

PiKA WVU History

Alpha Theta Chapter Re-chartered At West Virginia University

The Garnet and Gold flag flies atop fraternity row once again as Alpha Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha returns to West Virginia University. On Saturday, March 29, 2003, Pike welcomed the chapter back into its ranks after its four-year hiatus from the Morgantown, West Virginia campus. The installation of the chapter's charter brought with it the initiation of over 90 of West Virginia's finest gentlemen.

On the Friday preceding the chapter's charter installation, five initiation teams from four host chapters gathered at the Pi Kappa Alpha chapter house atop the highest hill in Morgantown. Those chapters assembling teams included Virginia Tech (Epsilon), Roanoke (Phi), Marshall (Delta Iota) and American University (Kappa Upsilon). With the members' initiations beginning at 5:00 p.m. sharp, teams had little time to enjoy the scenic view as the colony's 91 men anxiously awaited initiation into the bonds. The teams worked feverishly until the Marshall team had initiated the second to last colony member. Around 11:30 p.m., a team from Epsilon, led by Regional President Chad Hornik (Florida International, Kappa Gamma '94), prepared to initiate the colony's president, Nick Rauhala. All 91 newly initiated members, attending alumni, team members from the visiting host chapters and various international officers gathered in the great room of the Alpha Theta chapter house to participate in this final initiation. The roar of congratulatory cheers boomed throughout the local town upon the final initiation of the evening, a moment that will not soon be forgotten by anybody in attendance.

The following morning, the men from Epsilon, joined by various international officers and volunteers, completed the initiatory ceremony and duly installed Alpha Theta Chapter. International Rush Advisory Committee member Darius Sidebotham (Florida Tech, Zeta Sigma '94) led the installation team assisted by Regional President Hornik, Kappa Upsilon Chapter Advisor Steven Broderick (Old Dominion, Zeta Iota '95), former Chapter Consultant Jeffery Labrecque (Virginia Tech, Epsilon '00) and Director of Expansion Ryan Van Andel (California-Berkeley, Alpha Sigma '98).

The chartering banquet began Saturday evening as colony members, alumni, distinguished guests, and various international officers gathered to commemorate the accomplishments achieved by the members of Alpha Theta over the colony's 15-month existence. Ending with a powerful address by keynote speaker Sidebotham, the chartering banquet transformed into a celebration, which would last well into the night.

From Colony to Chapter

In early October 2001, Expansion Consultants Dean Snihur (Alberta, Lambda Epsilon '00) and Beau Carlson (Iowa State, Alpha Phi '99) arrived in Morgantown to start what would become one of the most successful recruitment efforts in Pi Kappa Alpha history. They came to WVU not just looking to start another fraternity, but looking to start the best fraternity on campus. The process started as they conversed with teachers, coaches, sororities and students; looking for the people that best fit the description of scholars, leaders, athletes and gentlemen, ultimately meeting with 220 men. Almost five weeks later the Pi Kappa Alpha Colony at West Virginia University was born – the largest fraternity on campus.

The first month started with a retreat where the colony spent the day setting various goals and objectives in areas including community service, fundraising, membership and GPA. As the months wore on, the members of the colony began to show the WVU Greek community that they were not just dominant in size, but also in setting the standards of achievement. They finished first in the Delta Gamma Anchor Bowl, a flag football tournament and participated in the Alpha Phi basketball tournament. Community service proved to be a major priority, which they proved by donating their time to Special Olympics, university blood drives and Relay for Life. Alumni relations fell into full swing with the first Founders Day event. Held at the Hotel Morgan, Founders Day brought together Pikes from past and present and proved to be a huge success.

On February 16, 2003, official inspecting officer Hornik reviewed the Pi Kappa Alpha colony at West Virginia University along with official inspection teams from Delta Iota Chapter at Marshall University and Gamma Sigma Chapter at the University of Pittsburgh. Based on a thorough review of the Colony's accomplishments and operating standards, the inspecting panel voted unanimously to allow the colony to petition for its charter. Subsequently, the colony received overwhelming approval from all international officers and chapter presidents as well as the Supreme Council.

After being re-established in the Fall 2001 semester, Alpha Theta Colony not only achieved its primary goals of brotherhood and community advancement, but excelled athletically and in scholarship. The chapter at West Virginia University is housed strategically atop the highest point in Morgan-town – a physical symbol of its truly monumental stature. But it is the continued strive for excellence by the men of Alpha Theta that serves as the true indicator that Alpha Theta has returned in full force