an aptitude for historical facts about the organization. A historian is defined as one who is concerned with the continuous, methodical narrative and research of past events as relating to the human understanding, as well as the study of all history in time. So, who

is qualified to be a historian? Is it limited to those possessing formal graduate training and philosophical experience, or those with a personal link to the history and can utter the statement; “I walked with the Founders at the 1922 Conclave in Baltimore”. For the purpose of simplicity, I would argue for none of the above. I believe that in the true sense of being a historian, one only needs to remember and account for the task(s) they performed yesterday. As yesterday is not the future, nor the present, thus it becomes the past and therefore the catalyst is history. Hence, the purpose of this article is to establish and make available, the

Sigma Light said it best, “herein will be a source of inspiration and guidance”. Brothers should heed these words as they embark into the historical relevance of Sigma.

STEP 2

Document Yourself

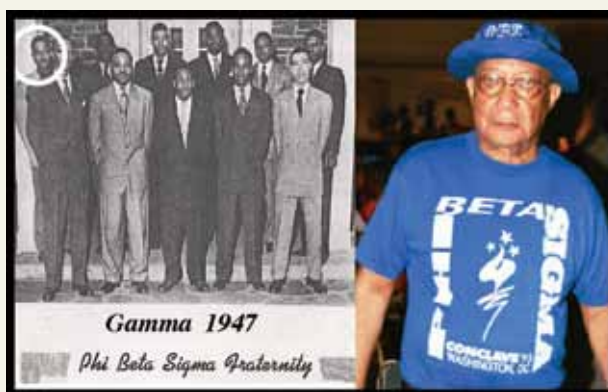
Begin to introduce your story as it relates to Sigma. Start with you and/or your line brothers. Document your experiences and provide details unique to you and your line, regardless of the year you crossed. Be sure to share with your immediate colleagues to verify your statements as to reduce the occurrence of tall tales. While it is difficult to understand the value of this information today, the true value of such documentation will not be realized until twenty to fifty years from now. Picture your grandchildren having this information fifty years from today and the wherewithal to share this now valuable information with the future brothers in your Chapter. Through my experiences with older brothers, basic data related to pledge numbers and line names are easily forgotten. The other benefit is that this documentation may help you recall events once your cognitive brain cells have traveled well pass their prime. Just remember, the trail you leave today may be the major

discovery for a younger brother in the years to come.

STEP 3

Maintain Your Senior Brother Relationships

Reach out to the older brothers in the Chapter. Unfortunately, this often does not consist of the older members who attend the regular chapter meeting. To be effective, you should try to engage those brothers that do not regularly attend the chapter meetings. I have found those brothers to be eager to share their story. And do not worry about



having the “right” questions to ask. A simple question, such as; “What made you interested in Sigma?”, can result into a two hour conversation. These circumstances are unique, as they are personal and intimate moments, which lead to more in-depth conversation. I was honored to spend a precious moment with Brother Calvin Carter, Gamma Chapter 1947, who really surprised me

with his uncanny memory for detail and our similar rational for wanting to be members of this great organization.

STEP 4

Positive Exchanges

Sharing is virtuous. As you travel the path of the Sigma Historian, you will meet other historians along the way. Upon such an acquaintance, humble yourself, and be the first to offer any rare tidbits of history you may have. At first, you will be judged by the context of your particular item, but whether miniscule or extreme, the transaction

will be rewarded by future exchanges. But, similar to any game of cards, one must clearly sort the low values from the high and be able to pull a trump card when needed. It is one thing to possess pages copied from a particular documents and

then it is another to actually have the full original copy in-hand.

STEP 5

Focus Your Attention

Find your passion. Each and every historian has their own particular niche. You must respect the fact that Sigma’s history is both vast and complicated. At first, focus on items which are very

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

LEONARD F. MORSE

A LEGACY FOUNDED ON STRONG VALUES

Reflections

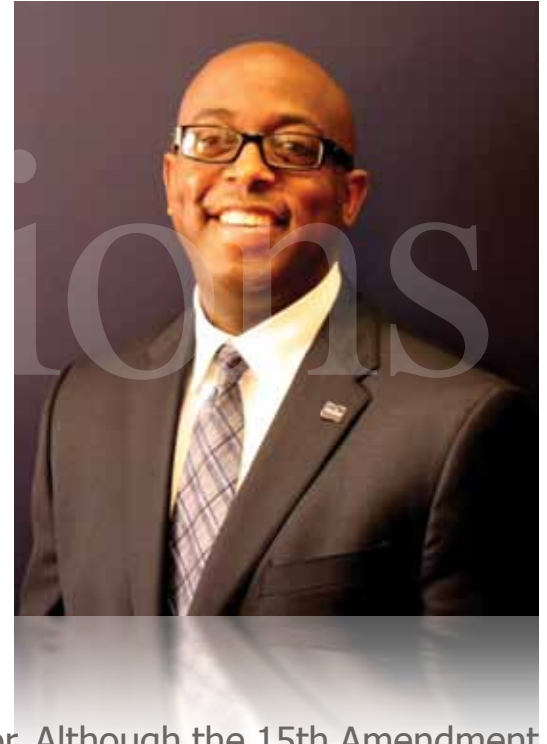
In the early part of the twentieth century times were much different for Blacks in this nation. Slavery was still fresh in the minds of many, and could still be seen clearly through the nation's rear view mirror. Although the 15th Amendment (1870) prohibited the states to deny the right to vote based on race, Jim Crow would ensure this would not be enforced for most Blacks until almost a decade later. There were not many rights Blacks possessed which many Whites, or the government, felt bound to respect and/or protect.

Those things we take for granted today required a great deal of sacrifice and struggle in the early 1900's. In those days we valued family, education and had a strong sense of community. In fact, the community was part of your extended family. Folks worked for the good of the whole, not solely for personal gain. They had neither the access nor resources available to us today, but accomplished extraordinary things. Hard work, perseverance and commitment were some of the values they lived by. The challenges of the day would help to mold the young men and women who would later found the organizations we hold so dear to our hearts. Giving up and/or making excuses was not an option. They were determined to make a way out of no way.

Over the years the drive and desire which fueled their passion to uplift the community seems harder to find. Our sense of family and community has fallen by the wayside. In today's society it is all about "me". The overall wellbeing of the community does not even appear to be a priority. Personal success, sometimes at the expense of others, is the goal.

How did we lose our way? How do you inspire future generations to uphold and maintain the strong values of past generations? The sharing of one's own history is a great place to start. All children should know where they have been, in order to know where they are going.

BY BRO. DECATUR 'WARD' MORSE, JR.



As the youngest grandson of Dr. Leonard Francis Morse, I never had an opportunity to meet my granddad. However, this did not prevent me from getting to know the man Sigma men hold so dear to their hearts. The grandfather I never met remains an inspiration to me, and many others. Granddad was much more than a Sigma icon. He was a minister, educator, mentor, community leader and most importantly a family man.

While growing up I recall stories shared with me by my grandmother, father and uncles. They told me about the struggles granddad, and many others of the time, were forced to endure as part of their daily lives. While traveling the country, often with my uncle Leonard Jr., he was forced to come face to face with Jim Crow. The most basic of daily activities, such as finding something to eat or locating sleeping accommodations for the evening, came with their own challenges. Although they were forced to endure so much, it did not stop them from pushing on and working towards a better future for all.

Although I never met granddad, my grandmother was a part of my life. While he was traveling my grandmother was home raising the children. I am sure this was an enormous challenge in those days. Grandma was a strong woman, and very involved in her church. While granddad's philosophy was no nonsense and no excuses, grandma encouraged you to do your best. This, I believe, created a perfect balance for my father and his siblings. Looking back I am not sure if it was granddad's influence or my father's military background, which resulted in those same values remaining the standard in our household. I am inclined to believe it was probably a bit of both. Today I am passing on those same values to my family.

While the challenges my children face today are much different, the values passed down from generation to generation are timeless. My children understand it will not always be easy, but hard work and persistence is a must for success.

Granddad had a huge impact on the lives of many through his work. Granddad was always reaching out to

those less fortunate in the community.

He would assist them in any way he could, and serve as a much needed role model and mentor to the youth in the community. His community outreach was sometimes difficult for his young children to understand. They would not fully understand and appreciate his efforts until they were a bit older. Granddad was trying to give those kids the balance and base his own children had a home. He truly lived the Sigma motto in his everyday life, "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity".

I have an overwhelming sense of pride in my grandparents. They endured countless challenges, during

a very tumultuous time in this nation's history, in order to raise their family. They could have easily given in to Jim Crow. However, they chose to instill strong family values and a sense of responsibility to the community in their children. Their value system continues to be passed down through the generations. My job as a father is to pass those values down to my children, and eventually their children.

I never met granddad, but he lives through me in the things I do every day. He lives through the men of Sigma as they work to uplift our communities around the world. Granddad's legacy will continue to inspire and grow founded on the strong values passed down to all those he touched during his time on this earth, and those he continues to inspire.



Founder Morse with his son Decatur

Daniel J. Tann, Esq.

No.163



Philadelphia, PA - On October 8, 2011 Brother Wadell Ridley, Jr., Assistant Vice President for Government Affairs at Saint Joseph University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania hosted a reception for the Hon. Daniel J. Tann, Esquire in recognition of his selection as the 163rd member of the Distinguished Service Chapter (DSC) of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. The event opened with a rendition of Lift Every Voice and Sing, performed by Ms. Jillian Patricia Pirtle, "Miss Black Pennsylvania USA 2011".

Following the opening of the program there were a series of tributes to Bro. Tann by Hon. Henry L. Moore and Hon. Emanuel J. Kenny, Jr., both of

Nu Sigma Chapter. They reminisced about how they knew Bro. Tann from his undergraduate days at La Salle University and watched him develop through the years.





A flashback account was presented by the three men who recruited Dan Tann, Bros. Tyrone M. Knight, Roland E. Finger, and William J. Savage. They talked about why and how they recruited him to Sigma and stated that they admired him because he always “lifts others with him as he climbs”.

During the program, his Distinguished Service Chapter Certificate was presented by DSC President, the Hon. William E. Stanley, Jr. of Atlanta and Hon. Peter M. Adams, Esq. of New York.

Following the presentation, Bro. Tann was presented with the DSC pin of his mentor, the late Hon. George H. Hibbler, by Bro. Hibbler’s daughter Rhonda D. Hibbler. This was a special moment for Bro. Tann because Bro. Hibbler had always told him that he would be a member of the DSC.

As part of the DSC concept, \$1,000 was donated by the Distinguished Service Chapter and Hon. Daniel J. Tann, Esq. to the Waynesboro Area Learning Tree (WALT), (Bro. Tann serves on the Board of Directors).

Additional speakers included Bro. Roland B. Jarvis, Esq., Alberta Scott, and Barbara Henderson, former Atlantic Regional Director Representative Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and Bro. Howard “Sid” Lucas presented him with a citation from the Honorable Michael A. Nutter, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia and a high school alumnus of Daniel J. Tann.

Bro. Tann had an opportunity to give remarks and opened with a stirring video on the ABA Death Penalty Representation Project where he serves on the steering committee and showed the impact that the death penalty has on people of color and low economic resources.

Following that presentation, Bro. Tann presented his living aunts and his fiancée with flowers. Also, in attendance were the following Past Eastern Regional Directors, Hon. Marvin “Doc” Cheatham, Hon. Scherod C. Barnes, Greville French, and Darryl T. Williams.

The event concluded with the brothers assembled singing the Fraternity Hymn in front of the 200 plus family, friends, and guests. A great time was had by all in attendance.



A True Sigma Man to the End and Beyond
My Personal Account of

The Honorable Bro. Oscar Morgan

meeting of the Phi Beta Sigma Chapter (Los Angeles, CA). I told him I would be there. I was eager to thank Bro. Morgan for “looking out”, plus my prophyte brother suggested I meet him.

While I adjusted to my new environment and the beginning stages of a business, I did not have an opportunity to attend a chapter meeting for a few months. When I did, I was greeted warmly by the chapter brothers and I was eager to observe the business of Sigma. Oscar left the meeting early, and I did not get a chance to meet him that day. However, I did meet the Hon. Ron Carter a few months later, and in subsequent meetings the Hon. Dr. Anthony Samad. By this time, I was an active member of the Chapter, and participated in most of the programs. As time passed, I became busier in life and of Sigma, but still wanted to thank Bro. Morgan.

During one meeting I volunteered to become the chapter historian as there had not been one for a few years. As the meeting ended, it was suggested I should meet up with various brothers to collect Sigma history. There was one name mentioned by everyone I spoke to, Oscar Morgan.

I made a few stops at brothers’ homes to collect history throughout the coming months. One Saturday, reinvigorated about learning about Sigma brothers and preserving the fraternity history, I opened the boxes and inside were stacks and folders of yellowed paper. These boxes had been in storage units and garages for years. The first box was marked “Chapter documents”. In an orderly fashion, the earlier documents found were membership rosters of 1978’s Delta Gamma Chapter of Los Angeles, California. It contained a PBS-1 Form and a northern California roster list with Huey P. Newton and

“Beyond” is what I strived to be as a Sigma brother. The best I can be in whatever I put my mind to. I wanted to do something “BIG”. As a neophyte Sigma, back in 2003, moving from Boston to Los Angeles seemed like the best thing to do for myself and my career. It was time for me to step beyond my comfort zone. This was a huge decision, to move 3,000 miles from home. I was going to a place where I had no network. But, I had joined the greatest fraternity, so there was nothing to worry about. While preparing for a new chapter in my life, I consulted with Bro. Terrence Jones, Zeta Kappa Sigma Chapter (Boston, MA), on the best ways to make the transition. Out of the thousands of names in the printed Sigma Directory, he suggested I meet Hon. Bros. Ron Carter and Dr. Anthony Samad. Because both are well known in the Fraternity and are members of the Distinguished Service Chapter (DSC), it made sense. But he also mentioned a third name, Hon. Bro. Oscar Morgan. This name I had not heard of.

Somehow, Hon. Bro. Morgan had known of me in 2003. Upon reaching Los Angeles, and its sunny southern California weather, Hon. Bro. Morgan sent Bro. Greg Dews to pick me up from the airport. After Bro. Dews helped me move in, I gave him the fraternity handshake and thanked him as he left. He returned shortly to inform me of the time of the next chapter

his brother. This type of information fueled me to learn more about the Fraternity and the elusive Oscar Morgan. At the bottom of the PBS-1, it was signed Oscar Morgan, in a very loose script. Turning the historian position into a research project, I found numerous documents from the chapter, regional and national levels, but there was consistently one common thread. An old time thread of the spirit of true brotherhood, ensuing scholarship, and dedicated service. Simultaneously, I reviewed these

to the end. In my short time as Western Region Historian, while never meeting the Brother in person, I can comfortably state he was a tireless, humble fighter for the Western Region and its undergraduate membership. His commitment to Sigma is captured in time through the countless documents he left behind, and the numerous images of him doing the work of Sigma over the decades. Clearly a selfless brother, it seems he rarely talked about himself, so I will account

“MR. OSCAR MORGAN WAS THE NUCLEUS OF THE WESTERN REGION AND AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO PHI BETA SIGMA’S SUCCESS.”

documents and was being mentored, through brotherly correspondences, on how to handle fraternity affairs through Morgan’s wise responses. Disappointedly, I began to realize I would never have the opportunity to meet the man physically. And miraculously, there was not one document containing information about Oscar Morgan, the person. But, then I had come to know the stark reality of who he had been. Mr. Oscar Morgan was the nucleus of the Western Region and an important contributor to Phi Beta Sigma’s success. And no other introduction would be needed.

BEYOND

Bro. Morgan transitioned into the Omega Chapter prior to me relocating to Los Angeles. His “next level” service trained many younger members to become productive members of the Fraternity, on local, regional and national levels, including me. He did not send someone to pick me up from the airport, but I am confident if he had known I was a new brother relocating to the area he would ensure a proper Sigma reception. That is who he was, and I continue to follow in his footsteps striving to become a True Sigma man (I would later discover he knew everyone in the Western Region by name and face.) His name is honored in the same reverence of a true brother from the beginning

for some of his accolades and accomplishments as history annuals state:

Hon. Bro. Oscar M. Morgan was initiated into the Alpha Upsilon Chapter in 1946. Brother Morgan is Life Member #82, Distinguished Service Chapter (DSC) member #70 and a member of the Western Region Distinguished Service Society. He served as undergraduate chapter advisor, Chapter President, 12th Western Regional Director, Western Region Secretary for 25 years (the longest term by any brother in the Region), President of the DSC and National Director of Education. He mentored many of our Regional Directors and Regional Officers. He also was a long time Secretary of the Los Angeles National Pan-Hellenic Council. A True Sigma Man, he also served a lifetime in the public school system as an educator and counselor.

After this there is nothing more to say but, “It was a pleasure meeting you, Honorable Brother Morgan.”



*Bro. Kaine Nicholas
Phi Beta Sigma Chapter
Los Angeles, California
Special thanks to Bro. Greg Brandon and
Bro. Rafael Matos for their contributions
to this story.*

specific, such as chapter history or specific members within your chapter. While every chapter cannot have a Tuskegee Airmen or U. S. Congressman, there are still very prominent brothers who will leave historical foot prints through their careers or within the community. As you begin to gather information for your specific task, other avenues and resources will become available. These opportunities will broaden your appetite for the subject matter. My initial interest was to understand the political and dynamic relationship between the Zeta Sigma Graduate Chapter and the undergrad Gamma Chapter. The mere mentioned of politics and Zeta Sigma unraveled historical implications that really had never been explained to me. In understanding the connection between Gamma Chapter (Found. 1916) and Zeta Sigma (Found. 1920), I began to see a unique Baltimore influence on Sigma that transcended to Delta Delta Chapter (Found. 1966) and then prompted charters all over Maryland.

STEP 6

Leave No Stone Unturned

Expand your horizons. After you have exhausted the aforementioned methods, then you are ready to pursue and investigate your own historical factoids. University libraries are the best source for archived information. There is nothing like finding a rare edition of the 1935 Crescent magazine buried on a book shelf at your local library. The ever expanding internet has fast become a great source for researching documents and other historical items. Next, locate the archives for your local newspaper. In most places, you will find that the old micro film has now been converted to adobe files (PDF). Now it is extremely easy to locate articles using search engines.

Sigma wives are another great, and often untapped, source of historical information. Brothers that have fought the good fight and transitioned into the Omega Chapter sometimes leave valuable information behind. To the non-Greek, these items may be inconsequential. Unfortunately, it may seem inappropriate to ask for a brother's belongings once he has passed on, but you will never know unless you ask. Morgan professor Brother Rolland McConnell, Alpha Chapter 1927, was my neighbor at the time he passed away 2007. I still regret to this day that I did not approach his offspring to inquire about all the Sigma related items he left behind. The most notable item was the 1931 Alpha Chapter member portrait that hung on his dining room wall.

There you have it, the basic steps required to become a Sigma Historian. As described, any brother of Sigma can become a historian by simply implementing these basic steps: look beyond the Sigma Light, begin to develop your story in Sigma, reach out to our senior brothers, avoid hoarding information, set your objective, and expand outside your comfort zone. If you follow these simple steps, you will be on your way to becoming a true Sigma Historian.



*Bro. Elford D. Jackson, P.E.
Zeta Sigma/Gamma Chapter Historian*

The History and Publicity Team



Bro. Brandon Brown
Eastern Region
Publicity Committee



Bro. Brad Leak
Eastern Region
Publicity Committee



Bro. Mark 'Mallet' Pacich
Southern Region
International Historian



Bro. Kevin Christian
Eastern Region
History Committee



Bro. Phil Eugenio
Western Region
History Committee



Bro. J. Burton
Eastern Region
Publicity Committee



Bro. Craig Arthur
Eastern Region
History Committee



Eastern Region
Publicity Committee
200 Nutmeg Lane #219
East Hartford, CT 06118

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