

Dover (DE) Alumni

March 10, 1956

The early beginning of Dover Alumni Chapter was closely interwoven with the Beta Sigma Chapter at Delaware State College. Preceding Dover Alumni by nine years, Beta Sigma Chapter was chartered on March 8, 1947. In 1955, at a Beta Sigma alumni tailgate party at Delaware State College's annual homecoming football game, Brother William Hearne, an initiate of Beta Sigma and a charter member of Salisbury Alumni in the Eastern Province, put forth the idea of establishing an alumni chapter in Dover, Delaware. All of the brothers residing in lower Delaware were contacted for their approval and a pledge of membership. The chartering process bore fruit on March 10, 1956, when the Grand Chapter granted a charter to Dover Alumni Chapter, Northeastern Province of Kappa Alpha Psi. The chartering ceremony was held at the old Rodney Hotel in New Castle County, Delaware. Northeastern Province Past Polemarch Enos S. Andrews attended the chartering ceremony. The charter members were Charles H. Bessellieu Jr., Samuel C. Davis, William Davis, Bennie J. George, Douglas A. Gibson, William M. Hearne, Allen T. Hill, Eugene Holmes, Roland Holmes, James Maull, Richard Maull, Robert Maull, Denver B. Parker, James Parker, B. Franklin Ricketts, Leslie Shockley, George H. P. Smith, Harrison H. Short and Jonathan Staggers. All of the brothers resided in Kent and Sussex counties, Delaware except B. Franklin Ricketts who lived in Denton, Maryland.

William M. Hearne was the first Polemarch. He later served as Keeper of Exchequer for twenty-five consecutive years. Another member with a long tenure in office is Brother Harold L. Harmon, who served as Keeper of Records for over twenty-five years.

Being a new chapter, the organization's Sunday monthly meeting was held at various brothers' homes. The agenda of the meetings included Delaware State College, homecoming, Founder's Day, Guide Right, Province Council Meetings, the annual formal, and closed entertainment with the silhouettes. After the meeting, a hardy meal and refreshments were served. The spouses of the brothers who were married did not have the slightest idea when the brothers would get home because the chapter met throughout Lower Delaware and in Denton, Maryland. An annual formal was held each year at no cost to the guests who were invited. Each brother was allowed to invite eight to ten guests, depending on the number of members in the chapter who decided to participate. If a brother did not need all of his invitations, he would give them to another brother. There were always brothers who needed extra invitations. The affair was usually held at the Convention Center in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, because it was one of the facilities that allowed you to bring your own bottle and breakfast could be served. In the evening of the affair, many brothers would rent a motel room for the night, anticipating that they would not be in any condition to drive home when the dance was over. During the intermission, the queen for the coming year was crowned and the brothers would sing the "Sweetheart Song". In 1961, the Dover Alumni Chapter joined forces with Wilmington Alumni and Beta Sigma Chapter to host its first Northeastern Province Council Meeting. The Province Council Meeting was held on March 31 –April 2, 1961 at the DuPont Hotel in Wilmington, Delaware.

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In 1976, under the leadership of Polemarch Mitchell Gordon, an initiate of Alpha Tau at Bluefield State College, Dover Alumni hosted its second Province Council Meeting at the Sheraton Inn in Dover, Delaware. The meeting was well attended by brothers in the Northeastern Province and their silhouettes. Many of the brothers and their spouses who were in attendance were graduates of Delaware State College and they used this opportunity to revisit the campus and renew acquaintances with former collegemates.

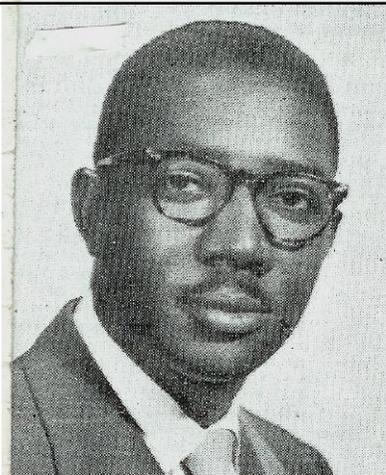
By 1981, the majority of the members of Dover Alumni were residing in Kent County, Delaware and the brothers expressed a desire to find a permanent meeting place. Polemarch James D. McNair II, an initiate of Alpha Chapter, contracted with Dover Air Force Base Officer's Club for a permanent meeting place. The meeting date was changed to the first Wednesday after the fifteenth of each month at 7:00 PM. No meetings were held during the months of July and August. In the beginning, the club prepared a meat tray for each meeting, and later a buffet was made available to the brothers prior to the meeting. Ten years of successful meetings at the Officers Club led the chapter to suggest that the annual formal be held at the Officer's Club. In 1992, Dr. McKinley Wardlaw, Jr., Polemarch, an initiate of Gamma Epsilon at Tuskegee University, a charter member of Delta Theta, a James M. Kidd Awardee, and Northeastern Province Historian (1999 – 2002) contracted with the Dover Air Force Officer's Club for the use of the club to have a dance in May of each year. The idea of bring your own bottle was replaced by a cash bar. All other facets of the annual formal remained intact.

In 1996, under the leadership of Dover Alumni initiate Polemarch Berlin N. Hollingsworth, the Dover Alumni Chapter hosted its third Province Council Meeting. The response by the brothers of the Northeastern Province and their silhouettes was outstanding. The attendance exceeded that of any previous Province Council Meeting. Many guests used this opportunity to revisit the campus at Delaware State University and take advantage of Delaware's no tax shopping. Under the guidance of Polemarch Lawrence Hampton, an initiate of Willingboro-Fort Dix-McGuire Air Force Base Alumni, Dover Alumni entered the new millennium with a successful Y2K party. This was followed by a repeat performance in the year 2000. The success of these affairs has led Dover Alumni to adopt the New Year's party as an annual affair.

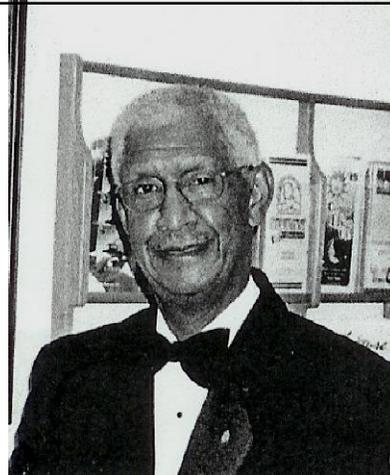


Charter Members of Dover Alumni – 1956

DOVER ALUMNI



William M. Hearne
Dover Alumni First
Polemarch



Harold L. Harmon
Dover Alumni
Keeper of Records
1978 – 2003

The Dover Alumni budget has grown from a “no set budget” in 1990 to an over \$11,000 line item budget in the year 2000-2001. Each year, Dover gives \$1500 in scholarships and invests \$1000 in mutual funds. In May 2000, Dover Alumni Chapter became a member of the Million Dollar Club of The Kappa Alpha Psi Foundation

Kappa Alpha Psi had an eight-state meeting for the Northeastern Province on March 26 and March 27, 1993 in Harrisburg, PA. The Dover Alumni Chapter captured three of the top four Province Individual Alumni Awards. Dr. McKinley Wardlaw, Jr. co-shared the James M. Kidd Award, the highest honor given by the Northeastern Province, for his lifelong service to the Fraternity, which includes establishing a new chapter at Wesley College, reactivating the Delaware State College Chapter, and traveling to Hawaii and England to assist alumni chapters with the new intake procedures.

Brothers Berlin Hollingsworth and James McNair II were both given individual Alumni Achievement Awards for civic involvement. Brother McNair received his award for years of service to both State and Central Delaware YMCA Boards and the Salvation Army. Brother Hollingsworth received the Province Alumni Achievement award for instituting the Kappa Alpha Psi Mentoring Program for Young Black Males at Dover High School, and for his involvement with the American Cancer Society, Delaware Prison Arts Advisory Council, the NAACP, the National Youth Sports program and Whatcoat United Methodist Church.

Through the efforts of the Dover Alumni Chapter and Calvin Brooks, a 1992 Beta Sigma initiate, the Guide Right Committee has launched a Kappa League program in south central Delaware. The “New P.S.I.,” or Positive Self-Image,” program is a subdivision of the Guide Right programming of the Dover Alumni and the Xi Mu (Delaware State University and Wesley College) Chapters. Mrs. Tiffany Foster, Program Monitor of the Delaware Department of Justice, presented a federal grant for the project to Brother Brooks on October 18, 2004. The mission of the program is to provide educational and occupational guidance to youth through programming and activities for African-American males.

DOVERALUMNI



*Calvin Brooks
Guide Right Chairman*



***Dover Alumni Chapter captured three top Province Individual Alumni Awards.
(from left) Berlin N. Hollingsworth, McKinley Wardlaw and James D. McNair***



*George H. P. Smith
Mayor Lewes, Delaware
1994 - 2004*