



Beta Sigma Psi Alpha Alumni Newsletter

2025 Homecoming

September 27, 2025

Illini vs. USC

Year in Review (report written by Andrew Elders, Dan Ross, Nathaniel Stoll, Greg Treichler)

As we come to our final newsletter of the year, we want to take a quick moment to travel back in time to a year ago...

On October 21, 2023, the alumni board, fellow alumni, and the active chapter executive board gathered in the chapter room at 706 W Ohio St in Urbana, IL for our annual Homecoming meeting to discuss the state of Alpha Chapter. During the active chapter report, members of the executive board highlighted that morale in the house was on the rise. Member



involvement was increasing, and the active chapter was setting its sights on increasing recruitment numbers, improving academic performance, and continuing philanthropic success. In contrast, the alumni chapter reported an opposite trajectory—namely, dwindling financials. Low active membership in the house—resulting in missed rent payments to the alumni chapter—compounded with increased property taxes and operating expenses projected a future where, unless something changed, Alpha Chapter would struggle to continue to exist as it does today.

And so, in November 2023, the alumni board expeditiously called a virtual meeting to discuss a major concern: the possibility of having to sell the house. The turnout at the meeting was going to be somewhat unpredictable. Would only a handful of people show up? A dozen people? It was around the time of the holidays, after all. As it turned out, over 40 brothers joined the call that night. This left an impression: Our alumni—despite leaving campus years ago—still care about Beta Sigma Psi at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

While the meeting, itself, was made up of good questions, dialogue, and discussions, arguably some of the most important conversations didn't occur over Zoom that evening... but, rather, played out in the months that followed, as brothers called brothers to bring awareness to the

situation, brainstorm what could be done to turn things around, and build some strength in numbers.

Since that meeting, over the past year, the number of brothers who reached out and offered support has been remarkable. There are too many positive notes and messages and actions to highlight and capture in a small article like this. But we do want to feature one significant achievement which, thankfully, is helping us deal with the primary subject which painted a gloomy picture this time last year: financials.



Following the November 2023 alumni Zoom meeting, alumni recognized some urgency to buy Alpha Chapter some time. Some initial donations were made by alumni. While they were certainly helpful and a step in the right direction, some recognized we needed more and believed we could go bigger. Starting with brother Steve Geske's "Three Zeroes Campaign", a \$10,000 matching program was launched. Then, two other alumni—Alan Schramm and Bob Mulch—stepped up and offered similar incentives: a \$10,000 and \$5,000 match, respectively. Chris Nack also picked up the cost of the upstairs bathroom renovation, and Andrew Elders, Dave Wu, and the actives brought it to life. Other significant donations were made. Overall, the goal was to raise \$50,000 by Homecoming... and that goal was met! With the help of our alumni, from the time the "Three Zeroes

Campaign" was announced up until today, a total of \$65,361 has been raised!

At the bottom of this article are a list of brothers who helped make this goal possible (as well as brothers who donated earlier in the year). It could not have been done without them.

This article does not do justice to extend enough gratitude to all those who contributed to the financial campaign this year. Nor does it recognize all who contributed in other ways, such as donating time and energy to volunteer. All in all, put simply, we are very blessed to have alumni who willingly donate time and money to help our fraternity continue its mission of developing young men in college and life thereafter. We, on the board, greatly appreciate each of you and the positive contributions you made to strengthen our fraternity this year.



If you are reading this and would like to join those in the list below, please consider making a donation! We hope to begin the process of formally recognizing donors in the form of plaques, bricks, and names on rooms at the house (as referenced in page 4 of the last newsletter) beginning in the first half of 2025, so it is not too late! To

guarantee your name will be added to the list of donors being recognized, **please submit your donation before the end of the second week in January (January 11, 2025)**. We hope to have an update on the donor recognitions at our **next alumni meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2025** (see "Upcoming Events" article below)...

There is still much work to be done at Alpha Chapter, and we certainly are not out of the woods yet. But this year has been a significant step in the right direction, and we will be looking to build upon this momentum next year—which just so happens to be a special year... our centennial year!





to our generous alu<u>mni</u>...

2024 DONORS

FOUNDER'S CLUB

Steve Geske Rodney Gieseke Tim Holtan Steve Meyer Dr. Robert Mulch, Jr. Dr. Alan Schramm

"THREE ZEROES" CLUB

Anonymous Josh Baggett John Bernhardt, Jr. Larry Braden Steven Brown **Eric Christiansen Dale Durfey Andrew Elders Tom Fricke Daniel Friend Bill Hartman Bruce Heins Dan Jenkins Alex Johnson Joel Kahling** Michael Kesselmayer **Patrick Kirchhofer** Chris Nack (continued)

William Rittmeyer Dan Ross Ron Sokol Nathaniel Stoll Karl Swanson Tim Tappendorf Kerry Wienke

CONCORDIA CLUB

Merle Aukamp Gary Best Gary Collis Del Karmeier Anthony Keel Justin Keel Mark Keel William Keel Mark Leesman Michael Masny Donald Robins Nathan Schneider Donald Tate Gary Weimer Stuart Young

WITTENBERG CLUB

Tilo Lamken Mark Toledano Gregory Wyss

Founder's = 5,000+ | "Three Zeroes" = 1,000+ | Concordia = 500+ | Wittenberg = 100+

If you made a donation since the December newsletter last year, and you do not see your name above, please contact Nathaniel Stoll (contact info at end of newsletter) to make sure your name gets added to the list so we can make sure your donation is accounted for.

Alumni News



Brother *Curtis Handley*, 60, of Mokena, IL passed away on September 14th, 2024 at the University of Michigan Hospital after a hard-fought, courageous, five-year battle with metastatic cancer. Curt attended the University of Illinois for his B.S. in Computer Science and Engineering where he met his wife, Mary, in a class they shared. Curt was a member of Beta Sigma Psi. After graduation, Curt and Mary moved to Michigan, where Curt pursued his law degree and fatherhood. In Lansing, MI, they had one daughter, Jacqueline, whom he loved dearly. Curt received his J.D. from Cooley Law School in 1993. He loved practicing law. He was a pioneer in

computer law, working remotely with clients all over the globe a decade before that was common practice. Curt was a kind, bright, caring, soul with raucous laugh and a sparkling sense of humor. To read more about Curt's life, his full obituary can be found here: <u>Curtis Edward Handley</u> <u>Obituary 2024 - Kurtz Memorial Chapel</u>.



Brother *Patrick Kirchhofer*, 60, passed away on November 11, 2024. Patrick graduated from Beecher City High School in 1983, Lake Land College in 1985, and the University of Illinois in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. He was a member of Beta Sigma Psi. Patrick enjoyed competing in sports, participating in baseball and basketball in high school, and softball well into his adult years. Patrick spent almost his entire working career at the Illinois Farm Bureau, working in several counties

before settling in as Peoria County Farm Manager for the last 29 years. Patrick loved the farm, especially preserving the natural environment and habitat, as well as restoring old farm equipment. To read more about Patrick's life, his full obituary can be found here: <u>Obituary | Patrick W.</u> Kirchhofer of Shumway, Illinois | Johnson Funeral Home.

Weddings! Congratulations are in order for...



(pictured above)

(Upper left) Brother *Nick Schwingbeck* and his wife, Kaelin ~ September 7, 2024! (Lower right) Brother *Galvin McQuellon* and his wife, Tianna ~ September 14, 2024! (Lower left) Brother *Joe Bateman* and his wife, Kristen ~ September 28, 2024! (Upper right) Brother *Steve Meyer* and his wife, Lynnae ~ November 9, 2024!

(Pictured are David's siblings and fiancée.)

Illinois Sports. All things considered... it's been a great year to be an Illini. From the Big Ten basketball tournament championship and Elite Eight run in the spring, to bringing home the Land of Lincoln trophy to end a nine-win regular season for the Fighting Illini football team, brothers of Beta Sigma Psi have not only had a chance to celebrate some great victories... but also some great brotherhood.



Beta Sigs cheering on the orange and blue, no matter the elements.

62,000+ fans give standing ovation for 1st Illini NROTC HOF Inductee, Beta Sig, Marine Corps 2nd Lt David Skibbe at historic 100-year Memorial Stadium Rededication game.



An extra-special moment shared by brothers occurred at the 100-year Memorial Stadium Rededication football game this year against Michigan. The night before, on October 18th, our fallen Brother, *David Skibbe*, was recognized as the first inductee in the Illini NROTC Hall of Fame. This honor was given to him for his service, and



David Skibbe NROTC Hall of

ultimately, his own personal sacrifice in the Vietnam War, as he gave his life to save others during battle while he, himself, was wounded. And so, during the first timeout of the October 19th game, the sold-out crowd at Memorial Stadium stood on their feet and gave a standing ovation in honor of the man displayed on the jumbotron: Second Lieutenant David William Skibbe. It was truly a spectacular moment to witness. And as it turned out, just like they did in 1924, the Fighting Illini ended up beating the Wolverines that Saturday. Needless to say, the weekend was one to remember, on multiple accounts.

Homecoming Report (report written by Avery Clark)

As we approach the end of the calendar year, I want to give a big thank you to all who helped make Homecoming 2024 another great weekend at the University of Illinois! Despite challenges posed by being held during an earlier-than-usual weekend, it was great to see everyone come together to cheer the Illini on to victory over Central Michigan.

This year, we enjoyed a better-than-expected turnout for the Friday night social. Alums were greeted at 706 W. Ohio Street by Actives, new Associate Members, and a spotless house. Some recent facility improvement efforts (championed by our Building Director Andrew Elders) were on display and serve as an example of the ways we continue to be stewards of the house, ensuring we're able to meet the needs of future generations of Beta Sigma Psi. Old photo albums and memorabilia were on display for



alums to go through and catalogue, helping to bring together members across generations and allowing people to re-live experiences they shared in the house. A big thank-you to the active members for preparing the house. Friday night was truly a testament to how our shared memories & experiences solidify our brotherhood through all time!



To kick off Saturday, we started with our annual business meeting. While the organization still faces challenges ahead, it was encouraging to see how recruitment efforts and alumni engagement have reignited the chapter's energy and garnered positive momentum. Please reach out to myself or any other board member to look for ways to get involved! Immediately following the business meeting, we began tailgating outside Memorial Stadium. Papa Del's (back by popular demand), snacks, and drinks were enjoyed outside while we watched the Fighting Illini in a command performance over CMU from our seats in the Horseshoe. Once again, we were blessed with fantastic summer-like weather.

Formal Dinner at Baxter's



To conclude Saturday, we hosted our banquet at Baxter's American Grille in Champaign. We were able to enjoy a family style dinner of bacon bourbon roasted pork loin, green beans, salad, and mashed potatoes followed by dessert and coffee. The space enabled us to return to our regularly scheduled program, allowing for further fellowship and brotherhood. Following the banquet, we were able to

enjoy a nightcap at Pour Bros. in downtown Champaign, where the conversations continued long into the night.

I again want to thank everyone who attended & helped make this year happen! I also want to take the time to ask everyone to begin thinking about Homecoming 2025. This upcoming year marks a very important milestone in the life of our

Fraternity: 100 years of Beta Sigma Psi. To mark this occasion, I want to make 2025 our biggest Homecoming yet! Mark your calendars for **September 27, 2025**! As we move into the new year, I'll be sure to post information to the Facebook group, as well as subsequent newsletters. And if you'd like to get involved or have any ideas about how the weekend should look, please consider filling out the attached survey or joining my Homecoming 2025 Subcommittee!



Link to feedback survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSciGPHpkzfnk_5fRiulS130oDWGWwIQI8aAgf3D F_VnRw0t1g/viewform?usp=sf_link

Homecoming Weekend 2025 is scheduled for the weekend of <u>September 27, 2025</u>. Updates regarding banquet, accommodations, & schedule to be provided in future Newsletters & the Facebook Group!

Upcoming Alumni Events in 2025 (report written by Nathaniel Stoll)

Some upcoming events to be aware of in 2025!...

Alpha Chapter All-Alumni 2025 Kick-off Meeting

<u>When</u>: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 @ 7:00 PM CST <u>What</u>: The alumni board will give updates on finances and other fraternity business, as well as open the floor for general alumni discussion. <u>Where: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82561438077?pwd=0l118CAeLxijoXeq73A1z8O3uQuVY4.1</u>

<u>Meeting ID</u>: 825 6143 8077 <u>Passcode</u>: 299915

Call-In Number: +1 (312) 626-6799

National Centennial Celebration

<u>When</u>: Friday to Sunday, February 14-16, 2025 <u>What</u>: Beta Sigma Psi will be turning 100! Join Beta Sigs, young and old, from near and far, in celebrating this momentous occasion! <u>Where</u>: St. Louis, MO <u>How to Register</u>: <u>https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScu</u> <u>2Kp6tVvBZUn_vobmY2Z7b8Ofng7seS8ddaK</u> <u>7z2zCRMXtIA/viewform?pli=1</u>





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2025 Christian Leadership Award Scholarship Weekend

When: Saturday, March 8, 2025

<u>What</u>: Join the actives in welcoming incoming freshmen to Beta Sigma Psi for scholarship interviews for the 2025 Christian Leadership Award. This is a great chance to act as a personal example to PNMs and parents (and actives) of how brotherhood at Beta Sigma Psi does not die when one leaves campus, but rather, continues on even after college. <u>Where</u>: 706 W Ohio St, Urbana, IL 61801

<u>How to Register</u>: Contact our scholarship chair, Josh Baggett, at <u>uiucscholarship@betasigmapsi.org</u> or 618-410-1912.



<u>Scholarship Application</u>: If you know any seniors in high school who are looking to attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2025, please share this scholarship form link with them: <u>https://forms.gle/iL4zSEmTVGevTMvP9</u>.

Homecoming 2025

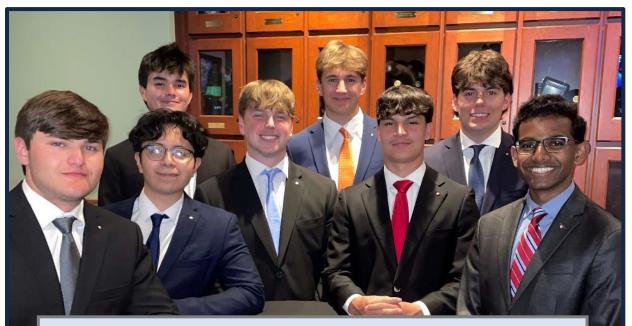
<u>When</u>: September 26-28, 2025 (Friday-Sunday) <u>What</u>: Homecoming 2025! Let's celebrate 100 years and make this the biggest Homecoming yet! <u>Where</u>: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign <u>How to Register</u>: Updates regarding banquet, accommodations, & schedule to be provided in future Newsletters & the Facebook Group!



Active Report (report written by Nic Talley)

A glimpse into the lives of the Fall 2024 Active Chapter...

Fall 2024 Pledge Class



The Fall 2024 pledge class—the largest pledge class since Fall 2013, with 8 total new members. From left to right: Logan Rice, Belleville IL. Steven Ortega, Chicago IL. Benjamin McKenzie, Round Lake IL. Drew Thurman, St. Joseph IL. Bennett Crane, Herscher IL. Raiden Daichendt, Chicago IL. Gavin Fack, Arlington Heights IL. David Biruduganti, Naperville IL.

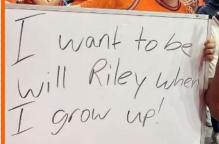
Philanthropy

This fall, Alpha Chapter raised a little over \$2,500 for philanthropy causes with an average of 17.5 volunteer hours per member! Causes we benefited included Habitat for Humanity, Champaign-Urbana At Home, and Champaign Urbana Rape Advocacy and Center for Education Services.

Photos



ennett Crane hard at work or our homecoming banner.



Sophomore Carter Puracchio, a Captain of the Orange Krush basketball student section, gets a photo with standout Illini freshman Will Riley after his record-breaking debut game at State Farm Center. Senior Nicholas Talley served as the inaugural Army ROTC cannon crew captain this football season. He is pictured with the backup 105mm howitzer during the Illini's 45-0 season debut win over Eastern Illinois.

> Pledges Bennett Crane, Raiden Daichendt, and Drew Thurman play Jungle Pong after dinner at the house.

9/11 Memorial Climb. This September, nine of our brothers attended the 9/11 Memorial Stair climb hosted by the UIUC Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC programs. They climbed 2,200 stairs in Memorial Stadium to simulate the 110 flights that NYPD and NYFD first responders climbed to rescue those trapped in the towers as they fell. Joining them was 2nd Lieutenant Miles Ralph, a recent May 2024 graduate and one of the newest members of the Alpha Alumni Chapter.



Fall 2024 Brotherhood Awards



2024 Brother of the Year:

Nicholas Talley President Senior, Pre-Law Psychology Auburn, IL



Fall 2024 Brother of the Semester:

James O'Hara 1st Vice President Junior, Marketing Kent, WA



Fall 2024 Outstanding New Member:

Bennett Crane Freshman, Agribusiness-Economics Herscher, IL

Treichler Unsung Hero Award:

"Awarded to the member who has received the least recognition for the most over-achievement in their role and to the success of the Active Chapter during the Fall 2024 Semester. Named in honor of alumni Greg Treichler (PC Spring '91)"

Johnny Powell Treasurer Junior, Econometrics Westmont, IL



Bunte School Spirit Award:

"Awarded to the member who is the most passionate in their school spirit and Illini Pride during the Fall 2024 Semester. Named in honor of alumni Brian Bunte (PC Fall '79)"

Carter Puracchio Recruitment Chairman Sophomore, Agriculture Communications Herscher, IL

<u>A Look at Alpha Chapter's First Home – 52 E. Armory</u>

(report written by Andrew Elders)

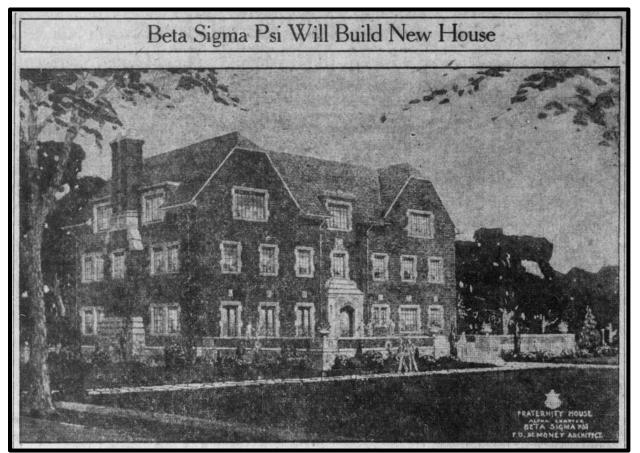


Image taken from The Daily Illini, May 11, 1930.

As we prepare to celebrate Beta Sigma Psi's centenary in 2025, I thought a look back at Alpha Chapter's only custom-built house would be interesting. Among the memorabilia displayed at our Homecoming reunion this year were several Illio yearbooks from the 1930s, showing Alpha Chapter residing at 52 E. Armory in Champaign. Either I knew about that long ago and had since forgotten it, or it was new information to me. The photo of the house intrigued me, so being an architectural historian, I did some research. Turns out, the old house at 52 E. Armory was purpose-built for Alpha Chapter. An article in *The Daily Illini* printed on Sunday, May 11, 1930 carried the headline "Beta Sigma Psi Will Build New House" and below that, the architect's rendering of the proposed house was published. Of particular interest to me was that the architect, Frank Osborn DeMoney, was one I was familiar with on account of his architectural work in Chicago and Oak Park.

The article stated that construction was to begin on June 1, 1930, with an expected completion date of September 1. The house would provide living quarters for 41 members, in 19 study rooms in the upper floors and a dorm on the third floor. The dining room, kitchen, service quarters, and chapter room were to be housed in the basement level, and a large living room, guest room, and library would take up the ground floor. The overall design of the house was in the English Tudor style, built in brick and limestone and having a slate roof. The emblem of Beta Sigma Psi was carved in limestone and set into the wall above the central second-story window. The structure of the house was entirely fireproof, being made up of steel and concrete, and the total estimated construction cost was \$85,000. The building site at the northeast corner of Armory and Locust

had been purchased a year prior. There was ample space for the new house, as the lot had a frontage of 146 feet on Armory and 176 feet on Locust.

The September 1, 1930 completion date wasn't met. Another article in *The Daily Illini* from October 18 stated that, "Although the members are living in the house at present it will not be completely finished until about November 1." The article gave further detail about the interior of the house, describing the basement dining room and chapter room as being separated by folding doors to allow for expanded dining room seating capacity. The dining room had recessed niches in the plaster for pictures. The basement also included a fireproof vault for the storage of chapter records. The first two floors of the house were finished with oak beams and textured, colored plaster.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the new house was the exterior, which boasted "an immense lawn" that included a sunken garden with a fountain, and a large terrace porch laid with turf and flagstones. A set of French doors from the dining room opened to the sunken garden, and another set opened from the living room onto the flagstone terrace.

Alpha Chapter spent the 1930s ensconced in 52 E. Armory. The house's French doors proved to be a liability almost immediately after the men moved in for the first school year. In the early morning hours of December 16, 1930, an estimated \$375 worth of watches, clothes, money, a traveling bag, cigarettes, and candy disappeared from the house. The burglar gained entry through one of the French doors in the dining room. In investigating the burglary, Champaign police declared that "they had no reason to suspect the burglary was an 'inside job." Otherwise, through the decade, the house served the needs of Alpha Chapter well until the chapter folded in 1940.



Image taken from the 1951 Illio; note the stone crest above the center window. View from the southwest.

Pi Lambda Phi then acquired the house from Alpha Chapter at auction. The fraternity had formed their Tau Delta chapter at UIUC in 1934 and were looking to acquire a house. The Pi Lams were a Jewish fraternity and it's interesting to note that a Jewish fraternity acquired our original house, and we acquired our current house from another Jewish fraternity, Phi Sigma Delta. The Pi Lams remained in the house until sometime in the early 1970s, when the house was sold to Zeta Psi.

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Zeta Psi occupied the house until their chapter folded in the 1978-9 school year, and in the fall of 1979, the house was rented to Beta Sigma Psi's sister sorority, Phi Beta Chi. Phi Beta Chi formed in the spring of 1978, and impressively had enough members to occupy the house after a full school year. The sorority continued to rent the old Beta Sig house from Zeta Psi until the fall of 1986, when the re-formed Zeta Psi chapter moved back in. However, by spring 1988, Zeta Psi was once again reorganizing, and the house was rented to the oldest historically African-American fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha. They occupied the house the following school year, and by March 1991, the house was empty and listed for sale by an "unnamed fraternity." The old house at 52 E. Armory was demolished after being sold, and the Armory Place Apartments have occupied the site since 1992.

Several alums wondered aloud what happened to our emblem built into the old chapter house; no one seems to know where it went. Anyone with memories or photos of the old place are encouraged to share them with me at <u>aeillini@gmail.com</u>.

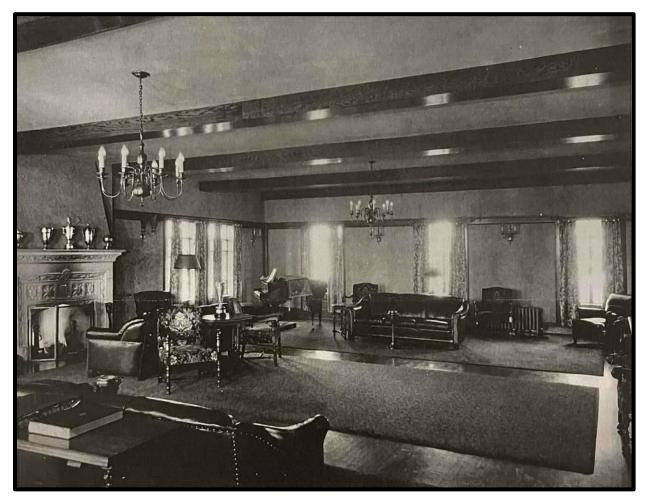
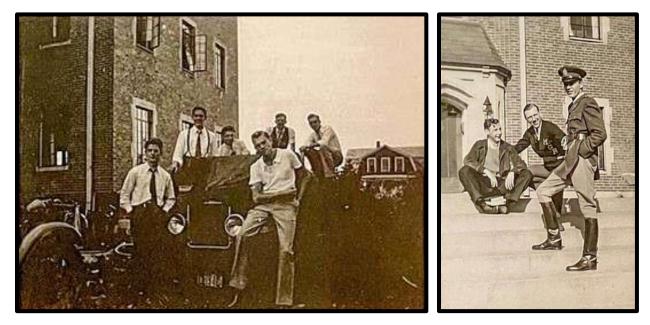


Image taken in 1931; from the Beta Sigma Psi archives. Lounge, located to the left of the front door.



Note the "B" carved in stone.

Group on flagstone terrace outside of lounge.



Group on east side of house.

Group on front steps.

Preserving Our Current House (report written by Andrew Elders)

As noted in the first article of this newsletter, cash donations are always welcome and always helpful. However, there's more than one way to give! The house could always use some tools and equipment, so if you find yourself upgrading your tools or downsizing (both powered and non-powered), consider donating them to our chapter house. Particularly useful would be a few sections of scaffolding for exterior work. If you can't donate scaffolding, a loan of scaffolding would also be appreciated as well. If you have materials or particular skills to offer, please reach out to me at aeillini@gmail.com. We're always looking for expertise, be it woodworking, electrical, plumbing, painting, drywalling, etc. There will be plenty of projects coming up so it would be great to have a list of alumni aptitudes you're willing to share.

Thank you! Andrew Elders Building & Facilities Director

<u>Alumni Spotlight – Todd Goebel</u>

Year Graduated: 1998

Undergrad Major: Finance

Post-Grad: Law degree from SIU

Hometown: Shelbyville, IL

<u>Current Location</u>: Rochester, IL, just outside of Springfield

<u>Current Employment</u>: Gates Wise Schlosser & Goebel (law firm in Springfield)



<u>Family</u>: My wife, Julie. Three boys and one girl. Nathan (21, senior at FGCU), Scott (sophomore at SLU), Connor (17), and Lauren (14) (both in high school).

Recently I've Been Into: Pickleball.

Most fond memory of Beta Sig: Listening to Rancid with Mike Woolery in Tim Foley's room.

If you can recall, why did you join Beta Sig?: I was surrounded by young men who treated each other like family.

Who is someone you'd like to reconnect with/who should we spotlight next?: Keith Ameiss

How can people reconnect with you?: <a>goebel@gwspc.com

Contact Us: Alumni Board

President

Dan Ross 81 Freedlund Drive Rockton, IL 61072 815-601-0854 <u>dross@cfnil.org</u>

Vice President

Joe Baldwin 3500 County Road 329 Palmyra, MO 63461 618-406-0284 vp.alphaalumni@gmail.com

Treasurer-Secretary

Greg Treichler 118 Birch Lane St. Charles, IL 60175 630-220-9831 <u>gtreichler@ameritech.net</u>

Publications Chairman

Nathaniel Stoll 1763 S Country Club Rd Apt 207 Decatur, IL 62521 217-273-3393 alpha.publications@betasigmapsi.org

Immediate Past President

Nick Schwingbeck 3704 N. Janssen Ave Apt #2 Chicago, IL 60613 224-622-0328 <u>n.schwingbeck@gmail.com</u>

Recruitment Chairman

Mike Schwingbeck 450 W. Cool Drive, Apt 437 Tucson, AZ 85704 224-766-9889 <u>mschwingbeck@gmail.com</u>

Scholarship Chairman

Josh Baggett 1144 Pinrun Dr. Ballwin, MO 63011 618-410-1912 uiucscholarship@betasigmapsi.org

Homecoming Director

Avery Clark 5044 N Wolcott Ave #2B Chicago, IL 60640 217-303-1823 avery.clark45@gmail.com

Building & Facilities Director

Andrew Elders 1037 Pleasant St. #1C Oak Park, IL 60302 309-373-2538 <u>aeillini@gmail.com</u>

Alumni Advisor

Dave Wu 3946 N Kolmar Ave Chicago, IL 60641 708-557-2511 davidwu772@yahoo.com

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	
Phone	
Describe why the person you are nom (Attach additional sheet if necessary)	inating deserves this award.
Return Form To (or fill out via Google I Dan Ross 81 Freedlund Drive Rockton, IL 61072	orm; see link: <u>https://forms.gle/SaywS3J3yvc6Qwx48</u>):
