

Delta Kappa Gamma, Tennessee State Organization

Theta Chapter History

Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) was organized in Tennessee on November 30, 1935 in Nashville. The Theta Chapter of DKG in Tennessee was organized April 1, 1939 by Miss Tommie Reynolds* to serve women educators in Madison and Chester counties. Charter members were: Mrs. H.E. Cawthon*, Louise Oakley*, Mrs. Frank A. Mercer*, Eula Mae Ringgold*, Mrs. Flynn Pickens*, Louise Austin*, Maggie Jo Gray*, Irene S. Foy*, Osa Smith King*, and Gertrude Woodrow*. The first Theta chapter president was Hilda Cawthon, who served 1939-1941. Theta founding member Miss Tommie Reynolds was the second president of Xi State, which was the original name of the Tennessee State Organization of Delta Kappa Gamma.

These ladies began a legacy for the other women educators in Madison and Chester Counties in West Tennessee to become outstanding educators and members of Delta Kappa Gamma.

Serving as Theta presidents and their terms are: 1939-1941 Mrs. Hilda Cawthon*; 1941-1943 Miss Louise Oakley*; 1943-1945 Mrs. Irene Foy*; 1945-1947 Miss Maggie Jo Gray*; 1947-1949 Mrs. Annie T. Davidson*; 1949-1952 Miss Pansy May Gowan*; 1952-1954 Mrs. Nora Smith Barker*; 1954-1956 Dr. Annie Lou Smith*; 1956-1958 Mrs. Della Meadows*; 1958-1960 Mrs. Neva T. Woodson*; 1960-1962 Mrs. Mable Dancy*; 1962-1964 Mrs. Pauline Anderson*; 1964-1966 Mrs. Annie S. Mulherin*; 1966-1968 Mrs. Ella K. Woolfork*; 1968-1970 Mrs. Aileen Sneed*; 1970-1972 Mrs. Evelyn Roby*; 1972-1974 Mrs. Martha McNatt; 1974-1976 Mrs. Evelyn Whybrew*; 1976-1978 Mrs. Regina East 1978-1980; Mrs. Frances Neisler*; 1980-1982 Mrs. Pat Kuykendall; 1982-1984 Dr. Peggy K. Smith; 1984-1986 Mrs. LaVonne Scott*; 1986-1988 Miss Dee Dee Rives; 1988-1990 Mrs. Lora Murchison; 1990-1992 Mrs. Margaret Bingham*; 1992-1994 Mrs. Caroline Johnson; 1994-1996 Mrs. Jackie Hibbett; 1996-1998 Miss Dee Dee Rives; 1998-2000 Mrs. Jo Price; 2000-2002 Mrs. Melinda Parker; 2002-2004 Mrs. Jo Price; 2004-2006 Mrs. Michelle Steen; 2006-2008 Mrs. Kate Faulk; 2008-2010 Mrs. Jo Price; Miss Dee Dee Rives 2010-2012; Melinda Carroll 2012-2014; Mrs. Michelle Steen 2014-2016; Mrs. Sandra Williams 2016-2018; Mrs. Kristy Sherrod; 2018-2020 Miss Dee Dee Rives; 2020-present Mrs. Beth Naylor

Currently, Theta Chapter has 30 active members and two reserve members, who are either retired or work as educators in public schools, private schools, and universities. During the school year, Theta Chapter meets monthly to work on chapter excellence and community excellence as well. During October and March, the monthly meetings are nontraditional. Small groups of members get together for a social outing. The purpose of these meetings is to build relationships among members. The January meeting is a legislative focus. September is traditionally an induction and recommitment meeting. April is usually a time of remembering the DKG Founders. The May meeting is usually a planning meeting for the coming year.

In April 2022, at the request of state president Dr. Elaine Vaughan, Beth Naylor coordinated an Area VIII meeting. Each chapter was represented by members attending. Dr. Vaughan was very pleased with the event.

Elected Theta officers for 2022-2024 are: President Beth Naylor, First Vice President Debra Martin, Second Vice President Bethany Brown, Recording Secretary Cassandra Williams, Corresponding Secretary Dee Dee Rives, and Treasurer Christine Carroll. The Theta president gets to wear the key pin that belonged to founder Louise Oakley. Aside from being a founding member of Theta Chapter, Oakley was seventh president of Xi State (Tennessee State Organization of DKG).

During the pandemic of 2020, the TNSO convention was held in a virtual online format. In 2021, the convention was held in Nashville due to restrictions at Sewanee University. The 2022 DKG state conference returned to the mountain at Sewanee University. Several Theta members attended and participated including: Dee Dee Rives, Bethany Brown, Michelle Steen, Dr. Kristy Sherrod, and Beth Naylor. Theta chapter received awards including the Maycie Gold Award, the Communication Award, and the Legislative Award. Three members (Jo Price, Beth Naylor, and Dee Dee Rives) received red cords for completing Chapter Marketing Award during the 2021-2022 year.

In 2022-23, the ladies of the chapter participated in projects such as supporting women and children through the Carl Perkins Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Dream Center of Jackson, Schools for Africa, and Operation Christmas Child. Local programs that are part of Theta Chapter's community involvement include providing sanitary supplies for students, working with new educators in the community, providing a local legislative forum, and working with local entities such as museums.

During the spring, for the several biennium, Theta chapter has hosted the West Tennessee State Officer Training at South Side High School. Delicious lunches are provided by Theta as our fundraiser.

Theta members who have received honors and/or rewards:

- **State Achievement Award:** Louise Oakley*, Dee Dee Rives;
- **Order of the Rose/Spotlight:** Margaret Bingham*, LaVonne Scott*, Jo Price, Jackie Hibbett, Jeanniebeth King, Jean Marilyn Hogan, Christine Carroll
- **Golden Gift Leadership Management:** Michelle Steen, DeeDee Rives
- **State Leadership Management Seminar:** Caroline Johnson, Melinda Carroll, Jo Price, Michelle Steen, Kristy Sherrod, Dee Dee Rives, Beth Naylor, Bethany Brown
- **Vision Foundation project grant:** Dee Dee Rives, Beth Naylor

- **International Achievement Award:** Louise Oakley*

Theta Chapter Local Chapter scholarships or grants:

- Theta Grant for a member (started 2021): Beth Naylor

Theta members served in State offices:

- Michelle Steen—editor, 2nd vp, corresponding secretary, recording secretary
- Dee Dee Rives—president, 1st vp, 2nd vp
- Louise Oakley*— president
- Peggy Killough—secretary
- Nora Smith Barker*-president

Serving as State Area Director:

Jo Price, Michelle Steen, Dee Dee Rives, Beth Naylor

State Committee Members:

Kristy Sherrod, Beth Naylor, Michelle Steen, Jo Price, Dee Dee Rives, Sandra Williams, Caroline Johnson, Bethany Brown, Melinda Carroll, Sandra Williams, LaVonne Scott*, Margaret Bingham*

Workshop presenter State/International:

Kristy Sherrod- S, Jo Price- S, Dwina Willis -S, Michelle Steen- S, I , Dee Dee Rives-S, I

State Convention attended

Lavonne Scott, Louis Oakley, Peggy Killough, Jean Marilyn Hogan, Caroline Johnson, Jean Brown, Melinda Carroll, Dwina Willis, Jo Price, Jackie Hibbett, Michelle Steen, Kristy Sherrod, Beth Naylor, Sandra Williams, Bethany Brown, Dee Dee Rives

International Conference/Convention

- Attending: Dee Dee Rives, Michelle Steen, Jo Price, Jeanniebeth King, Jackie Hibbett, Melinda Carroll
- Michelle Steen: selected as an International Speaker; Ad Hoc Committee for Int. President reception; International page
- Dee Dee Rives: timekeeper for two Int conventions; sang in the International Choir; organizer for pictures for all state org and countries and flag coordinator for Int. convention in Nashville; host for a day for Int. President Int. page

*Deceased

Submitted by Beth Naylor, March, 2023