



THE TENNESSEE DELTA NEWS

Official Newsletter of the Tennessee Delta Chapter of Phi Delta Theta at Tennessee Technological University



TENNESSEE DELTA LAUNCHES ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

ΣΤΩ Corporation Focuses on Debt Elimination and Chapter House Preservation

No brother ever forgets the first time he walked up the sidewalk at 626 N. Walnut and into the Tennessee Delta chapter house. For many of us, the two-story brick house and the time spent inside those walls defined our college experience at Tennessee Tech. We remember recruitment events, parties, afternoons on the front porch, the TV room and, of course, our individual initiations into Phi Delta Theta.

Our chapter house and those letters over the door define us on campus just as much as, if not more than, brothers wearing the letters to class. Everyone knows where the Phi Delt house is, no matter if they are in school today or graduated 50 years ago.

In recent years, however, the house has fallen into disrepair. When one problem was corrected, it seemed two more popped up. We faced

significant repair and a decision about the future of the building. In 2016, a feasibility study was conducted by the National Fraternity to look at raising funds to build a new chapter house at a cost of \$900,000. A select group of Tennessee Delta alumni were interviewed, and the results revealed a potential of \$300,000 in contributions with a \$600,000 debt service for future Phis.

There are 11 social fraternities on campus today, with 10 having membership ranging from 17 to 65, and one on suspension from campus. One fraternity has built an addition to an old house, three have new houses, one is starting to build a new house, and the remaining six organizations occupy old houses.

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Gary McDonald #199, John Bartlett #190, Steve Mock #200, Bob Campbell #194, Chauncey Day #196, and John Gray #197 at the 50th Anniversary reunion.



Keith Keisling #89 and Steve Daniels #35 at the 50th Anniversary celebration.

FRATERNITY FOR LIFE

Excitement Abounds at Tennessee Delta as Brothers Join the Golden Legion

As the president of Sigma Tau Omega Fraternity in the spring of 1968, I didn't fully realize the potential of the job that I had been given. Brothers were living in an older house that has since been removed on the lower end of Oak Street. Local fraternities weren't yet recognized by the Tennessee Tech administration, and our future was limited to only what we had the will to achieve.

It seemed natural to seek a national fraternity affiliation if we were going to grow and realize our vision. The process was launched by me and other key $\Sigma\tau\Omega$ founders. As Phi Delta Theta quickly moved up the list of first-tier possible national fraternities, we began to drill down and study the differences that Phi Delta Theta offered us. We learned about the Golden Legion award, where brothers with 50 years of membership are recognized. Early in the selection process, the idea of a "fraternity for life" appealed to me.

After graduation, I joined the DuPont Company and worked at the plant in Old Hickory for eight years, finishing up my Tennessee National Guard commitment and settling into my job. In 1978, I was transferred to Wilmington, Delaware, with DuPont, so through the years and other transfers, it was

difficult to remain connected to Tennessee Delta. Every so often, no matter where I was living, I would think about the "fraternity for life" and the Golden Legion.

It had been years since I'd walked through the front door of the house on North Walnut Avenue. I learned that the house, now as much as 85 years old, was in need of a lot of renovation and repair. I was engaged in a feasibility study about a new house in 2017 and the thought of the Golden Legion sprang back. There were many new brothers in the past 47 years, but sadly, many of the brothers who were my age were now gone and members of the Chapter Grand, honoring Phis who have passed away.

With a new house not making financial sense, we launched a "house renewal" project that I organized from my home outside Philadelphia. We had face-to-face meetings at the American Bank & Trust, where brothers **Buckie Parsons #7** and **Steve Daniels #35** secured a loan and our work began. When I returned to Cookeville, it is rather surprising now that I was back that this same house was purchased from my wife's maid of honor's uncle. I couldn't have predicted this at the time. We had begun leasing the current house in the fall of

1968. Small world! One must never forget that we are a "fraternity for life!"

As we traveled down the alternate path of a managed upgrade to restore the house, the Golden Legion timing was staring us in the face. Those of us still around knew we were approaching our 50th anniversary as members. Last, but not least, those who started the chapter tradition could start a new tradition these many years later.

On October 5, 2019, at TN Delta's 50th Anniversary celebration, many brothers joined the Golden Legion as the first 50-year members of the Tennessee Delta Chapter. We paused that night to remember our brothers who have gone on to the Chapter Grand. We will honor them and membership in our fraternity and chapter forever as brothers reach this impressive anniversary. Each year, this great group of brothers will grow. Brothers will reflect on their time as active members, and we will honor those who unfortunately did not arrive in the Golden Legion, but left us too early and are together in the Chapter Grand. *In coelo quies est.*



Yours in the Bond,
Steve Desirey #10

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Examining risk versus reward, and in consultation with the chapter, the Chapter Advisory Board (CAB) decided not to proceed with a new build and to focus on restoring and renovating the current house. Among the factors considered by the CAB was the small size of the chapter, the inability to operate with a positive cash flow, and the possible loss of the property at 626 N. Walnut.

Since 2016, approximately \$137,451 has been spent to update the house, both cosmetically and mechanically, through the work of the active members and loyal alumni like **Keith Trout #334**, **Ronnie Foster #109**, **Paul Payne #43**, **Jim Hearn #65**, and **Stephen Spicer #397**, who have come through time and time again to donate time, dollars, and expertise to repair, rebuild, and restore the house. Many thanks to these brothers for their efforts and always answering the call for help.

At the end of 2019, the line of credit was at \$105,245. Following our 50th anniversary celebration last fall, a number of brothers, including **Ronnie Foster #109**, **Keith Keisling #89**, **Chris Finley #154**, **Rick Wagner #157**, **Jim Hearn #65**, and **David Starbuck #184**, made personal solicitations to reduce the debt. To date, more than 70 Phis have made gifts ranging from \$100 to \$5,000, totaling \$95,335.

I am calling on the remaining 600-plus alumni to step forward and contribute to the debt-reduction effort and launch a capital improvement fund of \$25,000 to fund our wish list and other renovation/repair projects. You can make your contribution at bit.ly/TNDelta.

As everyone knows where the Phi Delta house is, everyone needs to see that it looks as good as ever, and that it still represents who we are as Tennessee Phi Deltas. Remember, one man is no man.

Yours in the Bond,
Jay Grannis #173
STO Corporation President
jgrannis@gcpas.com



Greg Lewis #228, Walter White #219, David Starbuck #184, and Chauncey Day #196 at Tennessee Delta's 50th Anniversary celebration in 2019.



Joe Leonard #113, Mark Sanders #124, and Harvey Crouch #170.



John Bartlett #190, Bill Evans #120, Bill McCord #115, and Ronnie Foster #109 celebrate together at the 50th Anniversary event.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Help Tennessee Delta Add to Its Collection of ΣΤΩ Memorabilia

During two house renovations, including two basement floods, all Sigma Tau Omega and Tennessee Delta Chapter memorabilia was removed and placed in a climate-controlled storage unit in Murfreesboro. The fact is that there is no space to display 50 years of history, as it would take a very large room (hint...the need for a chapter room addition!).

THE EARLY YEARS

I have located the ΣΤΩ banner, crest, beanies, scrapbook, fraternity pin, and new member manual, which includes ΣΤΩ's detailed history. I also found 1968 and 1969 TTU yearbooks and the Phi Delta Theta colony composite.

A lot of chapter installation memorabilia is in storage, including the original Phi Delta Theta charter, the Bible used at installation, the guest book and champagne bottles from installation, a group picture from the installation ceremony, and the 1969 "Neil Armstrong edition" of *The Scroll* that highlighted the chapter installation.

Another important archived item is the chapter's infamous owl, which was repaired by a taxidermist with a custom acrylic case. The chapter's

original copy of *The Bond of Phi Delta Theta* is in storage at the General Headquarters in Oxford, Ohio.

MISSING

We are always looking to add to the chapter's archives. The initial goal is to assemble as much from the ΣΤΩ days through the installation of Tennessee Delta.

Here are some items we would like to add from the local fraternity days:

- ΣΤΩ jerseys
- ΣΤΩ photos
- ΣΤΩ ritual materials, including pledge pins and black books
- ΣΤΩ minutes and correspondence

If you have any memorabilia, please contact me at jgrannis@gcpas.com to arrange a pick-up, shipping information, or just to let me know.

Yours in the Bond,

Jay Grannis #173, ΣΤΩ Corporation President, jgrannis@gcpas.com

P.S. Our 60th reunion is only nine years away! Remember the '70s!

TENNESSEE DELTA WINS 2020 SILVER STAR AWARD Active Chapter Lands 10 Fall Phikeia

Last summer, Tennessee Delta received the Silver Star Award for outstanding chapter excellence from the National Fraternity. Chapters are scored on a variety of policies and programs, including chapter bylaws, membership roster, chapter goals and objectives, annual financial planning, Phikeia education program, community service, facility management, recruiting, and alumni communications. While it was nice to be recognized for our success with this prestigious honor, we're working hard to achieve Gold Star status in 2021.

UPWARD AND ONWARD

The active chapter is growing at a steady pace and is expanding in all avenues on Tennessee Tech's campus. Due to the pandemic, all TTU fraternities have struggled with recruitment. However, we have been highly competitive with other fraternities that are twice our size. We welcomed 10 Phikeias to our fall new member class, and our chapter is up to 27 members. In the academic arena, Tennessee

Delta's spring 2020 3.2 GPA was the fifth best among TTU fraternities. Our goal is to consistently be a top-five fraternity when it comes to academics.

WORK WEEK INCLUDES KITCHEN REMODEL, ADDITIONAL BEDROOM

Every year, work week is a time for brothers to convene and map out the coming year and, yes, work on the house. The fact that 626 N. Walnut remains our address is a testimony to the hard work put forth by brothers at past work weeks and incredible alumni support.

Thanks to **Ronnie Foster #109** and **Jay Grannis #173**, the actives refinished the old card room in the basement and turned it into a bedroom for the first time in many years. We owe a special debt of gratitude to **Jim Hearn #65**, who provided funding and expertise to remodel the kitchen. The chapter appreciates the help of our alumni to ensure the house is in the best shape possible for the year ahead. This year, there are nine brothers living in the

house, seven on the second floor and two in the basement.

NAVIGATING NEW NORMALS

The 2020-21 academic year has been unlike any other, but we've done our best to make the most of it. While there was no traditional parade or football game, we celebrated Homecoming in November with Delta Phi Epsilon. We earned a third-place finish in Homecoming and were thrilled to win Delta Phi Epsilon's Cystic Fibrosis Week and ANAD Week.

HITTING THE LINKS WITH TENNESSEE DELTA

We are planning a Tennessee Delta alumni golf tournament in August 2021. We look forward to releasing more details in the coming months.

Yours in the Bond,

Samuel Splawn #707

Outgoing Chapter President



Brothers in front of the chapter house during recruitment.



Brothers show off the Homecoming float they made with the women of Delta Phi Epsilon.



Brothers participate in Delta Gamma's Yee Yee with Dee Gee Philanthropy Week.



Emily Dowell honored as Tennessee Delta's sweetheart.



Terry "Brillo" Elliott #72 dancing during the 50th Anniversary party in 2019.



Jay Grannis #173 and Steve Wagner #147 at the reunion.



David Jones #9, David's wife Sue Jones, and Mark Copeland #207 at the 50th Anniversary party.

CHAPTER ADVISORY BOARD OFFICERS

Chairman

Ronnie Foster #109

Alumni Relations Chairman

John Bartlett #190

New Member Education Chairman

Clark Childress #99

Recruitment Chairman

Bill Evans #120

Risk Management Chairman

Chris Finley #154

Finance Chairman

Bill McCord #115

Facilities Chairman

Mike Pippin #111

Scholarship Chairman

David Swindle #106



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ALUMNI NEWS

Steve Desirey #10 and his wife, Sandy, live just north of Philadelphia in Schwenksville, Pa. Sandy's brother is **Dan Roberge #52**. Steve retired after 36 years of service to the DuPont Corporation and worked in multiple businesses over that time. Now every day is a holiday for him and Sandy. Email: steve.desirey@verizon.net

Mickey Ponder #34 has been an insurance broker since 1975. Prior to his business career, he spent a tour in Vietnam in 1970-71 as an infantry officer with the 101st airborne. Mickey and his wife, Martha, have three children, Bentley, Brandon, and Brooke. He lives in Nashville, Tenn. Email: mickey.triad@gmail.com

Jessie Shirley #66 has played a lot of golf since retiring in 2013. He hopes to help out with some projects around the chapter house. Jessie lives in Calhoun, Ga. Email: jk2shirley@comcast.net

Keith Keisling #89 has retired from Equitable Trust Company in Nashville, Tenn. He lives in Brentwood, Tenn. Email: keisling@gmail.com

David Swindle Jr. #106 is a semi-retired consultant in executive management and project management. He serves on several boards, including the Tennessee Delta chapter advisory board. David is also a board member of international nuclear waste treatment company, AVANTech, and for Shetland Space Center, which is developing the first United Kingdom space launch center. He is a consultant to

the International Atomic Energy Agency, United States Department of Energy, and others. David lives in Louisville, Tenn. Email: davidswindlejr@comcast.net

Ronnie Foster #109 is retired and works with the chapter as an advisor. He lives in Rock Island, Tenn. Email: ronniefoster@excite.com

William McNeill #168 is retired and lives in Dunedin, Fla. Email: billchar.75@gmail.com

Gregory Lewis #228 is retired and enjoys traveling and hiking with his two chocolate Labradors. He lives in Ooltewah, Tenn. Email: gregnavy55@gmail.com

Matt Frost #288 lives in Oak Ridge, Tenn., with his wife, Leigh, and son, Andrew. Email: m_l_frost@yahoo.com

Robert Harvey #418 has three grown children and two grandchildren. He lives in Clarksville, Tenn. Email: robert.l.harvey418@gmail.com

Clinton Durham #630 is a former Army scout helicopter pilot and current airline pilot. His wife is an Air Force officer, so they move every few years. Clinton is very involved in his community. He's organized park rehabs, volunteered with the homeless, and helped prevent unlawful evictions. Clinton lives in San Antonio, Texas. Email: cjdurham42@gmail.com