

## **Phi Chapter History**

August 18, 1945 was a momentous day for sixteen women teachers of Giles, Lawrence, Lincoln, and Marshall Counties. They became charter members of Phi Chapter, Xi State. Delta Kappa Gamma (now known as Phi Chapter, Tennessee State Organization of DKG). The Charter Members were: Hannah Staggs, Evelyn McCrory, Eugenia Rich Murray, Elizabeth Davis, Miss Myrtle Haynes, Grace Zumbro, Eliot Copeland, Myra Baxter, Florine Hendrix, Sarah Margaret Lunn, Marian McAfee, Ruby O'Rear, Elizabeth Parker, Elizabeth Reed, Annie Mary Springer and Helen Zuccarello. These ladies met at the Giles County Library in Pulaski with Miss Mary Hall, a Tennessee State Founder and State Membership Chairman. Miss Tommye Reynolds, past state president, and Miss Perry Williamson assisted Miss Hall. Helen Zuccarello was elected president. Other officers were: Grace Zumbro, first vice-president; Annie Mary Springer, second vice-president; Eliot Copeland, recording secretary; Elizabeth Reed, corresponding secretary; Elizabeth Parker, treasurer; Evelyn McCrory, parliamentarian.

The first meeting of Phi Chapter was held on October 6, 1945 at the home of Helen Zuccarello in Campbellsville. This was a planning and business meeting. Upon arrival members were told of the passing of Dr. Annie Webb Blanton, the founder of Delta Kappa Gamma Society. The first initiation was held at the Methodist Church in Pulaski on April 6, 1946. The initiation luncheon was served by the Home Economics Department of Martin College. Miss Flora Rawls, state president, spoke on "This is a Great Time to be a Teacher."

During the first biennium, each member contributed one dollar and the chapter sent a package to the World Education Service Council, a goodwill service to teachers overseas.

Helen Zuccarello presented the charter to the chapter. Miss Myrtle Haynes presented a red Bible as a part of the initiation. Five new members were initiated during the service at Giles County High School in November, 1948. The initiation was followed by a banquet in the school cafeteria.

In 1950, the chapter participated in the World Friendship Among Children program and gave a \$200.00 scholarship to a future teacher, Nancy Cunningham from Lincoln County. Also in 1950, Phi Chapter was asked to be in charge of the Birthday Luncheon at the state convention at Sewanee. Helen Zuccarello was general chairman; Grace Zumbro presided; Evelyn McCrory gave the invocation and Vivian Shields was the guest speaker.

At the state convention in June 1951, Helen Zuccarello was elected and installed as state president, Annie Mary Springer as state treasurer, and Margaret

Butler as state corresponding secretary. Margaret was also appointed to design and edit a state paper for the Society. The paper was named Xi State News.

At the state convention at Sewanee in June, 1953, Phi Chapter was hostess at an informal reception for the state president. Fifteen members attended. Phi's yearbook was one of seven to meet state requirements and our scrapbook was one of three to receive commendations.

In 1955 each member contributed \$1.50 towards the headquarters building and the entire amount was presented in honor of Miss Mary Hall, state founder and chapter organizer.

On August 8, 1975, at David Crockett State Park Restaurant, Phi Chapter celebrated its thirtieth birthday. All ten living charter members, who had remained in the chapter, were present. Miss Mary Hall, the founder of Phi Chapter was also present. She informed the chapter that it must divide.

The chapter workshop and planning meeting was held in Pulaski on September 6, 1975. At this meeting, plans were initiated to divide Phi Chapter into two chapters. Giles and Lawrence Counties would split from Lincoln and Marshall Counties. On April 24, 1976, Phi Chapter was officially divided. Giles and Lawrence Counties remained as Phi Chapter; Lincoln and Marshall Counties became Beta Kappa, the fifty-eighth chapter of TNSO. Miss Mary Hall and Mrs. Souci Hall helped with the division of the chapter and the forming of the new chapter.

August, 1985, Phi Chapter celebrated her 40th Anniversary with 31 members and 7 charter members in attendance. The celebration was held in Pulaski. This was also TNSO's 50th Anniversary.

At the beginning of the 1994 – 1996 Biennium, Phi Chapter had 74 members. Jean Bryan was invited to the White House Conference on Aging by Bill Clinton. Phi Chapter celebrated her 50th Anniversary on October 26, 1995 with a banquet.

There was a joint meeting between Phi Chapter and Beta Kappa Chapter in September, 1999. It was a joyous occasion to see old friends. It created a tradition of September Brunches at Lynn Caruthers house. She hosted these brunches at her home from 1999 – 2011. Also in this biennium, Rosie Coleman was elected as TNSO Corresponding Secretary and Cynthia Ripp was appointed as Area VI Director.

During the 2000 – 2002 Biennium. Rosie Coleman served as TNSO Fellowship chair. There were five Phi members with 50 years of service to DKG. They were: Charlette Howard, Julia Smith, Mary Willis, Ethel Holt, Inez Sandusky.

During the 2002 – 2004 Biennium, the Joint Christmas Brunch for Phi, Rho, Alpha Rho and Beta Rho was started in December, 2003. Phi Chapter lost

the last charter member, Elliot Alexander, during this biennium.

In August, 2005 Phi Chapter celebrated her 60th Anniversary. Beta Kappa came to the celebration. The chapter scholarship fund was started. The chapter website was created. Phi chapter won the Gold Award.

After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, three Phi Chapter members, Lynn Caruthers, Barbara Edwards and Sherry Woods, went to Pascagoula, Mississippi in 2006. While there they helped an elementary librarian to catalog books that were not destroyed in the hurricane. The next year these same women went back to help catalog new books that the library bought with a grant.

During 2006-2008, Phi Chapter produced a cookbook composed of favorite recipes from members. Marilyn Shaver, president, came up with an investment strategy to place the cookbook sales in a money market account to fund present and future scholarships for college students majoring in education. This investment strategy is still in place. Phi became a Visionary Chapter through member contributions. For the first time, Phi Chapter hosted the Joint Christmas Brunch with the three Rho Chapters: Rho, Alpha Rho, and Beta Rho. Elaine Warwick, TNSO President, was the guest speaker. Jensi Souders, an International DKG officer, provided entertainment with a flute concert.

At the 2008 TNSO Convention in Sewanee, Phi achieved the Chapter Excellence Gold Award, Yearbook Highest Honors Award, Communication Highest Honors Award, and the Visionary Chapter Pin. It was decided that each Phi president would wear the pin during their biennium.

The 2009 Xi State Convention was held June 4-6 at Sewanee, Tennessee. Fordie Franklin, with assistance from Cynthia Ripp, presented a workshop at the convention.

The chapter celebrated its 70th Birthday on Feb. 20, 2016. At the 2016 TNSO Convention at Sewanee, Beth Johnson sang in the chorus. During the 2020-22, Phi had its 75th Birthday. Due to COVID, Phi had to find an alternative way to reach members. Phi Chapter used Zoom meetings to communicate. This biennium was a major challenge. Like our sisters before us, we have persevered and are coming back with our determination to be better than before.