



Beta Sigma Psi

Alpha Alumni Newsletter

2024 Homecoming
September 13-15, 2024
Illini vs. Central Michigan

Exciting Opportunity *(report written by Dan Ross)*

Greetings brothers. I trust this article finds you well and hope you are enjoying your summer. **I am writing to tell you about an amazingly generous opportunity that one of our brothers has put before us!!** But before I give the details, I want to give a brief recap of our current situation.

As we have discussed in our newsletters and on our Zoom calls, we are at a critical juncture in the future of our beloved Beta Sigma Psi. Prior to the global pandemic, the fraternity was enjoying a period of prolonged success. There were a number of active chapter members in the house, the alumni chapter had built up a small cash reserve and we were even preparing to embark on a much-needed renovation project for the failing moat walls. Then Covid hit and all forward progress ground to a halt for us and most other fraternities on campus. As the nation slowly emerged from the pandemic, life for our fraternity and many others did not return to pre-pandemic norms. Total fraternity membership across the campus dropped more than 30% and many houses have simply gone away. Instead of thriving, our focus shifted to surviving. Numbers of members in the house dwindled to unsustainable levels; rent payments to the alumni chapter largely dried up and every bit of cash we had available went to keeping the lights on and the doors open. Around the same time, property taxes in the Champaign/Urbana area skyrocketed. The situation became so dire that we were forced to secure a loan from National to cover our taxes. The moat project was put on hold, and in full transparency, we have been using many of the dollars collected for that project simply to keep the house open. Candidly, when I stepped in as president less than a year ago, I feared I would be the last alumni president of Alpha Chapter.

But God had another plan for us...due to the incredible efforts of the current active chapter, the generosity and hard work of many alumni and the strong partnership we have with our National chapter, the tide is turning. We had a record number of incoming freshmen commit through our scholarship process with a number of other prospects heading into fall recruitment. The group of gentlemen we have in the house now have been excelling Spiritually, Scholastically and Socially and were recognized for several awards by National in the spring. Many alumni stepped up both financially and with time and talents to help do some needed cosmetic repairs to the house and the

funds raised through the National Education Foundation have become the basis for a much more robust scholarship program that laid the groundwork for many of our incoming freshmen. We are mounting what has the potential to be a successful effort to get our property taxes reduced thanks to the efforts of a few knowledgeable brothers. As many of you know, our fraternity will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2025, and I now stand excited for what the next 100 years can bring for Alpha Chapter. All of that being said, we do not have an easy road in front of us. Our financial challenges are far from over with us facing a shortfall to cover our current tax payments. While our National fraternity has been a great partner, we must consider ways to start repaying our loan to them, and our house continues to need repairs and refreshing.

These needs have resonated in a profound way with one of our brothers, and he is offering up a very generous matching offer to help rebuild our solid foundation for the next 100 years. Below, and attached, you will find the text from a letter from that brother which outlines his challenge to all of us. I cannot begin to say thank you enough for his generosity and vision to get us headed on the right path. I will be joining the Three Zeroes Team as a part of this challenge, and I encourage you to prayerfully consider this as well.

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**Three Zeroes – A Bold Message**  
*penned by A Brother From the Early 80s*

Hello Brothers of Alpha Chapter,

The alumni newsletters of late reveal a story of gritty perseverance to keep the Alpha chapter at 706 W. Ohio open and running for current and future actives. House membership fell to pretty low numbers after the pandemic, as experienced by many fraternities. Thanks to valiant efforts by our actives and alumni, that trend is reversing and we are looking to have at least 5 or 6 new freshmen in the Fall pledge class. Those might not sound like big numbers, but they represent a critical mass that can keep the house going, and a momentum that our very dedicated actives plan to carry forward.

I know that many of you have heard of this already, and may have responded with your support in various forms. Fantastic! During the latest Zoom meeting, I listened to the alumni chapter financial status which reported we have a current cash balance of about \$35K. We recently received our property tax bill, which of course has been rising year by year along with increasing property valuations. Our tax due for this year... is \$35K. There goes that cash balance.

No wonder the alumni board has been warning us of the possibility of financial insolvency. They weren't kidding. Two thoughts immediately occurred to me:

- 1) **Beta Sigma Psi is too important to let down our actives**, both current and future, as they navigate their own futures based on what they learn in college. They learn in the classroom, yes, but just as important, they learn what it means to embrace Christian character and develop leadership skills as they grow in their personal lives.

Thinking back, did you and I know while we were in college what bits of knowledge and challenging experiences were going to be important for our own life paths? Maybe, but I think much of this isn't realized until later in life. And I can't imagine the onslaught of distractions and diversions that today's young men face upon arriving at college. Beta Sigma Psi is the unique foundation to provide for their welfare and help set the patterns for their futures.

2) **Next year will be the 100th anniversary of Beta Sigma Psi**, which all started with Alpha Chapter in 1925. *I cannot accept the idea that 2025 might also be the year that Alpha chapter may be forced to sell the house.*

After I considered and prayed about this situation, I came to an idea how to offer my support. I wanted to write this message of encouragement to all our alums, but in particular to my own contemporaries. Those of us who lived many years ago at Beta Sigs have now had three or four decades to grow and achieve many of our goals. We've had time to reflect on how our years at Beta Sigma Psi prepared us for future roles in leadership, team work, and servanthood.

And now the time comes to shore up the Alpha chapter so that current and future actives have the same opportunities to be challenged, to learn, and to build their own futures. The chapter house is an important asset that cannot be taken for granted. We need a thriving, sustaining college home that presents a positive impression to visiting candidates and their parents. One that lives up to the message presented to them about the benefits of the Lutheran fraternity experience during college. It needs to be a place where the actives are proud to live and encouraged to grow.

The main source of revenue for the alumni chapter is rent monies from the actives. Until that revenue stabilizes and can cover our annual expenses, **it's up to all of us** to provide the financial support necessary to stay afloat and press forward. Interesting how this all fits with the motto we learned long ago, *Per Aspera Ad Astra*.

There's no question that all donations, large and small, are helpful. But in all honesty, a hundred dollars here and there just isn't enough to answer this challenge. There's a big gap between where we are and where we need to be. I hope I have convinced you of this, because I am about to make a big ask on behalf of your fraternity.

The truth is – **we need alumni to write donation checks that end in three zeroes**. Yes, those would be thousands. Not everyone can do that, I understand. But many of you are in a position to do so, and help make a true difference. I encourage you to think about it this way... could you put a "current market value" on the life principles and experiences you gained during your time at Beta Sigma Psi? What might they be worth to you at this point in your life?

To stand behind my own words, I submit this donation challenge to all our alumni. I am offering to match dollar for dollar on **all individual donations of \$500 or more**, up to a cap of \$10,000. Your donation will effectively be doubled, if you are willing to step up to my challenge to "move the needle" and put enough zeroes on that check. If you are not sure – please pray about it, then start at the top and read this message again. Not for me, but for Beta Sigma Psi.

Any successful fundraising effort starts with a target that brings perspective to the goal. Just to cover the upcoming property taxes, and take care of some ongoing physical needs at the house, we should set a target of \$50,000. This is a very achievable goal for the body of alums we have.

I have seen amazing results when people get behind something they believe in. The \$50K target also corresponds with the loan amount we had received from National, which we will need to start repaying next year. Our motto means 'Through Adversity, To the Stars'. Reaching high, toward the stars, is how we meet this goal.

Now you understand the title of my message. Please answer the call from Beta Sigma Psi and be part of the "Three Zeroes" team. You can make a courageous difference for our fraternity as we pilot the future with focus and determination. Thank you.

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We want to memorialize those that are stepping up at this critical moment through several naming opportunities. New donations during this matching challenge and any existing donations to the moat campaign received after May of 2019 up to \$499 will be recognized on a plaque to hang in the chapter room. New donations to the matching challenge and any existing donations to the moat campaign from \$500-\$999 will be recognized with a paver brick in the front of the building; donations from \$1,000-\$1,499 will be recognized with a large paver brick and donations in excess of \$1,499 will have the opportunity to name one of the student rooms in the house or be recognized for a large paver brick. We will reach out to you for the language you would like on your paver bricks. This challenge will run from now until Homecoming (September 15, 2024).

If you would like to contribute, please send a check payable to “The Alpha Alumni Chapter of Beta Sigma Psi” to Greg Treichler, 118 Birch Lane, St. Charles, IL 60175, or you can Venmo your donation to @Beta-Sigs-Illinois-Alumni <https://venmo.com/u/Beta-Sigs-Illinois-Alumni>.

Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration of helping us solidify the foundation of Alpha Chapter for the next 100 years.

Fraternally,

Dan Ross Spring '91

Alumni News

Brother *Tilo Lamken* and his wife, Dr. Kaitlyn Lamken, were married on 05/18 in Highland, IL.



Homecoming 2024 *(report written by Avery Clark)*



We are pleased to announce that booking Homecoming 2024 is now live! We invite you to join us the weekend of September 13th – 15th in Urbana-Champaign. This year, we have a few different hotel room blocks to choose from. Booking deadlines vary by each hotel block, but I encourage you to reserve your spot ASAP! The **first deadline to book your hotel is August 9th** with subsequent deadlines for each room block. And as always, please continue to check the Alumni Facebook Group for updates.

We invite you to start the weekend on September 13th by returning to 706 W. Ohio for the annual Alumni/Active mixer. The event will begin at 7:00 pm in the Chapter House Lounge. Following the meet & greet with the Actives, we will head down to the traditional Friday evening social gathering, allowing brothers and significant others to reconnect and catch up with each other. A round or two of “Jungle Pong” may be played as well!

Saturday will begin with our traditional Alpha Alumni Chapter Fall Business meeting at the Chapter House. We anticipate starting the business meeting at 8:00 a.m. with our tailgate opening at the conclusion of the meeting. The tailgate will be in our traditional tailgate location on the northwest side of the Stadium. Once again, we will again have a menu featuring Papa Del’s pizza in addition to a wide selection of snacks & beverages. As of this writing, kickoff is scheduled for 11:00 am. As we saw last year though, it could get pushed back to 2:30 p.m. If changes to the schedule are made, we will continue to post updates to the Alumni Facebook Group.

The Fighting Illini football team is entering year four of the Bielema program. True to Illinois form, 2023 proved to be up and down. The season started with the optimism of 2022, but was quickly put to the test in subsequent weeks. Though challenging to watch unfold, I think it a testament to Illini fans for continuing to show out and watch our guys improve upon the week before. Undoubtedly, the Fighting Illini are hungry as we enter 2024. This year, Beta Sigma Psi will once again welcome back brothers to Memorial Stadium with our classic tailgate experience that we all know and love. This year, we once again retained a block of tickets in the Horseshoe. We have a contiguous block of 25 seats in Section 120 rows 43-45. Tickets are available on a first come, first serve basis but we might be able to snag a few more if demand is there!

Saturday will conclude with the 2024 Homecoming Banquet. After switching things up a bit last year, we are looking to re-incorporate more of the traditional banquet elements (awards, introduction of new actives) that we all know and love. Dinner will be at Baxter’s American Grille. We have reserved a private dining room that should allow us to accomplish this. Please join us before the banquet for a hospitality hour. Drinks will be complimentary from 6:00 to 8:00 (hospitality hour and the first half of the banquet) with cash bar to follow. Dinner will start around 7:00 and be family style with our traditional program occurring during dinner. Based on feedback, the dress code for this year will again be business casual. After dinner, all are invited to come unwind at Pour Bro’s Craft Taproom in Downtown Champaign. They have a wide wall of brews on tap, as well as games like ski ball, darts, and pinball. We will be sure to have a deck of playing cards. As a continuing incentive to our recent graduates, we again offer the “Young Alumni” banquet ticket price for Brothers who have graduated in the last 2 years.

Please see the schedule and reservations page for specific dates, anticipated times, and additional event information. And **please continue to check the Facebook Group** for updates about the weekend! Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend this year’s celebration. Homecoming 2024 will no doubt serve as an opportunity for a wonderful weekend to reflect upon the history of the Fraternity and to show our support to the fine Brothers that currently call 706 West Ohio Street home!

Football Tickets purchased from the Alumni Chapter will be available for pick up at the Friday evening social event or the Saturday morning Business Meeting.

2024 Homecoming Schedule and Reservations

This year's Homecoming Banquet will be held at Baxter's American Grille in Champaign (100 Trade Center Drive Champaign, IL 61820).

- WEEKEND AGENDA -

Friday, September 13, 2024

7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. – Alumni/Active Introductions in Chapter House Lounge
8:00 p.m. to midnight – Welcome Back Reception at Chapter House

Saturday, September 14, 2024

*8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. – Business Meeting at Chapter House
*10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Tailgate featuring Papa Dels Pizza
*11:00 a.m. – Football game vs. Central Michigan
*6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Hospitality hour at Baxter's
7:00 p.m. to 10:00(?) p.m. – Banquet in Baxter's Dining Room
9:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. – Pour Bro's (40 E University Avenue, Champaign, IL 61820)

*Assuming no change to scheduled 11:00 AM gametime.

- HOTEL RESERVATIONS -

Option 1: Eastland Suites (1907 N. Cunningham Ave., Urbana, IL):

Block of rooms is released to public August 9, 2024 (2 night stay required)

King Suite w/ pull-out sofa	\$209.00	(9 available)
Double Double	\$199.00	(2 available)

Call 217-367-8331 and specify group name "Beta Sigma Psi". **Group code: 3898**

Option 2: Wyndham Garden (1001 West Killarney Street, Urbana, IL)

Block of rooms is released to public September 1, 2024 (2 night stay required)

Double Queen	\$189.00	(15 available)
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Call 217-328-7900 and specify group name "Beta Sigma Psi Alumni". **Group code: GS071924BET**

OR book with hotel link:

<http://www.wyndhamhotels.com/hotels/48892?checkInDate=09/13/2024&checkOutDate=09/15/2024&groupCode=GS071924BET>

Option 3: Comfort Suites (2001 North Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, IL)

Block of rooms is released to public August 21, 2024 (2 night stay required)

King Suite (1 king & pull-out sofa)	\$259.00	(3 available)
Queen Suite (2 queen & pull-out sofa)	\$259.00	(3 available)

Call 217-328-3500 and specify group name "Beta Sigma Psi Alumni".

OR book with hotel link:

<https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/GD51T7>

Should the above hotel be booked, you may also contact the following nearby hotels. Note: we have no block reserved with the below hotels.

Ramada (217) 328-4400

Holiday Inn Express (217) 328-0328



To reserve your place at Homecoming 2024, please return the Order Form below along with check payable to **“Beta Sigma Psi”** to:

Avery Clark, 1487 E Evergreen Drive Apartment 302, Palatine, IL 60074

(call or email with questions: 217-303-1823 or avery.clark45@gmail.com)

Please note that I will be in the process of moving beginning August 1st.

My new address will be: **5044 N Wolcott Ave #2B, Chicago, IL 60640**

(mail forwarding will begin around August 15th)

I will still receive mail at my Palatine address until the end of August, but to help make sure I see your registration ASAP, please begin using the Chicago, IL mailing address for all orders put in the mail after August 1st.

OR

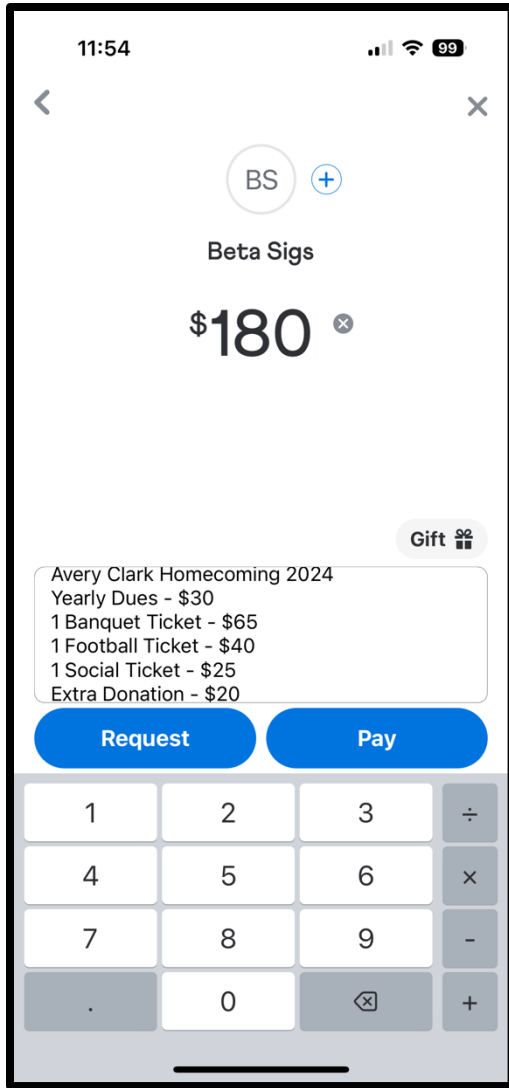
Please see the below for Venmo Payment instructions:

Returning this year, we **strongly encourage the online payment option** (electronic ordering will ensure your order is processed more quickly & avoid any snafu from mail forwarding). To register for Homecoming 2024 this way, please follow the instructions below. Screenshots were included to provide a sample of what the order should look like.

- Send payments to @Beta-Sigs-Illinois-Alumni
- Include the following information in the description (example below)
 - Name
 - Number of each item
 - Dollar amount of each item
- Send a screenshot of the completed order form to avery.clark45@gmail.com with a CC to gtreichler@ameritech.net to confirm the order.

We also encourage you to fill out items in the form below which were not included in your order (such as mailing address, phone number, graduation year, feedback, etc.). We love getting feedback about ways we can improve engagement throughout the year (not just homecoming). Additionally, I am looking to begin planning for Homecoming 2025 (100th anniversary!) shortly following the conclusion of this year’s event. Please reach out if you’d like to get involved!

Example Venmo Payment:



HOMECOMING 2024 ORDER FORM

DUES:

Existing Life Member	OR	\$ -0.00-
New Life Member (\$300)	OR	\$ _____
Annual Dues (\$30)		\$ _____

Dues must be paid (either by Life Membership or Annual Membership) to make Homecoming reservations, vote, and hold office.

TICKETS: (order must be **RECEIVED** by August 23, 2024)

Full Homecoming Package _____ x \$130 = \$ _____

OR (Individual Tickets)

Regular Banquet fee _____ x \$65 = \$ _____

“Young Alumni” Banquet (within 2 years of graduation date) _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

Social Fee _____ x \$25 = \$ _____

Fighting Illini vs. Central Michigan Football Tickets _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

OTHER: Limited Edition Beta Sigma Psi Tie _____ x \$25 = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Graduation Year _____

Email _____

Who are you trying to bring back to the Homecoming celebration? Do you or your Pledge Brothers have an anniversary coming up?

What's Your Favorite Part of Beta Sigma Psi and Homecoming weekend?

Are there any new events that you would you like to see at future Homecoming weekends? Is there a venue you'd like us to explore? Do you have a place in the Champaign area you'd like to visit/re-visit?



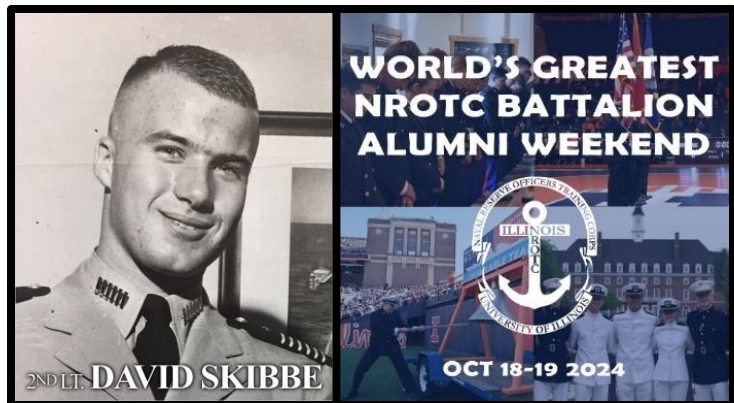
David Skibbe - NROTC Hall of Fame *(report written by Nathaniel Stoll)*

Our fallen brother, Marine Corps 2nd. Lt. **David Skibbe**, who was fatally injured in 1970 during the Vietnam War, is being recognized on **October 19th** at the U of I as the **first member of the Illini NROTC Hall of Fame**. Details about the event can be found below (taken from UIUC's NROTC Facebook page):

[University of Illinois Naval ROTC](#)

Calling all Alumni of the World's Greatest NROTC Battalion!

Spread the word! On the 18th and 19th of October 2024, we will be hosting an Alumni Weekend! We will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the dedication of Memorial Stadium with a football game vs. Michigan with a thrilling Tailgate, and viewing of the Michigan Vs. Illinois football game! Additionally, we will



celebrate the birth of our Navy & Marine Corps with a Birthday Ball dinner, and we will induct our FIRST ILLINI NROTC Hall of Fame inductee, 2LT David Skibbe, USMC (Class of '69), who was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions in Vietnam in 1970. We look forward to your presence at these memorable events!

Discounted tickets will be available for the football game at a later date.

More information will be provided for the Navy & Marine Corps Ball for those who RSVP:
<https://forms.gle/g87eTs6B5ohar6wy7>

We have a block of rooms available at a special rate; you can make your reservation here:
<https://www.bestwestern.com/.../hotel-rooms.14108.html...>

To read more about David's personal story, please see Ray Elliott's News-Gazette article (05/14/2024) at the end of this newsletter.

One additional comment of relevance. In 2018, Beta Sig brothers David Snavely and Dr. Alan Schramm presented a memorial display (donated by Alan) at our Homecoming banquet commemorating the service of four Beta Sigs who all received exemplary medals for heroism displayed during combat in Vietnam. One of those brothers was David Skibbe. (The other three were Steven Broquist, as well as Alan Schramm and David Snavely.) This memorial is proudly displayed in the main lounge of our house.



← Homecoming 2018. David Snavely (left), Dr. Alan Schramm (right).

Alumni Golf Outing (report written by Joe Baldwin)



2024 Summer Alumni Golf Outing - Mahomet, IL

Pictured above: Luther Leesman (SP '72), Mark Leesman (FA '00), Kevin Smith (FA '72), Duane Kolbus (FA '73), Brendan Wascher (FA '14), Gabe Wascher (FA '11), Nathaniel Stoll (FA '15), Joe Baldwin (FA '14), Andrew Elders (SP '98), Joe Bateman (FA '14), Travis Schiess (FA '10) and Andrew Hanselman (FA '13).

The 2024 Summer Alumni Event - Golf Outing is officially in the books and it was another great success! With three teams of alumni spanning across 6 decades, it was a great day of catching up with brothers and everyone putting their golf game to the test. The weather was beautiful and the course was in excellent shape. Thanks again to Lake of the Woods Golf Course in Mahomet for their hospitality and well-maintained facility. We had some returning players from last year as well some newcomers which was great to see. Afterwards, we all headed up once again to Project 47 Smokehouse for some delicious BBQ and bar style food which was a perfect way to close out the day and share stories of our time in the chapter house. I want to thank everyone that made it out this year to play and hopefully we can keep growing this fun event. I'm always looking for improvements so if anyone has suggestions or feedback, I'd be happy to hear them. Thanks again and keep an eye out for details for planning next years event!



Grand Champions:
Luther Leesman, Mark Leesman,
Kevin Smith, Duane Kolbus

Iron Sharpens Iron: Shaping the Future (report written by Nathaniel Stoll)

“If I were in your shoes again, knowing what I know now, by the time I returned to my current age, I would be a millionaire. If only I had learned some key lessons and skills sooner...”

These were the words I overheard an older gentleman say as he struck up a conversation with a high school student in Houston, TX at a Habitat for Humanity “build day” back in 2021. I don’t know if the man’s statement was legitimate. It’s possible he was just full of himself. But he made an important point that got me thinking: **“How would my life be different today if I knew ‘back then’ what I know now?”**








With this question in the forefront, the unfortunate reality for each of us is—as the quote goes (paraphrasing)—“Life is learned backwards... but it can only be lived forwards.” While we don’t have the ability to go back and relive our college years, we DO have an opportunity *in FRONT of us...*



We have five incoming freshman so far who signed bid cards to join Beta Sigma Psi in 2024. Those five, combined with whoever else pledges in the fall and the rest of the active chapter, will determine the trajectory of the fraternity for the next four years. While we, as alumni, no longer have the ability to directly impact the house as active members, we *do* have the ability to impact *the active members, themselves*. But first, it helps to know who the active members are... and it helps if they know who their alumni are. I suggest we take the first step.

To help initiate this process, the following Google Slides template has been created. If you are willing, please create a slide. On your slide, please include your name, city/state of residence, college background, fraternity background, career/life info, advice, contact info, and a picture to show who you are.

Link to slide deck: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dpA_sP9mtqGpwWpRPGX3J1gXQj-r0ncqxN7Ehek0HR8/edit?usp=sharing.

 [FIRST NAME LAST NAME] <i>[PLEDGE CLASS]</i>  [PHONE]  [EMAIL]  [CURRENT CITY]	MAJOR(S) [ADD INFO HERE]	FRATERNITY EXPERIENCES [ADD INFO HERE]
	HOMETOWN [ADD INFO HERE]	OTHER COLLEGE EXTRACURRICULARS [ADD INFO HERE]
CAREER/LIFE [ADD INFO HERE]		COLLEGE/LIFE ADVICE • [ADD INFO HERE]
BETA SIGMA PSI - ALPHA CHAPTER - MENTORSHIP		

These slides will be shared with the active 1st Vice President, James O’Hara. From there, he will share them with the new associate members and the rest of the active chapter. This will serve as a resource to them—to connect them with alumni who have previously held similar fraternity executive board positions, have pursued careers overlapping with their own aspirations, and/or to simply learn more about who our alumni are.

A simple conversation may not seem like much. But it has the potential to change the trajectory of a young man’s life.

Please consider making a slide. If you need any assistance getting started, please feel free to reach out to Nathaniel Stoll (alpha.publications@betasigmapsi.org) or Joe Baldwin (vp.alphaalumni@gmail.com), and we will be happy to help. Thanks in advance for your participation!



Active Chapter News (report written by Nic Talley)



The active chapter will be saying farewell to 4 of our graduating seniors (pictured left to right above):

Nolan Hull from Aurora, IL will be graduating with a BA in History. After graduation, he will be accepting a commission as an officer in the US Army and will head to Fort Liberty in North Carolina to undergo training to become an active duty combat helicopter pilot.

Andrew Arendt from Crystal Lake, IL will be graduating with a BS in Systems Engineering. He will be moving back home and is currently reviewing employment opportunities in the Chicagoland area.

Max Koenigsberg from Chicago, IL will be graduating with a BS in Civil Engineering. He has accepted a job with an engineering firm in New York City, NY to work in the renovation of historical architecture.

Miles Ralph from Springfield, IL will be graduating with a BS in Political Science. Miles has accepted a job with a consulting company in Springfield, as well as continuing his role as an aide to the Illinois Senate Republican Victory Fund. Additionally, Miles will be accepting a commission to become a Logistics officer with the US Army National Guard in Illinois.

Lastly, the Alpha Chapter 2023 Sweetheart **Molly Boyd** from Hennepin, IL will be graduating with a BS in Agriculture Consumer Economics. Molly has accepted a research fellowship position to study agriculture economics in South Africa, and will be traveling abroad for the next year in study. Molly was a 4-year member of 4H House Cooperative Sorority.



Alumni Spotlight – Paul Bishop

Year Graduated: 2000

Undergrad Major: English

Post-Grad: Act One Writing for Hollywood (Film school)

Hometown: Decatur, Illinois

Current Location: Castle Rock, Colorado

Current Employment: Director of Proposals for York Space Systems, a spacecraft manufacturer

Family: Married a Chicago gal named Danielle 18 years ago. Thankfully a north-sider or it might not have worked out (go Cubbies!). Four kids in five years: Lucas 14, Stella 13, Owen 11, Vivian 9. Journeyed out to Colorado in 2018.



The Bishops do Vegas 2022

Church I'm attending: St. John's Wash Park (142-year-old Denver LCMS congregation)

Recently I've Been Into: I restore antique cigar stands. I've got dozens of them, all cast iron or bronze, built at famous American foundries from the early 20th century. Some are basic stands with match holders and trays (see pic), but others are intricate animals, figures, or ships. To celebrate, I try out each one at least once before putting it on display. There are very few records or experts on these unique pieces of Americana, so I take joy in researching each piece and preserving a forgotten era.

It's a sentimental hobby that ties into my time at Beta Sigs. I had my very first cigar on Pledge Night 1996 with my pledge dad,

Bradley & Hubbard, 24 in.,
c. 1926-1939



Mike Woolery and pledge brother, David Josephitis. It was a fifty-cent, wood-tipped Jewel Sweet. From then began a tradition of smoking cigars with my brothers regularly, whether taking stogie walks through Urbana's snow-covered streets or catching up with guys all over the country in the years since graduation. Stogie bros include David J, AJ Elders, Ben Wells, and Conrad Moore, often during Illini games, both celebratory and commiseratory.



Dave and me, 28 years and counting. Our families have met in Illinois, Wisconsin, Colorado, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Arizona and always include stogie time.

Most fond memory of Beta Sig: Standing on the fire escape and gazing into the night sky to escape stressful finals studies. Stogie walks to the Japanese gardens and all around Urbana. Dominating Conrad in ping-pong or spending a couple hours hooping at WIMPE with him and Ben. Watching old flicks with fellow cinephiles. Gathering with Christian brothers to seek wisdom together for our futures, praying together, and knowing that at any moment, there was someone there to offer help or encouragement.

If you can recall, why did you join Beta Sig?: I met a couple of actives on Quad Day, and they persistently hounded me to join, claiming there was far more to Beta Sigs than just social merit. Eventually I relented and was greatly impressed by the maturity and mentorship of older members like Mike Woolery, Scott Schneider, Todd Goebel, Jeff Dukeman, Scott Egge, Brad Ruwe, Matt Niermann, and many others. I saw men whose lives seemed to be on meaningful trajectories where God was not just an afterthought but central to their identities. Ultimately, I blame David Josephitis. He convinced me that if we moved in together, we'd have the time of our lives. He was right.

Why should young men join Beta Sig?: College is a time of major life decisions. I can trace every important life event back to critical choices made during this time, from my career to relationships to faith-life. We're going to be influenced by the people in our circle, whether we've intentionally chosen those people or just accept what's given us. Beta Sig offers young men leaving home for the first time a chance to proactively chose a community of men who share common

values and purpose, ensuring that they find a network of brothers who truly care about them and support them in their pursuit of a meaningful future.

Who is someone you'd like to reconnect with/who should we spotlight next?: Maybe Todd Goebel. He's a lawyer now. I fondly remember debating in his room about so many issues relevant to the House. I'm glad others are taking the brunt of his sharp wit these days.

How can people reconnect with you?: pfbishop7@gmail.com or on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/paul-f-bishop-57876015

Contact Us: Alumni Board

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Distinguished Alumnus Award

The Distinguished Alumnus Award is chosen each year at the Spring Business Meeting. The Executive Board is always interested in obtaining names of alumni worthy of the title of "Distinguished Alumnus." Please read through the criteria below and think of someone who falls into one or more of the categories listed. Nominees may have done something recently or in the past that sets them apart from their peers.

Distinguished Alumnus Judging Criteria:

1. Activity in Beta Sigma Psi as an active or alumnus
2. Activity in the Community (school, clubs, volunteer, etc.)
3. Activity in Church (offices, committee, etc.)
4. Awards (professional, civic, etc.)
5. Outstanding personal achievement
6. Any other characteristic qualifying nominee as a Distinguished Alumnus

Distinguished Alumnus Nomination Form

Name of Nominee _____

Person Nominating _____

Address _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Phone _____

Describe why the person you are nominating deserves this award.
(Attach additional sheet if necessary)

Return Form To (or fill out via Google Form; see link: <https://forms.gle/SaywS3J3yvc6Qwx48>):

Dan Ross
81 Freedlund Drive
Rockton, IL 61072



David Skibbe - News-Gazette Article *(article written by author Ray Elliott, 05/14/2024)*

Mark your calendars for Oct. 18-19, when the University of Illinois Navy ROTC will celebrate 100 years of Memorial Stadium with a birthday ball dinner and the induction of the first Illini NROTC Hall of Fame inductee — Marine Corps 2nd. Lt. DAVID SKIBBE (Class of '69), who was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions in Vietnam in 1970. Here with a tribute to 2nd. Lt. Skibbe is fellow Marine and UI alum-turned-prolific author RAY ELLIOTT.



After David W. Skibbe had finished NROTC training in 1969 and was commissioned a second lieutenant of Marines, he was graduated from the University of Illinois and then completed training at The Basic School in Quantico before being sent off to Vietnam.

His fiancée, Georgine Tortorella, also graduated from the university and started teaching high school English. They expected to be married when 2nd Lt. Skibbe served his time in the Marine Corps and came home to the Midwest to work at a career in forestry, his college major.

Those plans went awry soon after 2nd Lt. Skibbe spent six months in-country with 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, a battalion of the Fifth Marine Division that had fought on

Iwo Jima during World War II and was reactivated during Vietnam, when both the 26th and 27th regiments fought there.

2nd Lt. Skibbe became one of 67 University of Illinois graduates who fought in Vietnam and were killed in action. Not only was he killed, but his body was never recovered and brought home.

With 2/26 being rotated out of country, 2nd Lt. Skibbe opted to join the First Reconnaissance Battalion of the First Marine Division because of his relationship with 2/26 Lt. Col. Bill Drumwright.

“David and the colonel had a special bond as he had saved the colonel’s life when a flatbed rail car on which they were riding and a locomotive were blown off the railroad tracks above Da Nang,” said a fellow lieutenant and author, Dan Kellum, who spent years researching what happened to his friend for a book he was writing. “David pulled the colonel out from under the locomotive before it could crush him.”

The colonel reportedly wanted 2nd Lt. Skibbe to rotate because “he had seen enough of the war with 2/26.” But a push was made to send all of First Recon’s seven-man teams to the bush to flush out a big operation of the enemy. 2nd Lt. Skibbe managed to join the last team sent out to the Que Son Mountains south of Da Nang deep in an enemy-controlled area on March 2, 1970.

In a furious firefight in Quang Nam Province about 10 miles northwest of the city of An Hoa, 2nd Lt. Skibbe took a round in the leg and ankle. Two helicopters had arrived and were able to hover above the treetops, 75 to 100 feet above the ground, to extract the wounded and the outmanned team.

But 2nd Lt. Skibbe wouldn't take the medevac initially because another man was wounded more severely, and the lieutenant insisted that that Marine be evacuated first.

The corpsman described 2nd Lt. Skibbe's wound as a "penetrating wound of the lower right leg, breaking the fibula 2 inches above the ankle, leaving an open fracture. Hemorrhage was moderate and eased after a pressure battle dressing was applied."

The broken leg was immobilized by the application of "a splint constructed from a small tree limb."



2nd Lt. Skibbe continued directing his men and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his leadership. A hoist cable with a jungle penetrator was lowered to extract the more seriously wounded Marine. Then it was lowered again to retrieve 2nd Lt. Skibbe.

The Marines on the ground lost sight of him when he was 30 to 40 feet in the air and cleared the trees. But when he got about 20 feet from the door of the helicopter, 80 to 100 feet above the ground, the cable snapped and 2nd Lt. Skibbe fell to the ground.

Confusion followed. The pilot radioed to the Marines on the ground to see if 2nd Lt. Skibbe was OK. Apparently thinking he was in the chopper, the radioman replied, "Yes, he's OK."

The pilot interpreted that to mean that they had located him and he was OK. Ladders were lowered for the rest of the team, and the choppers left for An Hoa.



It was there that both the helicopter crew and the team realized that 2nd Lt. Skibbe was not in the aircraft. Both helicopters went back to the area and an attempt was made to insert Capt. Lavoy D. McVey to search for 2nd Lt. Skibbe. Another cable snapped and McVey also fell to the ground, presumably to his death.

Because of the enemy position and numbers and dense jungle, it was decided not to attempt another insertion and risk more loss of life. And it was believed that both men sustained fatal injuries in the falls. No sign of either man was ever found in later searches.

Back home, about all Georgine and 2nd Lt. Skibbe's parents knew that he was missing in action in South Vietnam. Drumright reported this to 2nd Lt. Skibbe's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Skibbe, in a letter dated March 27, 1970.

A subsequent letter to the Skibbes from the colonel described the later attempt to find both Marines, the lack of success and that two men had observed 2nd Lt. Skibbe's body hitting the ground.

A letter to Georgine from the assistant secretary of the Navy added little to what the colonel had written, repeating that the "fall and impact was observed by an experienced parachute jumper and a doctor. Both of these men stated that David did not move at all after impact with the ground, and from experience, both of them believe that an unobstructed fall from that height would render survival too improbable to be logically considered."

"The story as to his demise never sounded right to me," Georgine said, "even after several years of my trying to get answers from the White House. Years later, I received a letter from Dan Kellum,

who had devoted himself to researching and commemorating the lives of Marines whose stories needed to be properly told.

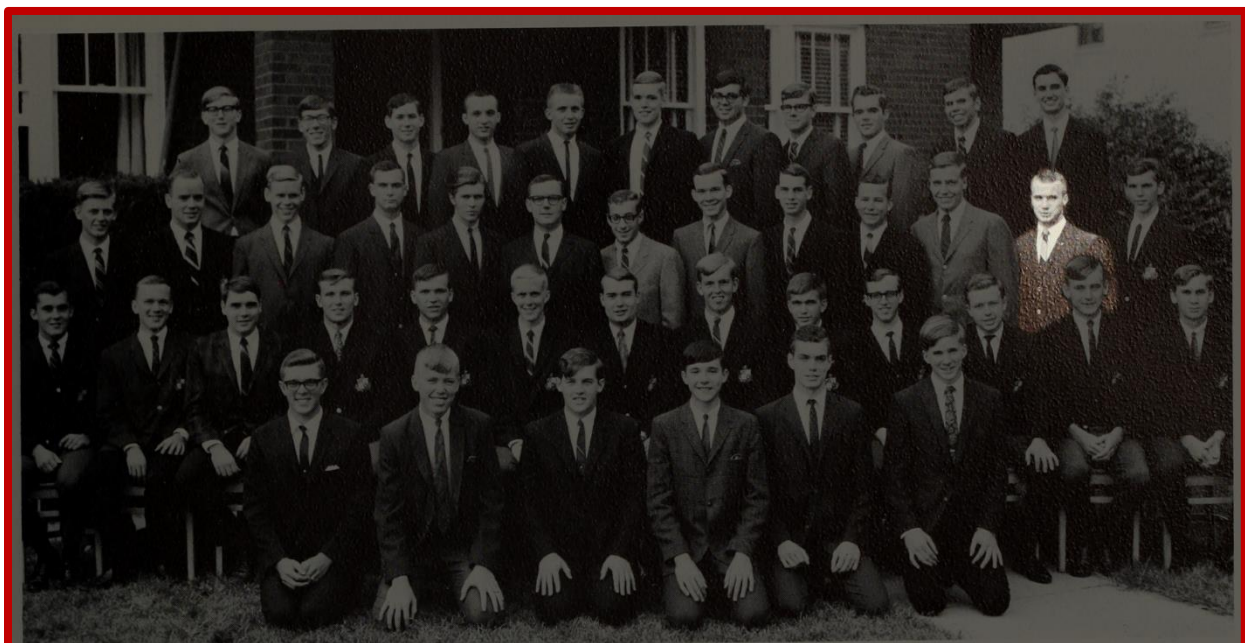
“So after almost 40 years, he contacted me and told me how a Vietnamese local had found David Skibbe, and on his person found a picture of David and me. That was so heart-wrenching. This prompted an even further probing by Dan and is included in the book that has that picture and David’s story in it.

“The stress of re-acquainting myself with this situation has taken a toll once again as I was in contact with Dan for some time as he wrote this book.”



Ray Elliott is an author and former high school teacher who lives in rural Urbana. He can be reached at rayelliott23@att.net.

Thank you to Ray for giving us permission to include this article in our Alpha Alumni newsletter.



TOP ROW: John Fisher, Randell Ehlers, Michael Madsen, Steven Eggerding, Dale Tammen, David Nesler, Richard Heinkel, Neal Mankey, Thomas Holtz, Bruce Petersen, Timothy Gassel. THIRD ROW: Thomas Trebelhorn, Christopher Klockau, Theodore Nolte, Gary Weimer, Tedd Runge, Donald Tate, Frederick Quirstfeld, Gerald Skoglund, Norman Siekman, Walter Feitshans, Bruce Jameson, David Skibbe, Peter Mueller. SECOND ROW: Richard Henrichs, Richard Leverenz,

Paul Monke, Stephen Kannaka, Allan Bleich, Robert Brissman, Ardell Nease, Donald Weeke, Randall Krause, Paul Nystrom, Donald Busse, Norman Harms, Gerald Borchers. BOTTOM ROW: Dale Fesser, Steven Rull, David Glade, Joel Rett, Roger Caruana, Mark Krebs. NOT IN PANEL: David Aschbacher, Kerry Anderson, Howard Elliott, William Foss, John Holtz, Michael Masny, John Quirstfeld, Wilbur Stamberger, Steven Wilson.

Beta Sigma Psi, 1968 Illio