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Fortitude in the Face of Adversity: Delta Sigma Theta's History of Racial Uplift

GREGORY S. PARKS* AND MARCIA HERNANDEZ**

The uninvolved, disengaged citizen has no place in America.¹
–Barbara Jordan, Texas State Senator

Political power may not be all that Black women are after. Historically, it has been the humanity, compassion and courage of Black women that has set them apart, gotten them through their most difficult times and made a difference in America.²
–Melba Tolliver, author

Introduction

Black Greek-Letter Organization (BGLO) scholarship presents a long-standing involvement of fraternity and sorority engagement in civil rights, philanthropy and community service.³ Although

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1. Barbara Jordan, *In Defense of Rights*, DELTA, 31st National Convention, 1971, at 47.

2. Melba Tolliver, *Black Women Politics; Invisible but Powerful*, DELTA, 1985, at 13.

3. PAULA GIDDINGS, *IN SEARCH OF SISTERHOOD* (1988); Jessica Harris, *Women of*

scholars have praised Black Greek-Letter Organizations for their commitment to community empowerment, literacy advancement, Black women's involvement in politics, and racial uplift, some scholarship suggests a critical examination of BGLOs is required. Arguing that BGLOs tend to focus on traditional forms of advocacy, there is a risk of becoming irrelevant in the contemporary landscape of social justice movements and African-American social and political organizations.⁴

In this Article, we examine the historical organizational efforts by one BGLO, Delta Sigma Theta, to influence local communities and national policy for social justice. Delta Sigma Theta boasts one of the largest memberships among BGLO sororities. The organization has a long, storied history of civic engagement and political activism. By examining relevant scholarship and historical records, such as sorority newsletters, we assess how Delta Sigma Theta members have employed a variety of collective action strategies at both the local level within individual chapters, and at the national level, to be a force for change in society. We conclude with a discussion of the importance of linking past accomplishments to current civic engagement strategies and social justice movements as sorority members address the needs of their local communities and participate in national movements in the 21st century.

Delta Sigma Theta was founded on January 13, 1913 by twenty-two young women on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C.⁵ When these women arrived on campus, they

Vision, Catalysts for Change: The Founders of Delta Sigma Theta, in BLACK GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: OUR FIGHT HAS JUST BEGUN 75 (Gregory S. Parks ed., 2008); Marybeth Gasman, *Passive Activism, Empirical Studies of Black Greek-Letter Organizations*, in BLACK GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS 2.0: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES 28 (G. S. Parks & M. W. Hughley eds., 2011); see also Marybeth Gasman, Patricia Louison, & Mark Barnes, *Giving and Getting: Philanthropic Activity Among Black Greek-Letter Organizations*, in BLACK GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: OUR FIGHT HAS JUST BEGUN (Gregory S. Parks ed. 2008).

4. G.S. PARKS, R. RAY, & S.M. PATTERSON, COMPLEX CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (2014); JESSICA HARRIS & VERNON C. MITCHELL, JR., A NARRATIVE CRITIQUE OF BLACK GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL ACTION (2008).

5. Harris, *supra* note 3, at 75–91; see Appendix, for the biography of the Founders.

were bright-eyed, eager, and seeking to bring change upon the American landscape that still embraced overt racism and sexism as acceptable aspects of everyday life. These young women joined Alpha Kappa Alpha, an African-American sorority on campus, in an effort to pursue their goals for change. However, the goals and activities supported by Alpha Kappa Alpha were not nearly ambitious enough for those desiring immediate action for social change. The group of twenty-two women broke ties with Alpha Kappa Alpha and founded Delta Sigma Theta to offer an alternative organization for like-minded college students at Howard University.⁶

Since its founding, Delta Sigma Theta has become one of the largest African-American women organizations in the world. Its growth is due in part to the reputation of its civically engaged membership, which has contributed significantly to race and gender rights. Most BGLOs promote passive activism for their members,⁷ but Delta Sigma Theta seems to be an exception; its members have engaged in public protests and acts of civil disobedience. While BGLOs share similar values and goals for advancing civil rights, “the women of Delta Sigma Theta sometimes put themselves at risk and have engaged in the most direct forms of activism of any of the BLGOs.”⁸ In fact, Delta Sigma Theta’s identity as an organization harkens back to women, many of whom would later become Delta Sigma Theta members, like Coralie Franklin Cook, who served as pillars of Black women’s involvement in the suffrage movement.⁹

6. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 49.

7. See Gasman, *Passive Activism*, *supra* note 3, at 27-41.

8. *Id.* at 40.

9. Coralie Franklin Cook was a professor at Howard University. She taught English, headed the Department of Oratory, and founded the School of Expression at the Washington Conservatory of Music. In 1880, Cook graduated Storer College and became a teacher in 1882. Her husband George Cook was also a professor and dean at Howard University. Cook was heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement in Washington, D.C. She belonged to the DC Colored Women’s League, served on the DC Board of Education, and helped to found the National Association of Colored Women. She is an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta.

Contained in the seven organizational goals of the sorority are guiding principles for every Delta Sigma Theta chapter: (1) To develop an appreciation of Delta Sigma Theta's potential for influence in the community and nation; (2) To increase knowledge of current national and local issues so that every Delta Sigma Theta will be an informed and effective citizen and voter; (3) To encourage active participation in political activity; (4) To influence enactment of legislation, national and local, of particular interest to Negroes and women; (5) To maintain vigilance over action or inaction by local judicial and administrative agencies and officials; (6) To cultivate a person-to-person relationship with the community power structure; and (7) To join volunteer leadership in civic and other Social Action organizations, including interracial groups.¹⁰ To this end, Delta Sigma Theta members have worked tediously to accomplish all of these goals since the sorority's inception. Although the members' contributions have been diverse, most notable among them are advances to civil rights, public policy, philanthropy, and community service; these four categories will be discussed in depth in the foregoing pages.

We examine relevant scholarship and archival data to highlight Delta Sigma Theta's achievements. Specifically, there are many advantages to conducting a document analysis of sorority newsletters to gain insight on how chapters and individual members have advanced the sorority's mission for civic engagement over the years.¹¹ In this study, we drew upon sources that would examine the

10. Gasman, *Passive Activism*, *supra* note 3, at 44. See also *Effective Social Action: To Be Seen and Heard*, DELTA SIGMA THETA (2009), http://www.deltasigmatheta.org/downloads/conf09docs/pdf/Effective_Social_Action_Regional_Conference_2009.pdf (last visited April 26, 2016).

11. Document analysis is an ideal research method for "studies designed within an interpretive paradigm . . . [and when] it may be simply [one of] the only sources, as in historical research and cross-cultural research." Glenn A. Bowen, *Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method*, 9 QUALITATIVE RES. J. 27, 29 (2009). Documents such as an organization's newsletters allow researchers to "[b]ear witness to past events and provide background information as well as historical insight . . . [as] a means of tracking change and development. Moreover, documents are 'unobtrusive and non-reactive' and are exact in the inclusion of names, references and details of events." Bowen, *supra*, at 29-31.

range of Delta Sigma Theta's community involvement and social justice work.¹² Newsletters provide detailed accounts of the activities and strategies employed by both Delta Sigma Theta's alumnae and undergraduate membership to address social problems and concerns.¹³ Black sororities were conceived as safe spaces on college campuses for Black women to share a sisterhood, support intellectual achievements, and develop leadership skills.

Over time, as the membership grew and alumnae chapters formed and expanded, the organizations transformed into multifaceted, intergenerational institutions. In short, Delta Sigma Theta, like all BGLOs, is a complex civil rights organization.¹⁴ Organizational complexity involves the identity, goals, strategy, and structure of a group.¹⁵ This Article highlights how Delta Sigma Theta members have worked for generations to build and expand upon a strong foundation of sisterhood and service to achieve their goals. Although the organization's achievements are vast, it is still adapting to social and political changes and "must come to grips with its own complexity in order to remain sustainable and productive, especially in the realm of civic activism and shaping public policy around issues of race."¹⁶ Understanding the multiple dimensions of BGLOs provides a way to examine Delta Sigma Theta's goals, mission, and actions over the past 100 years with a deep appreciation for the founders' challenges and the current members' opportunities.

12. Bowen, *supra* note 11, at 31.

13. *Id.* at 27.

14. Gregory S. Parks, Rashawn Ray & Shawna M. Patterson, Symposium, *Complex Civil Rights Organizations: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, An Exemplar*, ALABAMA C.R.-C.L.L REV. (2014), <http://gregoryparks.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Alpha-Kappa-Alpha-and-Civil-Rights-1.pdf> (symposium on The Ghosts of 1964: Race and Gender Inequity Fifty Years Later).

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.* at 30.

I. 1910s–1930s: The Early Years

Since its inception, Delta Sigma Theta has maintained a constant focus on using its position in society to promote higher standards in human treatment and to improve race and gender relations.¹⁷ Two months after the formation of Delta Sigma Theta, the new members participated in what would be their first public effort for civil rights. On March 3, 1913, Osceola Adams led the new Delta Sigma Theta members—along with 5,000 to 10,000 other women—down Pennsylvania Avenue in support of women’s voting rights.¹⁸ Over the next decade and a half, Delta Sigma Theta quietly continued its involvement in civil rights. It wished to remain a viable organization, but its outward support of such controversial topics would potentially disrupt its ability to operate.¹⁹ Delta Sigma Theta members found ways of being actively involved with and supportive of civil rights organizations by strategically engaging in both indirect and direct action.

Delta Sigma Theta also promoted its public policy goals by extending honorary membership offers to prominent African-American leaders. Honorary members such as Mary Church Terrell and Coralie Franklin Cook—two women active in the Washington Women’s Colored League—were some of the first honorary members. Terrell eventually became President of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of the District of Columbia Anti-Discrimination Laws, and the first African-American woman elected to the United States Congress of Women.²⁰ Terrell remained a strong voice for Delta Sigma Theta throughout her life by giving speeches on behalf of the sorority and lending her name to most of Delta Sigma Theta’s endeavors. Nannie H. Burroughs, another honorary member, was the founder of the National Training

17. MARY E. VROMAN, *SHAPED TO ITS PURPOSE: DELTA SIGMA THETA—THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS* 9 (2007).

18. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 57.

19. *Id.* at 112.

20. *Id.* at 64.

School for Girls in Washington, D.C.²¹ Hallie Quinn Brown, a renowned professor and dean at Allen University in South Carolina and ultimately Wilberforce University in Ohio, became another honorary member.²² Brown was well known for her traveling presentations and her leadership in a wide variety of organizations in Ohio.²³ One of the most important honorary members was Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of Bethune-Cookman College in Florida and founder of the National Council for Negro Women, a cabinet position under Franklin Delano Roosevelt.²⁴ Bethune also proved to be instrumental in promoting the goals and policies of Delta Sigma Theta throughout her lifetime as an honorary member.²⁵

More broadly, public policy has served as an important interest to Delta Sigma Theta since its inception. The cornerstone of Delta

21. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 64.

22. *Id.* at 70.

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.* at 96. Mary McLeod Bethune was an extraordinary educator, civil rights leader, and government official who founded the National Council of Negro Woman and Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune was born on July 10, 1875, in Maysville, South Carolina one out of seventeen children of former slaves. Bethune was the only child in her family to go to school, when a missionary opened a school nearby for African-American children. Doing so well in school Bethune got offered a scholarship to Scotia Seminary School in Concord, North Carolina earning her teaching degree in 1893. She then headed back down south where she taught nearly for a decade. Feeling that education was a very important pressing issue, Bethune opened the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute in 1904, which then later became the Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune served as the school's president, and remained its leader even after the integration of men in the college and stayed with the college until 1942.

While serving as the president of her college she also pushed for activist rights, founding the National Council Negro Women in 1935. She worked under President Roosevelt as a Special Advisor for Minority Affairs from 1935 to 1945. She was the first African-American woman to work alongside four presidents for minority rights. In 1973, Bethune was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. While in 1974 she became the first Black leader and the first woman to have a monument, the Bethune Memorial statue, erected on the public park land in Washington, D.C. Bethune married Albert McLeod Bethune in 1898, having one son named Albert, before ending their marriage in 1907. Bethune died on May 18, 1955 in her retired home in Daytona, Florida.

25. *Id.* at 64.

Sigma Theta's Five-Point Program focused on education, employment, housing, and race and intercultural relations. These initiatives continue to drive the sorority's community service and policy work. The organization's involvement in the political sphere has taken a wide variety of forms from lobbying efforts, voter registration, and supporting members running for public office, to sending members as representative delegates to conferences, political events, and international excursions.²⁶

In December 1913, the sorority sent M. Frances Gunner to the Intercollegiate Socialist Society conference in New York. Though Gunner was the only African-American student present at the conference, her voice was heard during the three-day conference. Her presence established a strong foundation in public policy that Delta Sigma Theta built upon for years to come.²⁷ Perhaps Delta Sigma Theta's most significant endeavor during this time of activity was its leading role in urging the United States to remove its forces from Haiti. Delta Sigma Theta lobbied very hard for President Wilson to leave Haiti. When Wilson's administration decided to use a commission to determine the best course, Delta Sigma Theta worked to get two members on that commission, Mary Church Terrell and Alpha Phi Alpha member Rayford Logan. Neither were appointed, but Delta Sigma Theta's work was not in vain; the president of the Tuskegee Institute, Dr. Robert Russa Moton, served as an advisor in the process that ultimately resulted in U.S. withdrawal from Haiti in 1934.²⁸

26. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 296.

27. *Id.* at 63.

28. *Id.* at 131. Mary Church Terrell was a writer, educator, and activist who co-founded the National Association of Colored Women and served at the organization's first president. She was born on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee. Her parents Robert Reed Church and Louisa Ayers, were both former slaves who used their freedom to become small business owners, and made themselves vital members of Memphis's growing Black population. After her parents divorced, she left home early to attend the elementary school at the Antioch College Laboratory in Ohio, where she also attended Oberlin College. Four years later she completed her master's degree in education.

After college Terrell accepted a teaching job at Wilberforce College in Ohio and then moved to D.C. to work at Dunbar High School. While in Washington, D.C. she

In 1925, the sorority established the Alpha Beta Chapter at Fisk University. Later, when there were numerous African-American student uprisings focused on equal rights, Delta Sigma Theta's established chapter on campus lent its support to this cause.²⁹ Toward the end of the 1920s, Delta Sigma Theta issued its first public statement regarding race relations stating: "We feel deeply the need for protest against the growing prejudice of all kinds in the United States of America. The time has come when we feel called upon to give voice for the first time to the strong feelings that have possessed us."³⁰ Since 1930, the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) has worked to promote projects that better the lives of Black people.³¹

Throughout this time, Delta Sigma Theta members maintained strong connections with the NPHC that allowed for a greater impact in the fight for social justice due to the collective efforts of BGLO's working towards common goals.³² In the early 1930s, civil rights groups challenged the civil codes, which governed most of everyday life for African Americans. Delta Sigma Theta joined the fray as an important ally in the fight for social justice. As the review date for

met her future husband, Robert Heberton Terrell, a talented attorney who would eventually become Washington D.C.'s first Black municipal judge. They married in 1891. While in D.C., Terrell was politically involved in woman's rights issues, eradicating segregation, and increasing access to education. In 1896 she was named the president of the National Association of Colored Women, where she continued to champion women's voting rights. Terrell became a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and later became the first African-American admitted to the Washington Chapter of the American Association of University Women. She laid the groundwork for an eventual court order in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co.* that ruled that all segregated restaurants in the city were unconstitutional. She lived to see the *Brown v. Bd. of Educ.* Supreme Court decision and the end of de jure educational segregation. Her home in Washington D.C. is now considered a national historic landmark. Terrell died on July 24, 1954, in Annapolis, Maryland.

29. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 113.

30. *Id.*

31. *Id.* at 97–98.

32. *Id.* at 156–157.

the codes neared, Delta Sigma Theta members all over the country mailed in letters protesting the codes and advocating for change.³³

Delta Sigma Theta has a long history of community service and donating its time and efforts to numerous causes. Additionally, Delta Sigma Theta has constantly provided scholarships to its members to promote and ensure higher education for African-American women. Beginning in 1922, the sorority created the Scholarship Award Fund and the College Tuition Fund, which Delta Sigma Theta chapters and members have funded each year.³⁴ The first fund helped young women afford college; the latter funded graduate level work.³⁵

The most common and celebrated philanthropic act, however, is the Jabberwock.³⁶ The Jabberwock, created in 1925 by the Iota chapter in Boston, Massachusetts, is a variety show with skits, dances, and songs.³⁷ The goal of the Jabberwock is to raise money for the sorority's scholarship funds.³⁸ A typical Jabberwock requires countless hours of rehearsal and production by numerous competing teams. In the end, the audience decides the best team, and all of the money raised goes towards benefiting women with the most promise for the future.³⁹ Since its inception, almost all chapters have adopted some form of the Jabberwock as a staple of Delta Sigma Theta life.⁴⁰

Community service may arguably be the area in which Delta Sigma Theta's efforts have been most felt throughout its history. The organization's commitment to communities through empowerment, sisterhood, and leadership has not waived since its inception. Many of the founding members could be found at the local Freedmen's Hospital providing cheer to sick children and making

33. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 158.

34. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 26.

35. *Id.* at 27.

36. *Id.* at 82.

37. *Id.* at 83.

38. *Id.*

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.*

nightgowns for adult patients.⁴¹ Leadership through service and sisterhood are common themes that bind Black Greek sororities; among the groups, Delta Sigma Theta's accomplishments are stellar. Delta Sigma Theta members have not only engaged in passive activism, they have also been proactively and passionately at the forefront of movements for equality and social justice as membership expanded beyond college campuses.

Beginning in the 1920s, May Week became a staple of Delta Sigma Theta's service. It was implemented by Delta Sigma Theta's first National President, Sadie Alexander, a civil rights activist and outspoken critic of racial discrimination, segregation and employment inequality.⁴² Alexander created May Week as an outreach initiative to inform grade school children of the benefits of

41. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 17.

42. *Id.* at 25. Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander was an esteemed lawyer who was the first African-American woman to gain admission to the Pennsylvania Bar, which started her long career advocating for civil and human rights. Alexander was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on January 2, 1898, to the esteemed parents of Dr. Nathan Mosell (founded the first African-American hospital) and mother Louise Tanner (founding editor of the nation's first African-American scholarly journal). Alexander, following the prestige of her family, earned a scholarship to Howard University and was directed by her mother to attend the University of Pennsylvania instead. In 1918 she graduated with honors and a B.S. degree in education, but at the same time was denied election into Phi Beta Kappa.

Alexander continued her studies at the University of Pennsylvania, earning an M.A. degree and then a Ph.D. in Economics, becoming the first Black woman in the U.S. to earn a doctorate in Economics. Unable to find work as an African-American woman in Pennsylvania, she was hired by the Black-owned North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1921 and stayed there until 1923. She then returned to Philadelphia to marry her college sweetheart, Raymond Pace Alexander, an attorney. They had two daughters, Mary and Rae. In 1924 Alexander became the first woman admitted to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where she graduated with honors. In 1927 she became the first Black woman to gain admission to the Pennsylvania bar. She was also the first African-American woman to hold both a Ph.D. and J.D. degree. She decided to open up a law firm with her husband working on cases in the orphan's court. Finally, in 1970, Alexander was granted membership to Phi Beta Kappa. Alexander continued to practice law until her retirement in 1982 and died in 1989 from the complications of Alzheimer's in her home in Philadelphia at the age of 91.

higher education.⁴³ Every year, for one week in May, each chapter reached out to the local community through a series of presentations and activities to demonstrate the importance of higher education to young students.⁴⁴ Not long after the initial implementation, the May Week programs were expanded to create study groups for high school students and college freshman led by the local Delta Sigma Theta chapter.⁴⁵

As the Depression gripped the country, Delta Sigma Theta members mobilized to help the most vulnerable in society. Throughout the country, Delta Sigma Theta chapters presented money to charitable organizations, gave food baskets to those in need, provided aid to the elderly, donated clothes, purchased playground equipment, and paid nursery workers' salaries.⁴⁶ Delta Sigma Theta members also spent much of their funds on supporting children during this time—providing milk, toys, and various picnics and parties for underprivileged children.⁴⁷ One of the most common projects was furnishing African-American hospitals with beds, linens, and hospital machinery, as well as painting the facilities, and providing other necessities.⁴⁸

In 1929, under the direction of Ethel LaMay Calimese, Delta Sigma Theta engaged in one of its largest public policy-related endeavors, the Vigilance Committee. Layle Lane and Sarah Speaks created the Vigilance Committee—which later became the Public Affairs Committee—at the National Convention in order to maintain meaningful and sustained connections with the political goals of the sorority.⁴⁹ Soon after creation, the Vigilance Committee began its work by sending a questionnaire to all chapters requesting their views on anti-lynching laws, reorganization of the courts, education funding, military expenditures, and unemployment protections.⁵⁰

43. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 25.

44. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 87.

45. *Id.* at 106.

46. *Id.* at 144.

47. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 34.

48. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 144.

49. *Id.* at 123.

50. *Id.* at 126.

These questionnaires shaped Delta Sigma Theta policies for the following decade. The Vigilance Committee worked in various ways to bring attention to and rectify a wide range of acts of injustice.

In 1930, there was a vicious lynching in Sherman, Texas, which prompted the Vigilance Committee to send a written condemnation to the Mayor of Sherman for his actions during and after the incident.⁵¹ In 1930, the Hoover administration sent mothers overseas to view their slain sons lost at war; however, African-American mothers were given inferior accommodations on the trip to France. Delta Sigma Theta spoke out to protest such treatment and demanded the administration rectify the problem.⁵² Similarly, the Hoover administration later would not allow an African-American football player from Ohio State University to play in a game against the U.S. Naval Academy. Delta Sigma Theta chapters around the nation wrote letters to the administration to protest the unfair treatment.⁵³ Delta Sigma Theta also wrote to President Hoover to urge his support of disarmament with other nations at the London

51. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 127. Cast against the backdrop of The Great Depression, white tenant farmers had exhibited hostility toward Blacks in many parts of Texas. In May 1930, George Hughes, a Black farm hand, was accused of raping an unidentified white woman. Hughes admittedly went to the farm just southeast of Sherman, Texas in search of the woman's husband, who owed him wages. Hughes reportedly demanded his wages at gunpoint and raped the woman. He ultimately surrendered to authorities and was indicted for criminal assault by a grand jury. In the days just before the trial, rumors spread about the case, among them that Hughes' alleged victim was unlikely to survive the injuries inflicted by Hughes. A medical examination of the woman and of Hughes proved the rumors to be false. In the midst of the jury trial, a white mob forced its way into the courtroom. Despite Rangers' efforts to secure Hughes, he was seized upon and dragged behind a car to the front of a drugstore in the Black business section. There, he was hanged from a tree by the mob. Furnishings from the local Black businesses were used to fuel a fire under Hughes' hanging corpse. The mob also burned down various Black businesses in the area and prevented firemen from saving the burning buildings. By daybreak, most of the town's Black businesses and a residence were in ashes. See *Sherman Riot of 1930*, TEX. ST. HISTORICAL ASS'N, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jcs06> (last visited Apr. 16, 2016).

52. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 123.

53. *Id.*

Naval Conference.⁵⁴ Delta Sigma Theta did not limit its lobbying to the White House either. When the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act was up for review before Congress, Delta Sigma Theta urged Congress not to pass the bill, which would have imposed the highest tariff on imports in American history. Delta Sigma Theta viewed the tariff as counter-productive to its economic goals of free trade and economic growth.⁵⁵

Lobbying was not contained to the government either, as Delta Sigma Theta also used its lobbying powers on many other institutions, including at predominantly white colleges and universities. Delta Sigma Theta applied pressure at the University of Michigan and Ohio State University to end discriminatory practices. Through Delta Sigma Theta's work, both Universities made concessions that ultimately led to more equal treatment for African-American students.⁵⁶ At the University of Illinois, then-Delta Sigma Theta President Ethel Calimese wrote letters to the Dean of Women, held numerous meetings with her, and ultimately convinced her to openly acknowledge and address campus climate issues impacting African-American students.⁵⁷ Delta Sigma Theta members expanded their policy proposals beyond traditional civil rights issues.

Many Delta Sigma Theta members were committed to achieving economic justice and actively supported public policy initiatives to address employment inequality. In 1930, members wrote to the Secretary of Labor urging him to create a long-range public works program. In conjunction with this endeavor, Delta Sigma Theta enlisted the help of Oscar DePreist, the first African American elected to Congress from the north.⁵⁸ When the Roosevelt administration created the Joint Committee on National Recovery during the Great Depression, Delta Sigma Theta sent Esther Popel

54. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 129.

55. *Id.*

56. *Id.* at 136.

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.* at 128.

Shaw to represent its interests before the committee while contributing significant funds to the project to ensure its success.⁵⁹

Delta Sigma Theta members also fought on the frontlines for social justice during the 1930s, putting them on a trajectory for even greater achievements over the decades. For example, Amelia Boynton Robinson's early activism began around the 1930's when she met her co-worker and ex-husband Samuel Boynton in Selma, Alabama.⁶⁰ Together they co-founded the Dallas County Voters League in 1933, where they advocated for voting, education and property rights for underprivileged African Americans. Robinson's work continued even decades later when she worked with Alpha Phi Alpha member Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to plan the Selma to Montgomery March on March 7, 1965, an event that became known as "Bloody Sunday." Publicity of Robinson and other protesters being beaten in the streets prompted a national outcry that led to the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In her later years, Robinson served as the Vice-President of the Schiller Institute, where she continued to be an active member in promoting civil and human rights, and in 1990, she was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medal of Freedom.⁶¹

59. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 35.

60. Amelia Boynton Robinson was born on August 18, 1911 and spent her life as an American civil rights activist on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama. Robinson then became the founding Vice-President of the Schiller Institute and was awarded the MLK Freedom Medal in 1990. She was born in Savannah, Georgia to George and Anna Plats, whom both encouraged religious and educational upbringing. Robinson attended Georgia State College, what is now known as Savannah State University, for two years before completing her undergraduate education at Tuskegee University and then furthering her education at Tennessee State University, Virginia State University, and Temple University. After being featured in the film, *Selma* in 2014, Robinson was honored by President Barack Obama at his State of the Union address in January 2015; in March 2015, the two held hands at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as they marched to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March. After serving a life dedicated to human rights and freedom, Robinson passed away on August 26, 2015, at the age of 104.

61. See *Amelia Boynton Biography*, BIOGRAPHY.COM, <http://www.biography.com/>

During the 1930s, Delta Sigma Theta members assisted individuals unfairly targeted for their civil rights work. For example, when Louise Thompson's arrest became national news in 1934, Delta Sigma Theta members immediately stepped forward to support her. Thompson was a member of the International Workers Order (IWO), a socialist organization working to promote a more socialist agenda. The IWO was founded in 1930 to provide workers with affordable life insurance; it was unique among fraternal groups as membership included "more than fifteen different nationalities, organized in their own national sections, plus native born black and white workers."⁶² The IWO was one of the most "leftwing of all fraternal organizations and the most successful Communist-led mass organizations . . . by the mid-1930s it was one of the fastest growing fraternal organizations."⁶³

When Thompson was arrested during a raid on her apartment, Delta Sigma Theta immediately began working on her release. Although the sorority's efforts did not directly impact Thompson's case, Delta Sigma Theta's open support cemented its place among social activist organizations and demonstrated a high level of commitment to social justice among its members.⁶⁴ As early as the 1930s, Delta Sigma Theta supported organizations such as the National Urban League, the NAACP, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and the National Youth Administration.⁶⁵ BGLOs were beginning to expand and connect with other civil rights organizations and solidify relationships that would last for decades. It was during this time, particularly during National President Vivian Osborne Marsh's administration, that Delta Sigma Theta began working with Alpha Kappa Alpha on two of its initiatives, the

people/amelia-boynton-21385459#related-video-gallery (last visited Oct. 2, 2015); Margalit Fox, *Amelia Boynton Robinson, a Pivotal Figure at the Selma March, Dies at 104*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 26, 2015), http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/27/us/amelia-boynton-robinson-a-pivotal-figure-at-the-selma-march-dies-at-104.html?_r=0.

62. Roger Keeran, *National Groups and the Popular Front: The Case of the International Workers Order*, 14 J. AM. ETHNIC HIST. 3 (1995).

63. *Id.*

64. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 159.

65. *Id.* at 161.

Mississippi Health Project and the National Non-Partisan Council.⁶⁶ The Mississippi Health Project helped provide medical care and immunizations to those living in rural Mississippi, and the National Non-Partisan Council worked with the NAACP to promote its future goals.⁶⁷ While Alpha Kappa Alpha took the lead on the projects, Delta Sigma Theta contributed regularly to promoting these endeavors.⁶⁸ Delta Sigma Theta members continued their work with the NAACP on the Fund for Freedom project, to which members annually contributed money and support.⁶⁹ By the 1970s, eighty-seven percent of chapters pledged life membership to the NAACP, while sixty-seven of the chapters annually contributed to other civil rights organizations.⁷⁰

Another common endeavor for Delta Sigma Theta was promoting education. In 1937, Congress was on the verge of passing

66. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 180. Vivian Osborne Marsh was born in Houston, Texas on September 5, 1897. Marsh received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley); she was one of the first African Americans to receive a master's degree from UC Berkeley. Marsh founded Berkeley's Kappa Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; she also founded several other chapters and served as President, Far West Regional Director, and National President. Marsh was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1935-39.

Marsh married Leon F. Marsh, Sr. with whom she was involved in many fraternal organizations throughout California. Marsh was a community activist, a Republican, and government official. She ran in 1959 for a City Council position in Berkeley, but did not win. Her two major projects included Traveling Library and Teen Lift. She was also elected President of the California State Association of Colored Women which later, under her supervision, established the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery in Oakland. She was also involved in the National Council of Negro Women as a State Supervisor of the National Youth Administration where she helped find employment for unemployed youths during the Depression. Marsh died in March 1986, after suffering a stroke during a convention earlier that year.

67. Tom Ward, *Medical Missionaries of the Delta: Dr. Dorothy Ferebee and the Mississippi Health Project, 1935-1941*, 63 J MISS. HIST. 189, 189-203 (2001); DEBORAH E. WHALEY, *DISCIPLINING WOMEN: ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA, BLACK COUNTERPUBLICS, AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF BLACK SORORITIES* 47 (2010).

68. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 180.

69. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 101.

70. DELTA, 1979, at 9.

the Harrison-Black-Fletcher Bill for Federal Aid to Education.⁷¹ Although the bill increased funding, it made no allocations to African-American institutions. In response, hundreds of Delta Sigma Theta members sent letters to their Congressional representatives and staged protests to the bill, which ultimately failed.⁷² Delta Sigma Theta also became active in supporting Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell, who regularly introduced bills that worked to eliminate discrimination and segregation.⁷³

In 1937, Delta Sigma Theta began one of its largest, most ambitious projects—the National Library Project (NLP)—after seeing the lack of library facilities afforded to minorities in the South.⁷⁴ Created at the Delta Sigma Theta National Conference, the sorority appointed Anne Duncan as the first leader to guide the NLP until 1950, when it became incorporated into the Five-Points Program.⁷⁵ By 1940, there were only ninety-nine libraries that served African Americans throughout the South and only about five percent of rural African Americans had access to libraries.⁷⁶ Realizing a significant need, Delta Sigma Theta mobilized its membership and each chapter began purchasing books and organizing them into locked baskets for efficient transportation.⁷⁷ This work continued for decades, with the sorority implementing a “bookmobile,” which traveled across the country educating and encouraging reading among school children.⁷⁸ The bookmobile project soon earned the title “Ride The Winged Horse” and eventually won awards including a special Certificate of Merit, a Community School Improvement Award, and the coveted American Library Award.⁷⁹ Delta Sigma Theta also created a similar project on Saint Helena Island in South Carolina,

71. DELTA, 1979, at 42.

72. *Id.*

73. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 161.

74. *Library*, DELTA, June 1960, at 8.

75. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 110.

76. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 183.

77. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 110.

78. *Appraising Values*, DELTA, *supra* note 74, at 8.

79. *Id.* See also *National Deltas Hire Associate Director Washington*, L.A. TRIBUNE, May 8, 1959, at 10.

where the local Delta Sigma Theta chapter created nine small libraries across the island to provide the residents with access to library materials.⁸⁰ Delta Sigma Theta has incorporated the library service into the Five-Points Program. Many chapters across the nation continue to provide reading materials to those without access and now include communication skill seminars to provide services to communities lacking resources or that are geographically isolated.⁸¹

With the books purchased, the first decision was where to begin. With the guidance of Mollie Houston Lee and Dr. Virginia Lacy Jones, the sorority chose numerous cities throughout the South, beginning in Franklin County, North Carolina.⁸² Franklin County had over forty schools, most only had one or two teachers. For this reason, Delta Sigma Theta provided hundreds of books for the county. By the end of the project, “thank you” letters were flowing in from across Franklin County for all that Delta Sigma Theta had provided.⁸³ Franklin County even built a local library and named it after Delta Sigma Theta; in response, Delta Sigma Theta provided \$500 for the purchase of new books for the library.⁸⁴ Carrolton, Georgia created another library with the local Delta Sigma Theta chapter providing \$500 of start-up money, in addition to helping the local library raise \$2,000 from other sources.⁸⁵ After it was built, the library fell short on funds and could not provide film readers, furniture, or broad services to local residents. Delta Sigma Theta stepped in and covered the costs, which allowed the library to remain open and flourish.⁸⁶

80. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 52.

81. *Id.* at 110.

82. *Id.* at 47.

83. *Id.* at 48.

84. *Id.*

85. *Id.* at 49.

86. *Id.*

II. 1940s–1960s: Emerging Civil Rights Concerns

At the dawn of a new decade, Delta Sigma Theta members were making great strides in the area of anticolonial activism. The Council on African Affairs (CAA), until 1941 called the International Committee on African Affairs (ICAA), was a volunteer organization founded in 1937. It was the leading voice of anticolonialism and Pan-Africanism in the United States, and internationally before the Cold War. Among its founders and early, key members were Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity brothers Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois, as well as Max Yergan, Alphaeus Hunton, Jr., Raymond Leslie Buell, and Ralph J. Bunche. Robeson's wife and Delta Sigma Theta member, Eslanda Goode Robeson,⁸⁷ was an active member of the CAA, which articulated and promoted the connection between the

87. Eslanda Goode Robeson had an unconventional but extraordinary life due to her experiences in both anthropology and being married to her first husband Paul Robeson. Robeson was born on December 15, 1896, in Washington, D.C. She was the only daughter and the youngest of three children to John J. Goode and Eslanda Cardozo. Robeson's father unexpectedly died causing their family to move to Chicago in 1912. Robeson graduated high school at the age of sixteen and entered a domestic science program at the University of Illinois on a full scholarship. Over time Robeson lost interest in the curriculum and decided to transfer to Teachers College of Columbia University in New York City, where she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree in 1920.

After college Robeson secured a job in the surgical pathological laboratory at the Presbyterian Hospital where Robeson met her future husband Paul Robeson, who attended Columbia Law School. They married a year later on August 17, 1921, and continued to work in the hospital until 1925. They had one son named Paul Robeson Jr. After Robeson's husband committed to becoming a full-time actor, Eslanda decided to follow him on all his assignments as his manager. While on the road in the late 1920s Robeson wrote her first manuscript, which was a biography of her husband who she divorced two years later. Robeson decided to enroll in graduate school at London University from 1933 to 1935, specializing in anthropology with a focus on colonized Black people around the world. She later graduated in 1937 from the London School of Economics. After anthropological visits in Costa Rica and Honduras in 1940, the Robeson's moved from New York City to Enfield, Connecticut. Throughout World War II, she lectured frequently on race relations and worked professionally with Pearl Buck. Robeson obtained a Ph.D. at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut in 1945. She died on December 13, 1965, in New York City.

struggle of African Americans in the United States and the destiny of colonized, indigenous peoples around the world.⁸⁸

In 1941, Elsie Austin presented a Delta Sigma Theta report entitled "Jobs Analysis and Opportunities Project."⁸⁹ The aim of the project was to determine where African-American women lacked job opportunities, then use Delta Sigma Theta resources to raise awareness and educate women on how to help.⁹⁰ Delta Sigma Theta launched its job opportunity program in 1941.⁹¹ Through the job program, Delta Sigma Theta set up clinics in high schools and colleges around the country educating youth about available job fields.⁹² Delta Sigma Theta's job program eventually expanded to include teachers, guidance counselors, and parents. Its goal was to encourage parents and raise the aspirations of their children. Delta Sigma Theta also contacted prospective employers who were perpetuating discrimination to inform them that sorority members were working to end employment discrimination.⁹³ In 1947, Delta

88. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 110.

89. *Library*, *supra* note 74, at 10. Austin was born in 1908 in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her mother taught Household Science at Tuskegee Institute and her father served as Commandant of Men. Her mother later taught at the Stowe School and her father worked in insurance, after the family moved to Cincinnati.

Graduating from high school in 1924, she enrolled at the University of Cincinnati. Austin earned her undergraduate degree in 1928 and law degree in 1930, within one year at the University of Cincinnati Law School. While completing her law degree, she worked on the staff of the *Rocky Mountain Law Review* and the *Cincinnati Law Review*. She was the first African-American woman to receive a law degree from the University of Cincinnati. Austin was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1939 to 1944. She was appointed Assistant to the Attorney General of Ohio, and was the first Assistant to the Attorney General of any U.S. state. She later worked in the legal divisions of several federal government agencies. After retiring, she spent almost a decade in Africa, working with the United States Information Agency, where she helped found and operate several educational and cultural programs. She was appointed to the Board of Trustees of Wilberforce University in 1934 and was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Austin died in October 2004.

90. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 195.

91. *Library*, *supra* note 74, at 10.

92. *Id.*

93. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 197.

Sigma Theta redoubled its efforts for fair employment and adopted a new resolution highlighting its efforts, which included: promoting better training for African-American workers, increasing awareness of the labor market challenges for African-American workers, and a stronger effort to enact policy changes that would improve the status quo for African-American workers.⁹⁴ The Beta Alpha chapter began lobbying the tobacco industry to promote equal rights for their mostly African-American workforce.⁹⁵ In 1967, Delta Sigma Theta supported Job Opportunity Clinics in the southern region co-sponsored by Natural Urban League. In 1969, the sorority launched national programs—Delta Womanpower in the World of Work and the Career Motivation Program—conducted on forty college campuses.

When the United States became involved in World War II, Delta Sigma Theta rose to the challenge and began a wide variety of war-related projects. At Delta Sigma Theta's 1942 National Convention, the sorority adopted the slogan, "Delta Dynamic for Defense," and began investing in government bonds to support the war effort, as well as bolstering support for United Service Organizations, especially African-American servicemen.⁹⁶ Later, Delta Sigma Theta began the Victory Book Drive led by Victoria McCall, which collected books for servicemen overseas to provide them with entertainment while spending time in their camps. Delta Sigma Theta further provided countless Red Cross kits and even purchased an ambulance to help the servicemen fighting the war.⁹⁷ As the war ended and the new United Nations was readied, Delta Sigma Theta authorized Bertrell Wright to send a letter to each member of the Dumbarton Oaks Delegation from the United States and advocated for a more robust proposal to further promote equal rights for people in the United States and across the world.⁹⁸ In 1947, Sadie T.

94. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 205.

95. *Id.* at 209.

96. *Id.* at 199.

97. *Id.* at 200.

98. *Id.* at 207.

M. Alexander was appointed to the Presidential Commission on Human Rights.⁹⁹

Delta Sigma Theta members frequently engaged in presentations and held beauty pageants to raise money for various philanthropic causes. A chapter in Ohio held a pageant that raised money for the CAA, which received all of the proceeds from the pageant.¹⁰⁰ In 1946, the Beta Beta chapter in Texas raised over \$7,000 through various activities and events to help build a child welfare center in Houston, and the Beta Kappa chapter in Virginia raised \$1,070 to help build a nursery school.¹⁰¹ Two chapters in Michigan, Alpha Pi Sigma and Tau, worked together to raise money to build a boarding house for delinquent young women and girls.¹⁰² The Delta Home for Girls, as it would be called, soon became operational and housed numerous troubled women, two of which were accepted into a Catholic institution.¹⁰³

In 1947, Delta Sigma Theta teamed up with the National Urban League and created experimental programs in Atlanta and Detroit that worked to compare the vocational counseling needs of young people in segregated and nonsegregated communities.¹⁰⁴ When Founder Jessie Dent sued the Galveston Independent School District, Delta Sigma Theta members in the area mobilized to help with Dent's landmark victory to gain equal pay for African-American teachers in the district.¹⁰⁵ In 1954, the Supreme Court handed down the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This decision led many African-American teachers to question their position in this new system. Delta Sigma Theta answered those questions by conducting reports on what this decision would bring and providing support to African-American teachers around the nation as they faced an uncertain future.¹⁰⁶ Delta Sigma Theta also sent numerous

99. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1949, at 40.

100. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 209.

101. *Id.*

102. *Id.* at 210.

103. *Id.*

104. *Id.* at 206.

105. *Id.* at 208.

106. *Id.* at 232, 233.

members from all over the country to the South to participate in the Freedom Summer—a move designed to help enforce the newly minted Voting Rights Act and ensure all eligible voters were registered properly.

In 1948, Delta Sigma Theta formed an affiliation with the American Council on Human Rights (ACHR), which organized Black opinion on numerous legislative and policy implications and provided a unified opinion in favor or in opposition to these policies.¹⁰⁷ Delta Sigma Theta's work with the ACHR lasted for a decade and a half. In 1952, Delta Sigma Theta members attended the ACHR meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, where 3,000 delegates from various fraternities and sororities represented their organizations.¹⁰⁸ Many Delta Sigma Theta members held positions in the ACHR. Patricia Roberts Harris, a graduate from Howard University and an Alpha chapter initiate, was in charge of ACHR's social action programs.¹⁰⁹ Other prominent members of the sorority held positions as well, including Mae Downs,¹¹⁰ first Vice-President; Dorothy Height,¹¹¹ Vice President in 1952; and Bertell Wright,

107. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 99.

108. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 221.

109. *Id.* at 222.

110. *Id.* at 222.

111. *Id.* Dorothy Irene Height was an American educator and civil rights activist who channeled most of her energy to addressing problems faced by African-American women including voting rights, education, and unemployment. For forty years, Height was the president of the National Council of Negro Women. In 1994 President Bill Clinton honored her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom and in 2004 she was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by Congress. Height was born in Richmond, Virginia, on March 24, 1912, but moved with her family to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, during her childhood. After receiving a scholarship from the Elks, Height was admitted to Barnard College in 1929; however, she was turned away upon entrance due to an unwritten policy stating that only two Black students were allowed in each year. Soon after, Height applied to New York University, where she earned an undergraduate and master's degree in educational psychology.

Throughout her life Height was an active member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, implementing numerous leadership and educational programs. Height began her career at age twenty-five with the New York City Welfare Department and proceeded to get involved as a civil rights activist, joining the National Council of Negro Women. Height was appointed president in 1957. Furthermore, during the peak of the Civil

President in 1953 and 1954. In the early 1960s, Delta Sigma Theta participated in the Student Emergency Fund created by the ACHR. The fund was designed to pay fines and bonds for those arrested during the Civil Rights Movement. The fund supported a variety of activities, including helping to pay the tuition of the first North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NCA&T) students to participate in a sit-in.¹¹² Other student activists, such as Charlayne Gault, a Delta Sigma Theta member from Georgia who worked to integrate the University of Georgia, were supported by the fund.¹¹³

The ACHR had both short- and long-term impacts on Delta Sigma Theta's internal organization.¹¹⁴ Several sorority activities—formerly delegated to sorority committees—were now channeled through the intra-fraternal council.¹¹⁵ While national programs were running smoothly and some of the internal structures were coordinated through the ACHR, the sorority focused on its next stage of development.¹¹⁶ The sorority took this time to reevaluate itself; the result was a more streamlined sorority structure.¹¹⁷ Delta Sigma Theta was a dedicated member of ACHR; but by the 1960s, the sorority believed its resources would better support other organizations.¹¹⁸ The ACHR leadership agreed to disband the

Rights Movement, Height organized many programs including, "Wednesdays in Mississippi" which united both white and black women of the north and south, to create conversation and mutual understanding. Height was influential among American leaders including President Lyndon B. Johnson, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Height continued to be a prominent civil rights figure even in her later years. Height and fifteen other African-American women formed the African-American Women for Reproductive Freedom in 1990. Height was a notable guest at President Obama's inauguration on January 20, 2009. Sadly, on April 29, 2010, at the age of 98, Height passed away from unspecified reasons. Height's legacy and achievements will forever be commemorated and honored.

112. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 242.

113. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 241.

114. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 223.

115. *Id.*

116. *Id.* at 224.

117. *Id.*

118. *Id.* at 242.

Council in 1963 due to financial reluctance among its allies and pressure from the NAACP.¹¹⁹

Under the presidency of Jeanne Noble, Delta Sigma Theta produced a project manual for its Delta Five-Points Project. This manual “present[ed] suggested blueprints for project organization” for any of the points in the Delta Five-Point Project.¹²⁰ The Five Points in the project were library, job opportunities, community

119. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 242.

120. DELTA SIGMA THETA’S FIVE POINT PROJECT MANUAL, at 24 (on file with authors) [hereinafter FIVE POINT PROJECT]. Jeanne L. Noble was born in Albany, Georgia on July 18, 1926, as the first child of Floyd and Aurelia Noble. Noble earned a B.A. from Howard University in 1946 and a master’s degree from Columbia University in 1948. Noble was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1958-1963 as well as vice-president with financial assistance and moral support to the Little Rock Nine. She helped DST desegregate Albany and open a chapter in Liberia, as well as sponsor a maternity wing in a remote Kenyan hospital. *Ebony* magazine named her “one of the 100 most influential Negroes of the Emancipation Centennial Year [1963].”

She taught summer school at Albany State College and later accepted a position as Dean of Women at Langston University. She studied Black college women and their backgrounds, educations, and achievements with a grant from Pi Lambda Theta. In 1955 she earned a doctorate in Educational Psychology and Counseling, and studied at the University of Birmingham. Noble was later hired by New York University as Associate Professor of Teaching at the Center for Human Relations in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She advanced to full professor and held summer visiting professorships at the University of Vermont and Tuskegee Institute. She then served as Assistant Dean of Students at City College of New York. Noble worked on a forty-page plan to increase jobs for girls and women aged sixteen to twenty-one for President Johnson to help plan the Women’s Job Corps. Noble also served on educational and investigative commissions for Presidents Nixon and Ford.

Noble’s publications include: *The Negro Woman’s College Education*, published by Columbian University Teachers College in 1956; “Negro Women Today and Their Education” in *The Journal of Negro Education*; *College Education as Personal Development* in 1960, *The Negro Woman College Graduate* in 1970; and *Beautiful, Also, Are the Souls of My Black Sisters* in 1976. Noble was honored with the Pi Lambda Theta Research Award for her book *The Negro Woman College Graduate*. Noble was active in the Episcopal Church in New York City. She was named Professor Emeritus of Brooklyn College and City University of New York’s Graduate Center. Noble died on October 17, 2002, at New York University Medical Center of congestive heart failure.

volunteerism, mental health, and international affairs.¹²¹ It was intended that this project be a “flexible and expressive vehicle to confront and help eradicate the problems of the day.”¹²² Moreover, chapters showed creative approaches to motivate youth through job opportunity and library outreach programs; chapters also shared skills and goods through the Volunteers for Community Service.¹²³

As Delta Sigma Theta chapters worked to combine civil rights, job readiness, and education efforts in their communities, their work was recognized and supported by the federal government. For example, Berkeley’s chapter secured a \$4,000 federal grant used to help motivate junior high school students toward college and future careers.¹²⁴ A chapter in St. Louis received federal funding to assist with the costs of college entrance exams and college application fees for low-income students.¹²⁵ Delta Sigma Theta members have not limited scholarship offers to only members within the sorority. The sorority has consistently provided money to young women looking to pursue studies overseas, much like Dorothy Maynor, a young woman looking to conduct music and study in Europe.¹²⁶

Kumari Paul was another young woman who received money from Delta Sigma Theta to study in India.¹²⁷ Also, Delta Sigma Theta has given money to graduates of Lincoln and Virginia Union Universities to enable women to further their studies after graduation.¹²⁸ The sorority also supported efforts to increase literacy in underserved areas and schools. In 1950, the Delta Sigma Theta Bookmobile extended service in Northwest Georgia as part of the West George Regional Library.¹²⁹ In 1956, Delta Sigma Theta gifted a sewing machine to a young woman from Ghana while she visited

121. FIVE POINT PROJECT, *supra* note 120, at 24.

122. *Achievement and Potentiality*, DELTA, 1962, at 32.

123. *Id.*

124. Dr. Geraldine P. Woods, *Decisive Action for Freedom through Education*, DELTA, Mar. 1967, at 18.

125. *Id.*

126. *Id.* at 191.

127. *Id.*

128. *Id.*

129. DELTA, 1979, at 40.

the United States. Once the young lady returned to Ghana, she reported that she had become a leader in African fashion and was wildly successful due to Delta Sigma Theta's donation.¹³⁰ In 1959, under then-National President Jeanne Noble, Delta Sigma Theta sponsored Lucy Lameck, a young political leader of the Tanganyika African National Union who was working to promote women's rights in many of the new African nations.¹³¹

In 1951, the Urban League conducted a study to determine the prevalence of discrimination among downtown hotels and restaurants in Portland, Oregon. As a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Ellen T. Law volunteered to be a human "guinea pig" for the discrimination study.¹³² As a member of the study, Law visited restaurants and took notes about her dining experience. From that survey, Oregon enacted a state law against discrimination in public accommodations in 1953; it was later broadened in 1957.¹³³ These events led to the founding of the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice, which was established to replace the Fair Employment Practices Division in 1957.¹³⁴

Ignited by student protests, the Civil Rights Movement caught fire nationwide. Less than two years later, over thirty-five percent of Delta Sigma Theta's membership had participated in sit-ins.¹³⁵ When conditions turned violent in Little Rock, then-Delta Sigma Theta President Jeanne Noble paid a visit to the city to survey the scene.¹³⁶ She found numerous members active in the cause and attempting to maintain order amongst the more violent factions.¹³⁷ Delta Sigma Theta chapters across the nation also continued to run advertisement

130. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 127.

131. *Id.*

132. Ellen T. Law, *Overcoming Barriers to Intergroup Communications*, 46 DELTA: COMMUNICATIONS, 1960, at 23.

133. *Id.*

134. *Id.*

135. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 127, 256.

136. *Id.* at 244.

137. *Id.*

space in the *Arkansas State Press*—a pro-equal rights paper run by the husband of Daisy Bates that lost all of its funding during this time.¹³⁸

Through the chapters' generous donations, the paper was able to stay afloat and continue business for a few more months.¹³⁹ Delta Sigma Theta women worked with "Black families in Albany, Georgia, whose means of income had been cut off due to their efforts to obtain the right to vote."¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Delta Sigma Theta members in Albany were often in the middle of protest activities, which placed them at risk. The then-chapter President, Marion King, was attacked by police officers who knocked her to the ground as she delivered food to peaceful teenage protesters. King was six months pregnant and lost her baby as a result of the police attack.¹⁴¹

In 1953, Delta Sigma Theta sponsored a town meeting with Stanley High, Editor of *Reader's Digest*, and Dr. Charles S. Johnson, the founder of the National Urban League's *Opportunity* magazine and President of Fisk University. The goal of the town meeting was to discuss the moral fabric of the community and determine whether it was eroding.¹⁴² The sorority held another town meeting in Detroit and discussed the role of race in America on an international scale.¹⁴³ Both meetings served the purpose of providing knowledge and awareness to the community of problems Delta Sigma Theta believed needed attention.¹⁴⁴ The sorority also sponsored the Portland Conference on Counseling Minority Youth. The Delta Workshop directed attention to the less tangible needs of Negro youth, which are still some of the most fundamental needs.¹⁴⁵

Beginning in 1955, Delta Sigma Theta implemented the Delta Volunteers for Community Service program, in conjunction with the Five-Point Project. The Five-Point Project was designed to motivate

138. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 89.

139. *Id.*

140. See Gasman, *Passive Activism*, *supra* note 3.

141. *Id.*

142. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 220.

143. *Id.* at 220–21.

144. *Id.*

145. Geraldine Woods, *Delta Meets the Challenge of Tomorrow's Opportunities for Minority Youth*, DELTA, 1963, at 55.

Delta Sigma Theta chapters to become more involved in their community and increase volunteerism with Delta Sigma Theta partners like the YWCA, American Red Cross, the National Urban League, Girl Scouts of America, and the National Community Chest and Councils.¹⁴⁶ As part of the mental health initiative for the Five-Point Project, Delta Sigma Theta chapters throughout the Midwest raised money to provide radios, television sets, toiletries, games, and magazines to local mental health patients.¹⁴⁷ Many chapters also held informative sessions on mental health to provide the public with knowledge of what remains a shrouded problem.¹⁴⁸

Under the goals of the Five-Point Program, Delta Sigma Theta also established the Southern Regional Project, an endeavor led by Cecil Edwards designed to improve services to children with impaired hearing.¹⁴⁹ Delta Sigma Theta members located in Atlanta—the site of the Southern Regional Project—contributed to the programs by helping the specialists involved and running the center's day-to-day needs.¹⁵⁰ Continuing its programs in the South, Delta Sigma Theta began the "Ride the Winged Horse" program in Tuskegee, Alabama.¹⁵¹ The program was designed to foster good reading habits in local children; the local Delta Sigma Theta chapter ran the entire program.¹⁵² This program eventually spread to chapters in St. Petersburg, Florida, and Bradenton, Florida, where the local chapters would continue to run the program.¹⁵³ Delta Sigma Theta continued to make notable strides in literacy and education with support and services related to education as one of the primary community service activities.

Delta Sigma Theta possessed a large national influence as well. The newly created International Project, a part of the Five-Point Program, grew significantly. In 1955, Hurricane Hazel hit Haiti and

146. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 108, 121.

147. *Id.* at 135.

148. *Id.*

149. *Id.* at 111.

150. *Id.*

151. *Id.* at 113.

152. *Id.*

153. *Id.* at 116.

caused millions of dollars worth of damage.¹⁵⁴ Delta Sigma Theta had recently established a chapter there and felt the need to contribute. Delta Sigma Theta sent \$1,000 to the heavily damaged village of Jeremie to provide tools, sewing machines, food, and other necessities.¹⁵⁵ The economic level of the village was raised so much by this donation that Delta Sigma Theta was not allowed to give any more money to the region for fear of unbalancing the region.¹⁵⁶

Individually, Delta Sigma Theta members also worked to integrate public educational institutions. As a teenager, Daisy Bates met her husband Christopher, who was an experienced journalist.¹⁵⁷ They married and moved to Little Rock, where they operated the *Arkansas State Press*, a weekly African-American newspaper that championed civil rights. Bates also became president of her NAACP chapter in 1952. After the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, when school segregation continued in Arkansas, the Bateses used their media presence to report on these events. In 1957, Daisy Bates used her authority as NAACP chapter head and as a reputable newspaper publisher to help the famous Little Rock Nine become the first African-American students to attend Central High School in Little Rock. On September 4, 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus sent members of the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the Little Rock Nine from entering the school. Undeterred, the Little Rock Nine had their first integrated day of school on September 25, 1957, guarded by U.S. soldiers sent by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

154. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 12.

155. *Id.* at 126.

156. *Id.*

157. Daisy Bates was an African-American civil rights activist, newspaper publisher, and journalist. She is well-known for documenting the battle to end segregation in her home state of Arkansas. Born November 11, 1914, in Huttig, Bates suffered loss early on in life. Her mother was the victim of a deadly hate crime, and her father left soon after. She has been recognized by the Associated Press as the 1957 Woman of the Year in Education and one of the top ten newsmakers in the world. In 1960, she moved to New York to write *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*, her memoir of her experiences with the Little Rock Nine. Daisy Bates was also the only female to speak at the Lincoln Memorial at the 1963 March on Washington. She is an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

In 1958, Delta Sigma Theta launched a national drive to raise money for Africa's first native-operated hospital. Through the drive and additional fundraising, the sorority raised a total of \$5,000 for that hospital.¹⁵⁸ In the 1960s Delta Sigma Theta supported projects that stressed the importance of person-to-person relationships in the world community. It joined twenty-four other organizations in Harrington, New York, for the 1962 American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa.¹⁵⁹ The resolutions passed at that conference were presented to the President by the Call Committee.¹⁶⁰

In 1961, under the presidency of Jeanne L. Noble, Delta Sigma Theta again used its philanthropic arm to fund another project—this time in Kenya. Using money from various sources, Delta Sigma Theta contributed \$5,000 and helped build the maternity ward in the Njore Mungai Hospital in rural Kenya.¹⁶¹ In 1962, forty-five members went on the African Study Tour and took Friendship Trees with them.¹⁶² Following the study tour, Delta Sigma Theta projects involving international affairs emerged. The sorority presented over \$1,500 to the National Council of Women in Liberia and the Women's Association for Aid to Rwanda Women for village developments that taught girls vocational and educational skills.¹⁶³ They also pledged \$5,000 to the Thika Hospital that opened in 1964. Not only does that hospital provide medical services, it also trains nurses and midwives. New York's Queen Alumnae Delta Sigma Theta chapter underwrote the education of six children in Kenya.¹⁶⁴

For many years, Delta Sigma Theta chapters across the nation have held annual Christmas parties where the chapter provides underprivileged children with Christmas presents, food, and holiday cheer.¹⁶⁵ Across the nation, Delta Sigma Theta has held these annual parties to support those in need. As tensions rose in Little Rock,

158. *Lena Horne Honorary Member*, DELTA, 1959, at 7.

159. *American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa*, DELTA, 1962 at 51.

160. *Id.* at 52.

161. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 90.

162. *The Story of the Friendship Trees*, DELTA, 1962, at 47.

163. *International Understanding*, DELTA, Mar. 1967, at 56.

164. *Id.* at 57.

165. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 88.

Arkansas, Delta Sigma Theta provided gifts and money to Little Rock students who endured the tedious situation.¹⁶⁶ When an entire class of African-American students were refused graduation at Prince Edward County High School in Virginia because the school shut down to avoid integration, Delta Sigma Theta provided all fifty-seven seniors with a Christmas party that raised scholarship money for them to attend school elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ In 1960, Delta Sigma Theta held a Christmas party for four six-year-olds who were the first to desegregate a school in New Orleans.¹⁶⁸ In 1961, Delta Sigma Theta gave Christmas gifts to seventy high school students in McComb, Mississippi, who were expelled after refusing to sign a pledge to stop their nonviolent demonstrations against the arrest of a fifteen-year-old student named Brenda Travis who violated travel segregation laws.¹⁶⁹

Delta Sigma Theta also continually wrote to President Eisenhower during this time to urge him to take a stronger stance on civil rights.¹⁷⁰ When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was proposed, Delta Sigma Theta not only sent hundreds of members to march on Washington in support of the bill, but also used all of its resources to apply pressure and ensure the bill passed.¹⁷¹ Delta Sigma Theta managed to acquire a room in the capital where Delta Sigma Theta leadership met with numerous Senators and urged their support of the bill.¹⁷² Delta Sigma Theta followed a similar path with the Voting Rights Act.¹⁷³

The tone of President Geraldine Pittman Woods' address to sorority members in 1964 was that of encouraging participation. In her address, she urged all members to either remain active or to become active and for all members to work together to help the

166. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 244.

167. *Id.* at 255.

168. *Id.*

169. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 91.

170. *Id.* at 248.

171. *Id.* at 263.

172. *Id.* at 264.

173. *Id.* at 263.

sorority reach its goals.¹⁷⁴ Delta Sigma Theta made a deposit for the purchase of a John F. Kennedy Chair at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C.¹⁷⁵ The sorority was also involved in voter registration and education in cooperation with the NAACP, Urban League, and N.C.N.W.¹⁷⁶ Additionally, Delta Sigma Theta aided the National Scholarship Service Fund for Negro Students and awarded scholarships to Ugandan girls at the request of the State Department.¹⁷⁷

During the 1960s, individual Delta Sigma Theta members flew the sorority banner in their social justice work. Among them was Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, who participated in the Mississippi Freedom Ride during the summer of 1961.¹⁷⁸ She had arrived in Jackson, Mississippi by train from New Orleans, Louisiana. She was shortly arrested by Jackson police and taken to a waiting paddy wagon; she was refused bail and transferred to Parchman State Prison Farm. There she was put on trial and found innocent. After the Freedom Rides, Trumpauer Mulholland studied at Tougaloo College and was a Freedom Summer organizer in 1964. As one of the first white women to become a Delta Sigma Theta member, Trumpauer Mulholland set an example of white-black solidarity with respect to social justice activism.

In 1962, honorary member Fannie Lou Hamer became a civil rights activist after attending a protest meeting.¹⁷⁹ That year, she

174. Geraldine Woods, *Delta Sigma Theta Regional Conferences, 1966 Presidential Address*, DELTA, 1967, at 13–14.

175. *Id.* at 71.

176. *Id.*

177. *Id.*

178. Joan Trumpauer Mulholland attended Duke University and was a part-time secretary in the Washington office of Senator Clair Engle of California. While in Washington D.C. Mulholland participated in over three dozen sit-ins. She later worked at the Smithsonian with the Community Relations Service at the Departments of Commerce and Justice before teaching English as a second language at an Arlington, Virginia elementary school.

179. Fannie Lou Hamer was born in Montgomery, Mississippi, on October 6, 1917. She was the youngest of twenty children and began working the fields when she was six years old. She dropped out of school at age twelve to help out her family. In 1944, she married Perry Hamer and worked on a cotton plantation near Ruleville.

was one of a small group of African Americans in her area to register to vote. Because of this, she was fired from her job at the plantation. She then dedicated her life to fighting for civil rights. She also worked for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. During her service, she was threatened, harassed, beaten, and shot at. In 1963, she was booked in a Winona, Mississippi, jail, where she suffered severe kidney damage after being horribly beaten. She also helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, which was established to oppose Mississippi's all-white delegation to the Democratic National Convention. The civil rights struggle in Mississippi was brought to national attention by a televised session at that year's convention.

Similarly, Delta Sigma Theta member Joyce Barrett joined the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s.¹⁸⁰ She was one of the few white northerners involved. When she was in college, she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and worked to promote voting rights. In the spring of 1963, she was jailed in Albany, Georgia, for handing out voter registration forms. For her activism and service to the Civil Rights Movement, she was inducted as an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta, one of the only white women to receive such an honor.

Also in 1963, Vivian Malone Jones, along with another Black student James Hood, matriculated at the University of Alabama, making them early trailblazers in desegregating the university.¹⁸¹

In 1965, Hamer ran unsuccessfully for Congress the following year. On March 14, 1977, she died of breast cancer. Her tombstone reads "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired." This is one of her most famous quotes. She is an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta and the recipient of the Mary Church Terrell Award.

180. Joyce Barrett joined the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s. As a white northerner, she was one of a few. When she was in college, she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and worked to promote voting rights. In the spring of 1963, she was jailed in Albany, Georgia, for handing out voter registration forms. For her activism and service to the Civil Rights Movement, she was inducted as an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta, one of the only white women to receive such an honor.

181. Vivian Malone Jones was born on July 15, 1942, in Mobile, Alabama. She was the oldest of eight children. She has received many awards for her service including the first Lurleen B. Wallace Award for Courage in 1996. Former Governor

Jones began her college education at the predominantly Black Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical (A&M) College. The school was unaccredited, so Jones applied to the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration at the all-white University of Alabama. Though *Brown v. Board of Education* had been decided nearly a decade earlier, the University of Alabama only complied with the ruling when it was ordered to do so. Even so, Alabama Governor George Wallace attempted to prevent the two Black students from entering the school.

He physically stood in the doorway to Foster Auditorium and proclaimed "Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!" It took a military intervention by President John F. Kennedy to safely allow the students to enter. The rest of that day and the next day, Jones and Hood were able to enter the school without incident. Jones's experiences at the university ranged from hostile threats of violence to warm promises of friendship. In 1965, Jones graduated with honors and became the university's first Black student to graduate. The same year, Jones moved to Washington D.C. to begin a career fighting injustice with the U.S. Justice Department and its Voter Education Project. Jones and her husband moved to Atlanta in 1969. She worked as the Director of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs for the Environmental Protection Agency and also as the Director of its Environmental Justice program. Later, she worked as a Personnel Specialist at the Veterans Administration Hospital, as well as Acting Executive Director of the Voter Education Project in Atlanta.

Other individual Delta Sigma Theta members also sacrificed much during the Civil Rights Movement. Myrlie Evers-Williams married her husband, Medgar, in December of 1951.¹⁸² Medgar

George Wallace presented her with the award named for his late wife. Later, they spoke "of forgiveness." She received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters and had a scholarship named for her at the University of Alabama. She was a member of the Delta Delta chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, which she joined at Alabama A&M.

182. Myrlie Evers-Williams was born on March 17, 1933, in Vicksburg, Mississippi. She was raised by her grandmother, a schoolteacher, and grew up with a love of learning and music. She went to Alcorn Agricultural & Mechanical College, where she was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta. She made an unsuccessful bid for Congress in

became the secretary for the NAACP, and Evers-Williams worked alongside him, fighting to end racial segregation of schools and other public facilities; they also campaigned for voting rights. Medgar was shot by white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith on June 12, 1963, and soon died. Evers-Williams fought for thirty years to see Beckwith jailed.

She kept the case alive after two all-white juries could not reach a verdict. In the early 1990s, a multiracial jury convicted him. After her husband's death, Evers-Williams moved with her children to California and continued fighting for civil rights and speaking on behalf of the NAACP. She made an unsuccessful bid for Congress in 1970. She married Walter Williams in 1976 and continued to serve her community and work with the NAACP. In 1987, she was appointed to the Board of Public Works as a Commissioner. She also joined the board of the NAACP. In 1995, Evers-Williams was elected chairperson of the NAACP Board of Directors. Her goal was to help the organization move past a dark period marked by scandal and economic problems. She received many honors, including the title of "Woman of the Year" in *Ms. Magazine*. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta's Delta Epsilon chapter, which she joined at Alcorn Agricultural & Mechanical College.

During this same period, Delta Sigma Theta member Marian Wright Edelman became involved in the Civil Rights Movement, was arrested for her engagement, and then enrolled at Yale Law School. In 1963, Edelman earned her J.D. and became the first woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar.¹⁸³ She immediately began

1970. She married Walter Williams in 1976 and continued to serve her community and work with the NAACP. In 1987, she was appointed to the Board of Public Works as a Commissioner. She also joined the board of the NAACP in 1995; she was elected chairperson of the NAACP Board of Directors. Her goal was to help the organization move past a dark period marked by scandal and economic problems.

183. Marian Wright Edelman is an American-born children's civil rights activist. She has spent much of her life advocating for the rights of underprivileged children and in 1973 she founded and became President of the Children's Defense Fund. Edelman was born on June 6, 1939, in Bennettsville, South Carolina, where she attended Marlboro Training High School and went on the Spartan College. Today, Edelman continues to advocate for youth prenatal care, child-care funding, greater pregnancy prevention, and

working on civil rights issues with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's Mississippi office. Edelman moved to Washington D.C. in 1968 where she continued working for the Poor People's Campaign of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

In 1965, under the leadership of National President Geraldine Pittman Woods, Delta Sigma Theta co-sponsored the East African Women's International Seminar in Nairobi, Kenya.¹⁸⁴ Two decades

serves as a member of the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City.

184. DELTA, 1985, at 6; *Inspiration and Encouragement*, DELTA, 1964, at 42. Geraldine Pittman Woods was born on January 29, 1921, in West Palm Beach, Florida, to Susie King Pittman and Oscar Pittman. Woods transferred from a private Episcopal school to Industrial High School in the fourth grade, where she graduated in 1938. She went on to attend Talladega College and then transferred to Howard University in 1940 to be closer to her sick mother. Woods attended Radcliffe College and Harvard University through a partnership program, where she earned a Master of Science degree in 1943 and a Ph.D. in Neuro-Embryology in 1945. Dr. Louis Hansborough, a professor at Howard University, encouraged her to continue studying embryology after graduation. Woods was elected into Phi Beta Kappa, a national honors society, in 1945. Woods was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1963-1967; while she was in office, Delta Sigma Theta founded the Delta Research and Educational Foundation.

Woods briefly worked as an instructor at Howard University until 1946, when she took a hiatus to focus on family. She married Robert Woods, a dentistry student at Meharry Medical School and had three children, Jan, Jerri, and Robert. Woods became involved in volunteer and community efforts. She served a four-year term on the Personnel Board of the California Department of Employment starting in 1963, became a member of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences the following year, and was the first African-American woman appointed to the National Advisory General Medical Services Council. The NIGMS appointed her a Special Consultant in 1969.

Woods was invited to help launch Project Head Start with First Lady Johnson and Delta Sigma Theta. In 1968, President Johnson appointed her Chairman of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. From 1968-1972, she worked as the Vice Chair of the Community Relations Conference of Southern California. In 1972, two programs Woods worked on at NIGMS, the Minority Access to Research Careers Program and the Minority Biomedical Research Support Program, were initiated. Woods headed Howard University's Board of Trustees from 1975-1988 and she retired from the NIH and leadership positions in 1991.

Woods received the Mary Church Terrell Award of Delta Sigma Theta, Scroll of Merit of the National Medical Association in 1979, Howard University Achievement Award in 1980, and the Distinguished Leadership Achievement Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education in 1987. In 1978,

later, under the leadership of National President Hortense Canady, international awareness was emphasized as a prominent theme for chapters to explore. She encouraged members to review their past work abroad, including: the building and maintenance of a maternity wing at the Thika Memorial Hospital in Nairobi, support for Haitian refugees, sending books to libraries and schools in West African countries to embrace future initiatives, and projects across the African diaspora.¹⁸⁵ The Chapter in Little Rock, Arkansas, entertained foreign guests for twelve years and joined the Little Rock International Hospitality Committee in 1964.¹⁸⁶ In Detroit, a trip to Africa by Soror Bernice White led to a book collection project by the Detroit Alumnae Chapter where the Chapter collected over 1,000 books for donation.¹⁸⁷ The St. Louis, Missouri Alumnae Chapter sponsored an exhibit for its second shipment of articles and hospital supplies for the Riruta Clinic in Kenya, and the San Francisco, California Alumnae Chapter sent a contribution of \$200 to the Riruta

Woods had the sixth annual NIGMS Minority Biomedical Support symposium at the Atlanta University Center dedicated to her. Delta Sigma Theta established the Geraldine P. Woods Sciences Award in 1994. NIGMS unveiled the Geraldine Woods Award at the 2003 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students. A fellowship in biology at Howard University and in chemistry at Atlanta University have been established in her name and honorary degrees at Benedict College, Talladega College, Fisk University, Bennett College, Meharry Medical College, and Howard University have been given to her. Woods died on December 27, 1999, in her Aliso Viejo, California, home after succumbing to a long illness.

185. DELTA, 1985, at 6. Hortense Golden Canady was born Elizabeth Hortense Golden on August 18, 1927, in Chicago, Illinois. She enrolled in Fisk University at age sixteen, where she met her husband, Clinton Canady, Jr. They married on her eighteenth birthday before his deployment during World War II. They had a daughter, Alexa, who was the first African-American woman to become a neurosurgeon. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from Fisk University. Later on, she went back to school to receive her master's degree in Higher Education from Michigan State University.

Canady was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1983-1988. Canady was a civil rights leader and the first African American elected to the Lansing Board of Education. She died on October 23, 2010.

186. *Toward International Understanding*, DELTA, 1962, at 46.

187. *Id.*

Clinic.¹⁸⁸ The Beta Omega Chapter in El Paso, Texas, corresponded with a Catholic School in Uganda.¹⁸⁹ The Tuskegee, Alabama Chapter named its international project "Operation Friendship," which focuses on helping foreign students at the Tuskegee Institute adjust to local customs and etiquette.¹⁹⁰

During the 1960s, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was created to conduct studies on how federal laws and policies affect civil rights. Delta Sigma Theta chapters around the nation contributed hundreds of witness testimonies by members, all of whom testified at the studies' hearings.¹⁹¹ Throughout the 1960s, Delta Sigma Theta's regional and annual meetings were dedicated to informing and rallying members to join different social justice causes. For example, the 1966 theme "Decisive Action for Freedom Through Education" was chosen as the regional conference theme to provide members with "greater insight and sensitivity in the area of voting, education and the family" to motivate members to face the challenges before them.¹⁹² Conferences provided Delta Sigma Theta members an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments of chapters, and to recognize the hard work of individual members throughout the organization.

Notable leaders and high-ranking officials in civil rights and government organizations were invited to speak, provide a platform for their work, and inform members of progress in the movement and upcoming changes in legislation and public policy. Guests included leaders from the Urban League, the NAACP, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Education, as well as members of Congress. President John F. Kennedy addressed Delta Sigma Theta members at the Golden Anniversary Luncheon in Washington D.C., in 1963. The President congratulated members for their service stating, "At this anniversary we should look to the past and

188. *Toward International Understanding*, *supra* note 186.

189. *Id.*

190. *Id.*

191. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 266.

192. Woods, *Presidential Address*, *supra* note 174, at 16.

recognize the extraordinary contributions that this sorority has made, but I think that all of us will say that there's a great deal left undone and to the finishing of these tasks we commit ourselves."¹⁹³ He specifically congratulated the sorority for raising over \$600,000 over the last several years for scholarships.¹⁹⁴ Delta Sigma Theta's goal for the upcoming year was to raise over \$250,000 because the members recognized that financial resources were absolutely necessary to reach meaningful goals.¹⁹⁵ In 1963, newly elected Delta Sigma Theta President Geraldine Woods reminded the Delta Sigma Theta women of their important responsibilities in all movements at the time. In her remarks, she proclaimed: "Women not only play a key role in these social movements, but also have 'vital stakes' in them."¹⁹⁶

In 1965, Delta Sigma Theta participated in the Civil Rights Luncheon.¹⁹⁷ Mr. Clarence Mitchell, Director of the NAACP, acknowledged the organization's efforts during a speech to the organization at the Annual Conference. In his speech, Mitchell quoted: "[T]he victories of 1964 and 1965 [Civil Rights Bills] are accomplishments for your organization because your representatives worked for the results." Mitchell acknowledged Dr. Geraldine Woods and Marie Barksdale as "consistent and effective as participants in the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights."¹⁹⁸ However, along with his outstanding reclaim, Mitchell further challenged the Delta Sigma Theta members to continue working for the same accomplishments moving forward into 1966.¹⁹⁹ "Action for Freedom" became the main topic of discussion, especially at the 1965 Annual Delta Sigma Theta Meeting.²⁰⁰ To this end, the sorority

193. President John F. Kennedy, Address at the Golden Anniversary Luncheon (1963).

194. *Id.*

195. Edith Green, *Education*, DELTA, at 21.

196. Geraldine Woods, *New Directions Emerge*, DELTA, 1963, at 11.

197. *Civil Rights Luncheon*, DELTA, 1965, at 16.

198. Director of the NAACP Clarence Mitchell, Jr., Address at the Civil Rights Luncheon (1965).

199. Samuel C. Jackson, *Public Meeting Address*, DELTA, Mar. 1967, at 27.

200. Wiley Branton, *Social Action Address*, DELTA, Mar. 1967, at 37.

created the Social Action Committee to give direction in voter education, civil rights, and education on housing and employment.²⁰¹ Additionally, the Culturemobile Project, or “Delta Teen Lift,” began in June of 1963.²⁰² The purpose of this project was to broaden the horizons and experiences of young adults by introducing them to new places and people.²⁰³ Thirty “culturally deprived” junior and high school students traveled by bus from Atlanta to Washington D.C., while touring other states along the way.²⁰⁴

During the 1950s, under the leadership of National President Dorothy Penman Harrison, Delta Sigma Theta created numerous additional programs to aid African-Americans in their job searches. Programs like the Parents’ Clinic, the Ninth Grade Clinic, the Search

201. Woods, *New Directions Emerge*, *supra* note 196, at 30.

202. *Toward Brighter Horizons*, DELTA, at 35. Vivian Osborne Marsh played a crucial role in this project. She was a notable activist and government official and was one of the most prominent African-American leaders in San Francisco, California. Marsh was born in Houston, Texas, on September 5, 1897. After growing up in Texas, Marsh applied to the University of California, Berkeley where she was required to take multiple entrance exams due to her southern education. Because she scored so highly on each exam, Marsh was admitted to the university and also helped discontinue this discriminatory policy. During her time at Berkeley, Marsh founded the Kappa chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, in which she served as president and then continued founding Delta Sigma Theta chapters on several other campuses. Marsh received both an undergraduate and master’s degree from UC Berkeley in anthropology, becoming one of the first African-American women to receive this degree.

In her early adulthood, Marsh built two successful organizations, the Traveling Library, which brought books to rural Georgia, and Teen Lift, which gave underprivileged teenagers opportunities to attend events like concerts and museums. Marsh was president of the California State Association of Colored Women and she participated in the National Council of Negro Women where she oversaw the National Youth Administration, helping young adults find employment during the Great Depression. Marsh was a Republican and ran for City Council in 1959 but did not win. This defeat did not deter her passion for activism and community involvement. In 1982 the Mayor of Berkeley declared February 21 to be Vivian Osborne Marsh Day. In 1986, Marsh suffered a stroke and passed away at the age of 89.

203. *Toward Brighter Horizons*, *supra* note 202, at 35.

204. *Id.*

for Future Scientists, and the Conference of Counselors all worked to promote job growth and knowledge growth for their respective audiences.²⁰⁵ The Parents' Clinic was a program where Delta Sigma Theta members would meet with local ninth-graders and their parents in an effort to create positive attitudes with parents, which studies show lead to positive results for the child.²⁰⁶ The Ninth-Grade Clinics were job clinics that showed teenagers job possibilities in an attempt to motivate them toward one profession and encourage the development of goals.²⁰⁷ The Search for Future Scientists was a testing program run by Delta Sigma Theta to find future Black American scientists.²⁰⁸ The Conference for Counselors was a Delta Sigma Theta program where local chapters would invite counselors of all races to meet together to put stereotypes to rest.²⁰⁹ In 1958, Delta Sigma Theta held a conference in Shreveport, Louisiana, for homeroom teachers from the surrounding areas and

205. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 246. Dorothy Penman Harrison was born Dorothy Marie Penman on December 8, 1907, in Portsmouth, Ohio, as the daughter of a teacher, Annabelle Layne, and chef, Victor Logan Penman. She graduated from high school in 1924 and then studied history at Fisk University. She graduated from Ohio State University in 1932 with a degree in education. Harrison joined the Epsilon chapter of Delta Sigma Theta and was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1956-1958 and then Treasurer.

She married Gerald Lamar Harrison, president of the Colored Agricultural and Normal University (now Langston University) in 1940. He earned his Ph.D. in Education from Ohio State University in 1936 while serving as head of the Education Department at Prairie View A&M College. In 1948, her eldest son, Gerald, died at age thirteen in a car accident and her second son, Richard died of an asthma attack at the same age in 1950. Her husband died in 1986.

She returned to Ohio to work as a teacher following her parents' death in 1926. She served as a board member for a range of organizations including Chicago Metropolitan YMCA, Central Review Team, Chicago Urban League, and Art Institute of Chicago. She is a life member of the NAACP and the National Council of Negro Women. She was selected as co-chair of the federal Head Start program in 1965 and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Langston University in 2003.

Harrison died on Wednesday, December 22, 2010, in Flossmoor, Illinois, after suffering from a brief illness.

206. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 118.

207. *Id.*

208. *Id.*

209. *Id.*

trained them to better counsel their students and contribute to their future development.²¹⁰ Troubled by the low numbers of people of color employed in government positions, Delta Sigma Theta lobbied federal agencies to evaluate their hiring and promotion practices. For example, Delta Sigma Theta sent a resolution to the State Department to call for an end to “the restriction of ambassador appointments to one or two persons of color ... [and] called upon them to appoint distinguished and competent American Negroes to their Boards and to top staff positions.”²¹¹

College-aged members participated in a range of community service activities during the 1960s in addition to civil rights activities. Traditional forms of service were common and encouraged to maintain community ties and assist those who had immediate needs. For example, in the early 1960s, the Epsilon Theta chapter volunteered to provide recreational activities for patients at the Community Hospital, King’s Daughters Hospital, and Norfolk General Cerebral Palsy, Inc. Volunteerism and community service are foundational to sorority life and provide alternative images of Blacks as college-educated, civically engaged citizens. Alumnae chapters in particular provide their members, and by extension their communities, with technical and professional expertise, monies, and networks that few organizations can offer. Delta Sigma Theta was invited by the Johnson Administration to meet at the White House to learn about the Headstart Initiative and consider taking a lead in the program. The Headstart Program was designed to provide underprivileged preschoolers with mentors who could help direct them down more successful paths.²¹² Seven Delta Sigma Theta chapters were successful in securing federal grants to support Headstart programs in their communities as part of the initial launch of the program.²¹³

During the 1950s and 1960s, Delta Sigma Theta began to branch out and support a wider variety of programs. In Oklahoma, Delta

210. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 120.

211. *Id.* at 54.

212. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 268.

213. *Project Headstart*, DELTA, 1967, at 67.

Sigma Theta provided a daycare for single mothers who needed the help.²¹⁴ In Baltimore, Delta Sigma Theta began a counseling program for unwed mothers—a program ahead of its time.²¹⁵ Delta Sigma Theta also established a mentoring program called “Teen Lift,” in the early 1960s under the guidance of Jeanne Noble. The program was designed to take young southern African Americans with little resources and move them to a new city, such as St. Louis, Detroit, or Los Angeles. Once moved, Delta Sigma Theta members in the city would then mentor the young students and ensure they continued along an appropriate path.²¹⁶ Sorority member Vivian Washington became concerned with the plight of the adolescent, unwed mother when forty-four girls withdrew from school due to pregnancy all within one school year.²¹⁷ The Baltimore Alumnae Chapter sponsored a project that gave services to these young girls, as well as researched what information and services were needed to help combat this issue.²¹⁸ The results of the project showed that services were needed for unwed mothers, especially services that would go to the mother.²¹⁹ The project also found that there was a need for a continued education program for mothers during pregnancy and post-birth.²²⁰ Improved coordination between already existing services and resources was needed as well.²²¹ Furthermore, the project found that a service was needed to help improve family relationships so parents would teach their children proper sex education.²²²

The Los Angeles Alumnae Chapter created Project DRIC (Delta Reading Improvement Class) for elementary school students.²²³ This project was created to improve the reading skills of third and fourth

214. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 271.

215. *Id.*

216. *Id.* at 257.

217. *The Adolescent Unwed Mother – Baltimore Alumnae*, DELTA, 1963, at 21.

218. *Id.*

219. *Id.* at 22.

220. *Id.*

221. *Id.*

222. *Id.*

223. Geraldine Woods, *Project DRIC – Los Angeles Alumnae*, DELTA, 1964, at 21.

graders and consisted of three eight-week sessions that were staffed by sorority members.²²⁴ The members of the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter sponsored a Charity Ball for Mental Health that was well supported by the community.²²⁵ The funds were used to sponsor a craft arts workshop for the patients.²²⁶ The Delta Pi Chapter of the sorority launched a new project to help improve the grade point averages of on-campus students.²²⁷ This project was called Operate Doe and used a series of study-ins. Dedicated staff and sorority members helped raise students' grade point averages.²²⁸ The members wished to show that making a "concentrated effort" would bring about higher grade point averages.²²⁹

In the years following, Delta Sigma Theta launched programs designed to serve the community. In 1966, Delta Sigma Theta launched the College Application program, which covered the costs in full or in part for students to apply to college.²³⁰ The Application program aimed to overcome the inequality of educational opportunities that economically deprived students faced.²³¹ Along with the College Application Program, Delta Sigma Theta formed a Social Action Commission in 1968.²³² Additionally, Delta Sigma Theta launched a National Program on Womanpower in the World of Work in 1969, which aimed to spread career options and motivate women to pursue careers.²³³

224. Woods, *Project DRIC*, *supra* note 223, at 21.

225. Geraldine Woods, *A Charity Ball for Mental Health – St. Louis Alumnae*, DELTA, 1964, at 21.

226. *Id.*

227. Geraldine Woods, *Delta Pi Launches Operation Doe*, DELTA, 1965, at 63.

228. *Id.*

229. *Id.*

230. Eugene L. Baum, *Delta Sponsors College Test and Application Fees for Students of Low Income Families*, DELTA, 1967, at 66.

231. *Id.*

232. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1979, at 44.

233. *Id.*

III. 1970s-1990s: Balancing Interests

Moving into the 1970s, Delta Sigma Theta became involved in the Black Power Movement by tailoring some of its new endeavors and activities to the needs of the blossoming movement.²³⁴ Delta Sigma Theta also began chastising the Nixon Administration for reversing positions on its initial policies; members often wrote to urge the administration to change its position.²³⁵ During the 1970s, there was an expansion of civil rights work focused on various ways to address areas in which Black communities were underserved including health care awareness, mental health services, and training for Black health professions.²³⁶ Delta Sigma Theta members realized it was necessary to hone leadership skills to carry on the group's work in a quickly changing world. The organization quickly expanded into new areas of service and the South to strengthen connections with other civil rights agencies and government offices.

Delta Sigma Theta created the Leadership Training Laboratories so that "persons carrying a leadership role would be fortified with the skills needed to advance the business of Delta."²³⁷ The Leadership Training Laboratories were to be completed in two phases during this era as a "process to undergird the decision making, the planning, the freedom and the on-going leadership, [to] develop the framework of a moving organization."²³⁸ Establishing leadership training was vital for the health of local chapters as internal relations and community work became increasingly complex. Frankie Muse Freeman, the 14th National President—as well as a civil rights lawyer, activist, and the first female member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights—encouraged members to give not only their money, but also their expertise, time, and networks to aid multiple causes for civil rights.²³⁹

234. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 273.

235. *Id.* at 282.

236. Mona Bailey, *President Speaks*, DELTA, Dec. 1979, at 3.

237. DELTA, 1979, at 6.

238. *Id.*

239. Frankie Freeman, *A Summary of the President's Address*, 31ST NATIONAL CONVEN-

Lillian P. Benbow, the 15th National President, in her address to the membership urged her sisters to reflect on “Delta Priorities” and encouraged members to use “moral excellence” as a guide for their actions against injustice, oppression, and all human suffering.²⁴⁰ As necessary changes were slowly realized within the political system, vast inequality in health care, education, housing, and employment continued. Delta Sigma Theta members attempted to address the

TION OF DELTA SIGMA THETA, 1971, at 34. Frankie Muse Freeman was born on November 24, 1916, in Danville, Virginia. Both parents, Maude Beatrice Smith Muse and William Brown Muse, came from college-educated families. Freeman herself attended Westmoreland School and learned how to play the piano. At the age of sixteen, she enrolled into her mother’s alma mater, Hampton Institute, which she attended from 1933 through 1936. While in New York, Freeman met and married Shelby T. Freeman. In 1944 she was admitted to Howard University School of Law and graduated second in her class in 1947. After not hearing back from graduate schools in 1949, Freeman decided to open up her own law firm in Jackson Bank Building engaging in civil rights issues.

Freeman was the lead attorney in the landmark NAACP case *Davis et al v. the St. Louis Housing Authority*, which fought for no racial discrimination when it came to public housing in St. Louis. Then in 1958, she became a charter member of the Missouri advisory committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In 1964 she was appointed as the first female member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by President Lyndon Johnson and served the position for sixteen years. Freeman continued to work in the government as the Inspector General for the community services administration during the Carter administration. Once Reagan came into office, Freeman returned to St. Louis and worked as a municipal court judge. Freeman has won many accolades such as being inducted into the National Bar Association’s Hall of Fame in 1990, serving as the founder of the Citizen’s Commission on Civil Rights, founded in 1982, being honored with a place on the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta in 2007, and on February 5, 2015, President Obama appointed her to serve as a member of the Commission on Presidential Scholars. At the age of ninety-nine, she is still practicing law with Montgomery Holie Associates in St. Louis.

240. Lillian Pierce Benbow, *Delta Priorities: Address by Lillian P. Benbow 15th National President* (31st National Convention of Delta Sigma Theta), DELTA, 1971, at 62. Lillian Pierce Benbow was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1971-1975. She served as the Assistant Director of Housing Programs for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission; and she implemented the Delta Arts and Letters program. *Lillian Pierce Benbow (Omega Omega Chapter): 15th National President (1971-1975), Legacy of National Leadership*, DELTA SIGMA THETA, <http://www.deltasigmtheta.org/centennial/> (last visited Apr. 15, 2016).

needs of their community on those issues. By the end of the 1970s, Delta Sigma Theta secured a reputation as a powerful ally for social justice among civil rights groups. In later decades, Delta Sigma Theta members employed new strategies to increase political participation and raise awareness.

Women's rights and support for Black families were always a concern for Delta Sigma Theta members, which was reflected in the increasing intersectional nature of their civil rights work. For example, beginning in the 1980s, Delta Sigma Theta worked with around 100 attorneys to distribute a pamphlet entitled "Know Your Rights," which informed single mothers of their rights against their children's fathers and the state.²⁴¹ In 1984, under the leadership of Hortense Canady, the sorority announced a call for participation in "Summit II—A Call to Action in Support of Black Single Mothers" in Washington D.C., to create a set of recommendations and actionable items for members to address challenges faced by black women. More than fifty graduate and undergraduate chapters across thirty-eight cities participated in the event. Participants included churches, legislators, government agencies, nonprofits, as well as sorority and fraternity members.

In 1971, Delta Sigma Theta members received \$45,000 in funding from the National Urban Coalition to conduct a Public Information Program on Health Careers and Training for Minority Youth. The project operated in cities discussing the availability of health careers in an effort to influence educators and broaden their awareness of health care as a reasonable career field.²⁴² Two years later, at its 32nd National Convention in 1973, Delta Sigma Theta adopted a resolution setting out its beliefs that a woman is entitled to choose abortion and that no one should deprive a woman of that decision.²⁴³ Delta Sigma Theta funded a socioeconomic development program in rural areas of Green County, Alabama, in 1972.²⁴⁴

241. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 302.

242. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1964, at 42.

243. *DST is Pro-Choice*, DELTA, Winter 1990, at 19.

244. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1979.

In 1971, the Nixon Administration appointed Delta Sigma Theta as the lead organization to carry out a rehabilitation program for female law offenders.²⁴⁵ Delta Sigma Theta received a \$500,000 grant from the Department of Justice for its co-sponsorship on a program designed to rehabilitate women who were victims of abuse.²⁴⁶ During that year, the organization also established a grant for students pursuing law degrees called the "Sadie T.M. Alexander Grant."²⁴⁷ During the following years, Delta Sigma Theta funded an Alabama socioeconomic program created to help youth in poor rural areas and implemented the "Right-to-Read Project," which helped functionally illiterate people learn how to read.²⁴⁸ On the international front, the first Delta Sigma Theta chapter in the Virgin Islands was established in 1973 in St. Croix.²⁴⁹ Across the nation and throughout the Virgin Islands and West Germany, Delta Sigma Theta members mounted high-level action projects focusing on their Five-Point Program, the arts, and social and political action.²⁵⁰

In 1973, the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter was recognized for receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the amount of \$88,253 to help improve race relations in two local elementary schools and advance children's classroom work.²⁵¹ Delta Sigma Theta's "Right-to-Read Project" was a nationally coordinated effort supported by volunteers.²⁵² Many alumnae chapters have supported historically Black colleges and universities through funding and sponsorship of faculty. In 1977, the Tuskegee Institute was the inaugural recipient of the Distinguished Chair grant from Delta Sigma Theta.²⁵³ Delta Sigma

245. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 272.

246. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1964, at 42.

247. *Id.* at 40.

248. *Id.*

249. *Id.*

250. *Corporate Report: "I Will Not Shrink from Undertaking,"* 50 DELTA, no.7, 1964, at 7.

251. Lillian P. Benbow, *Baltimore Alumnae Awarded \$88,000 for Special School Project*, DELTA, 1973, at 60.

252. Lillian P. Benbow, *Delta Implements Right-to-Read Project* (reprint from 1943 30th Anniversary Issue), DELTA, 1973, at 48.

253. *Corporate Report*, DELTA, 1964, at 44.

Theta has a long lasting partnership with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). Houston Alumnae chapter adopted the UNCF and supported it through the local projects Committee.²⁵⁴

A major philanthropic and educational work of Delta Sigma Theta, featured in 1976 under National President Thelma Thomas Daley's term, was the production and financing of the film *Countdown at Kusini*.²⁵⁵ The film starred all Black actors, was shot on location in Nigeria, and was one of the first major films produced by an all African-American team. The film was designed to raise money for the sorority and its causes, but also raise awareness of African-American art, culture, and theatrical abilities. Sorority members who donated personal funds to the production largely financed the film. Delta Sigma Theta believed that the film could address a variety of issues including the "media's treatment of Blacks, and by extension, repair their social image, [. . .and] improve the public profile of Black sororities and fraternities that seemed to

254. *The Action Is...*, DELTA, Apr. 1979, at 7.

255. Robin Means Coleman, *The Making and Demise of Countdown at Kusini*, in BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS 2.0: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES 181, 182 (M. W. Hughley & G. S. Parks eds., 2011). Thelma Thomas Daley was born on June 17th in Annapolis, Maryland. She attended Bowie State University and graduated at nineteen with her B.S. degree. She earned her M.A. in Counseling and Personal Administration from New York University. She received her Ed.D. in Counseling from George Washington University. She and her husband, Guilbert, live in Maryland. Daley was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1975-1979 as well as National treasurer from 1963-1967. She has served as President of four national organizations, including the American Counseling Association. As National President, she established the Distinguished Professor Endowed Chair.

She served as the Coordinator for Guidance and Counseling Services at Baltimore County Board of Education as well as a visiting professor at North Central Western Maryland College, University of Wisconsin and Harvard University. She also served as National President of the American School Counseling Association from 1971-1972 and President of the American Personnel & Guidance Association from 1975-1976. She has been active with the United Negro College Fund, National Director of WIN, the Women in the NAACP, and promotes knowledge of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and AIDS prevention within the African-American Community. Daley became the first woman to chair the National Advisory Council on Career Education; she also appeared in *Who's Who Among Black Americans* and has served on the Board of Directors of the National Testing Service.

only generate press attention during hazing scandals.”²⁵⁶ Delta Sigma Theta members in arts and media, including Lena Horne, Nikki Giovanni, Ruby Dee, Roberta Flack, and Charlayne Hunter Gault lent their expertise to the project.²⁵⁷

Members were used in more conventional forms of philanthropy and community service, such as donating time to hospitals and funding bookmobiles. Entering into the world of filmmaking was a bold step for Delta Sigma Theta. Despite high expectations and noble efforts of sorority members, the film fell short in its delivery to usher in a new era of film making by and for African Americans. Ultimately the film was a failure due to poor distribution, poor ratings, long and expensive production, and uneven marketing from mainstream studios who were unsure how to sell the film. However, the film did raise a decent amount of money for numerous chapters and helped provide countless scholarships to incoming Delta Sigma Theta members.²⁵⁸ The film provided Delta Sigma Theta a new platform to fulfill “its fostering mission of educational and political engagement, economic empowerment, and self-sufficiency.”²⁵⁹

During this era, Delta Sigma Theta also established two new projects—the Delta Education and Research Foundation (DREF) and the Black Diaspora Project. The DREF was created to raise money toward research and education projects for Black female scholars.²⁶⁰ The Black Diaspora Project was created to promote awareness and education on study, international travel, and an awareness of African culture.²⁶¹ Delta Sigma Theta members pursued these goals through different strategies, including sponsoring international travel for education, raising awareness and philanthropic work, and fundraising to support local and international causes with donation of time, funding, and expertise.

256. Coleman, *supra* note 255, at 181, 182.

257. *Id.*

258. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 292.

259. Coleman, *supra* note 255, at 181, 187.

260. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 303.

261. *Id.*

Beginning in the late 1970s, Dorothy Stanley and Constance Clayton created the concept of Delta Sigma Theta houses across the nation called "Life Development Centers."²⁶² The houses became community centers that provided public services to anyone who needed them. Houses were implemented in Durham, North Carolina, and Houston, Texas. The houses were very successful and served as the center for many of Delta Sigma Theta's programs throughout the community.²⁶³ In 1979, a year of transition from National President Thelma Thomas Dailey to National President Mona Humphries Bailey, Delta Sigma Theta also sponsored the creation of the Delta Towers in Washington D.C.—two towers created to house elderly and handicapped individuals in a safe and nurturing environment.²⁶⁴ The Delta Housing Corporation was

262. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 295.

263. *Id.* at 295.

264. *Id.* Mona Humphries Bailey received a B.S. in Chemistry from Florida A&M University in 1954 and was elected Miss Florida A&M University in her senior year. She earned her Master's of Science in Science Education from Oregon State University and pursued her Ph.D. in Educational Administration at the University of Washington. Bailey was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1979-1983. Bailey serves as President of the Delta Research and Educational Foundation and was honored at the Sorority's 40th National Convention in 1990 with the Mary Church Terrell Award. Bailey married William Peter Bailey; they have two sons, Major Peter Govan Bailey, United States Air Forces, and Christopher Evans Bailey, Founder and CEO of Mindseekers. They also have twin grandsons, Tre and Taylor.

Bailey served as Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Washington from 1974-1986, District's Assistant Superintendent from 1986-1990, Deputy Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools from 1990-94, Director of the National Faculty's Western Region from 1995-1998, Head of Forest Ridge School of Sacred Heart from 1998-2000. Prior to all of this, she has also served in various positions in the Seattle School District including Middle School Principal, Personnel Administrator, High School Counselor and Science Teacher as well as teaching courses at the University of Washington and Seattle University.

Bailey serves as a Senior Associate with the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington and the Institute for Educational Inquiry. *Id.* She also serves as Chair of the State Board for the Washington MESA Program and is a member of the following boards: Delta Research and Educational Foundation, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., The National Network of Sacred Heart Schools, and the Forest Ridge School; she is also an Associate of the Pacific Science Center Foundation.

funded by a \$5-million grant from the Housing and Urban Development Agency in 1977. Land was secured to build the property in a transitional area near Capitol Hill, and the apartments were earmarked as Section 8 housing to guarantee a low-income option for residents in the D.C. area.²⁶⁵

After the Delta Executive Board Session in 1976, national officers reached out to Chapters to share what they absorbed from a newly designed leadership program that they attended.²⁶⁶ By 1977, 590 Chapters had undergone an Executive Training Lab. In 1978, Delta Sigma Theta co-sponsored both the National Conference on Educational Issues that Impact the Black Community and a service of exhibitions of African Contemporary Art with Howard University.²⁶⁷ Also in 1978, Delta Sigma Theta's Grand Chapter contributed \$1,500 to a reading shelf in the library of the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.²⁶⁸ The shelf held books explaining the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Over the course of the following year, Delta Sigma Theta was also given a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare worth \$134,230. The grant was awarded to administer and conduct Delta Sigma Theta's "Educational Equity Training and Self-

Her previous public service include serving on the National Board of TransAfrica; the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum Foundation; The American Civil Liberties Union National Advisory Committee; Washington State Vendor Rates Advisory Committee; the Washington State Crime and Delinquency Board; Seattle's University Preparatory Academy Board of Trustees; Women + Business Board of Directors; Pacific Science Center Board of Trustees; the City of Seattle Advisory Committee for the African American Heritage Museum; Board of Directors for the Washington Special Olympics; In Roads of Puget Sound; Mothers Against Violence; The Northwest Regional Laboratory's Advisory Committee on the Education Profession and Improving the Outcome of Schooling; and the Pacific Science Center Foundation Advisory Committee.

265. *Washington D.C. Alumnae Receives \$5 Million HUD Grant to Build Delta Towers*, DELTA, Summer 1979, at 8.

266. DELTA, Dec. 1979, at 44.

267. *Id.* at 44.

268. *Id.* at 10.

Awareness” project aimed at conquering sex-based stereotypes and promote equity for women.²⁶⁹

At the highest echelon of the federal government, Delta Sigma Theta members were working to ensure equal access to justice for all. Because of such early success, in 1977, President Jimmy Carter named Mary Frances Berry Assistant Secretary for Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.²⁷⁰ Although she left this position in 1980 to return to Howard University as a professor, President Carter appointed Berry to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in 1980. During Berry’s tenure on the committee, President Ronald Regan, Carter’s successor, attempted to remove her from the board due to conflicting opinions. However, she successfully fought in court to keep her seat.

Although Delta Sigma Theta was concerned about people’s physical health, the organization also dedicated its efforts to mental health. Programs included seminars on stress in the home and work environment, child abuse, battered women, and working with the mentally retarded and juveniles.²⁷¹ In 1978, the chapter’s Annual Report detailing Delta Sigma Theta Programs, community service, educational development, mental health, housing and urban development, and economic development were listed as the chapter’s most influential programs respectively.²⁷² Furthermore, Delta Sigma Theta sponsored a program aimed to recruit dropouts

269. DELTA, Dec. 1979, at 13.

270. *Id.* at 11. Mary Frances Berry, born on February 17, 1938, is a Professor of History and the Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social Thought at the University of Pennsylvania. Berry was born in Nashville, Tennessee, to parents’ George and Frances Berry but was temporarily placed in an orphanage due to economic hardship. Throughout her youth, Berry attended one of Nashville’s segregated schools but went on to attend Howard University where she earned her undergraduate degree. Berry furthered her education at the University of Michigan earning a J.D. and Ph.D. in History. Berry has had a decorated career working in education. In her early adult years, Berry worked at the University of Maryland, becoming the Interim Provost of the Division of Behavioral Social Sciences. She went on to become the Chancellor of the University of Colorado, Boulder, as the first Black women to lead a major research university.

271. *Id.* at 13.

272. *Id.*

in school as models with the direct Search for Talent Program. The program's main goal is to motivate and place those children into post-secondary programs compatible with their interests and abilities.²⁷³

Wanting to expand its services and reach more of the population, Delta Sigma Theta aimed to form coalitions and team up with other organizations to yield better results for its efforts. By 1978, eighty-seven percent of Delta Sigma Theta chapters pledged life-membership in the NAACP and seventy-six percent of Delta Sigma Theta chapters contributed annually to other political and/or service organizations.²⁷⁴ Delta Sigma Theta's educational programs focused their efforts around competency-based testing, test-taking techniques, career awareness and development, and the fundamentals of reading.²⁷⁵ Grand Chapter and local chapters contributed more than \$500 in annual college scholarships.²⁷⁶

The 1978 Corporate Report also indicated that the bulk of Delta Sigma Theta programs were also focused on encouraging and supporting their sisters and minorities in their campaigns for political office. Throughout the years, Delta Sigma Theta followed legislation affecting Blacks closely and wrote letters and raised funds to support the Equal Rights Amendment and political leaders in prison.²⁷⁷ Delta Sigma Theta educational programs also assisted foreign students in mastering the English language.²⁷⁸ In 1979, Delta Sigma Theta chapters participated in the United Negro College Fund's annual "Parade of Stars" to raise funds for continued functioning of Black colleges and universities.²⁷⁹

Delta Sigma Theta's housing and urban development program efforts extended to funding renovations and construction of new housing and to promoting energy conservation methods.²⁸⁰

273. \$192,000 to Educational Talent Search Program, DELTA, 1986, at 21.

274. DELTA, Dec. 1979, at 7.

275. *Id.* at 9.

276. *Id.* at 10.

277. *Id.* at 7.

278. *Id.* at 9.

279. *The Action Is...*, DELTA, Apr. 1979, at 7.

280. *Id.* at 9.

Although there was a slight decline in interest from previous years, fifty-eight percent of the Delta Sigma Theta chapters reported sponsoring an activity that addressed the issue of unemployment in society. These efforts included promoting women in business.²⁸¹ Examples of some of the Delta Sigma Theta programs included but are not limited to the following:

- (1) C is for Communication: an effort to educate the community on various aspects of the media
- (2) Child search: a search to locate handicapped children
- (3) United Negro College Fund Roadblock: roadblocks at major intersections in an effort to collect funds for UNCF
- (4) Multi-Ethnic Cultural Library: a project designed to foster better understanding among the races
- (5) Cherish the Children: designed to prevent child abuse
- (6) IYC: workshop series designed to alleviate the many problems faced by children
- (7) Housing Rehabilitation: a project in conjunction with HUD to revitalize a predominately Black, low-income neighborhood in South Carolina City.²⁸²

Delta Sigma Theta's Project Committee, Social Action Committee, and General Corporate teamed up to promote Life Development Centers (LDC) for Delta Sigma Theta programming. These programs were created to maximize community access by bringing together all of a chapter's programs.²⁸³ On July 1, 1979, Delta Sigma Theta received new \$450,504 in funding to operate an

281. *The Action Is...*, DELTA, Apr. 1979, at 9.

282. *Id.* at 10.

283. *Id.* at 11.

Educational Opportunity Center.²⁸⁴ The center was organized to provide educational services and career opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged youth and adults in Baltimore.²⁸⁵ In that same year, the Delta Housing Corporation of the District of Columbia received a \$5-million grant to develop a Housing Program in Washington D.C.²⁸⁶

In 1979, the Detroit Alumnae Chapter paid a tribute to Rosa Parks with a collection by the world-renowned artist Paul Collins.²⁸⁷ In the same year, Soror Lynnette Taylor represented Delta Sigma Theta at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the most broadly based civil rights coalition in the nation.²⁸⁸ By 1978, the Corporate Report indicated that Delta Sigma Theta focused most of its interests on educational programs with social action programs being a close second.²⁸⁹ Other programs of interest included activities for senior citizens, volunteer work for the Y.M.C.A., and the Girl Scouts.²⁹⁰ Delta Sigma Theta's dedication to health planning also continued as they fought to decrease health problems through volunteer work at Red Cross Blood Drives and at Sickle Cell and Hypertension screenings.²⁹¹ Along with volunteer work, Delta Sigma Theta also focused efforts on alerting and spreading awareness of the health problems spreading throughout the Black population.²⁹² Roughly fifty percent of Delta Sigma Theta chapters worked with Sickle Cell Anemia programs and Cancer Treatment and Detection programs in 1978.²⁹³

In 1986, Delta Sigma Theta was supported by the National Urban Coalition to organize a year-long program dedicated to educating the public about health careers and to training for the

284. *The Action Is...*, DELTA, Apr. 1979, at 13.

285. *Id.*

286. DELTA, Dec. 1979, at 44.

287. *News*, DELTA, Summer 1979, at 17.

288. *The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights*, DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 11.

289. Bailey, *supra* note 274, at 7.

290. *Id.*

291. *Id.*

292. *Id.*

293. *Id.*

poor and young minority.²⁹⁴ During Fall 1989, under the leadership of National President Yvonne Kennedy, Delta Sigma Theta launched "SCHOOL AMERICAN," a nation-wide program helping families learn how to read.²⁹⁵ The program aimed to register over one million readers who pledged to read to a child under the age of ten-years-old every week throughout 1990.²⁹⁶

Delta Sigma Theta's international program aimed for peak activity during the 1986 to 1987 year by placing emphasis on the African Diaspora.²⁹⁷ The Winter 1986 publication of *The Delta* advertised its International Women's Conference, which took place the week of June 23rd in 1987. At that conference, members participated in workshops at the Non-Governmental Organization Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, and learned an overview of the international dimensions in the society.²⁹⁸ During this year, Delta Sigma Theta also participated in planning sessions for the International Decade for Women and the Global Aspects of Single Female Heads Households, for which they received outstanding public acclaim.²⁹⁹ In 1989, Delta Sigma Theta joined NAACP in a march that resembled the famous Silent March of 1917. The theme of the march was "No Retreat on Civil Rights" and was a result of the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action and minority set-aside decisions.³⁰⁰

294. *National Urban Coalition Funds Delta Sigma Theta's Health Careers Program*, DELTA, Winter 1986, at 21.

295. *Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is "Taking the Lead Helping Families to Read,"* DELTA, Winter 1990, at 3. Yvonne Kennedy was born on January 8, 1945 to Leroy and Thelma Kennedy. She attended Bishop State Community College and the University of Alabama. Kennedy was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1988-1992. She became president of Bishop State Community College in 1981 and resigned in 2007. Kennedy also represented Mobile, Alabama, in the Alabama House of Representatives in 1979. She died on December 8, 2012 at the UAB Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama.

296. *Id.*

297. *The Delta Sigma Theta International Women's Conference*, DELTA, Winter 1986, at 49.

298. Hortense Canady, *President's Message*, DELTA, Winter 1986, at 3.

299. *Id.*

300. *Delta Joins NAACP in Silent March*, DELTA, Winter 1990, at 15.

Moreover, in the 1990 Winter Journal of *The Delta*, the Delta Sigma Theta Research Educational Foundation advertised for a study tour that consisted of a thirteen-day tour of Brazil to explore the historical and cultural impact of Black Africans, and seek knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture.³⁰¹ By 1997, the sorority had founded The Delta Research and Educational Foundation's Center for Research on African American Women, under National President Marcia L. Fudge's leadership.³⁰² The Center is the "first-of-its-kind repository of information about the social and economic characteristics of African American women."³⁰³

This work by the sorority in the 1990s is punctuated by the work of many of its individual members. For example, for over two decades, Melanie L. Campbell has fought for social justice on behalf of African Americans. As the CEO and Executive Director of the National Coalition of Black Civic Participation, Campbell has worked to make voting and civic contribution a national reality.³⁰⁴ She convened the Black Women's Roundtable Public Policy Network

301. *Delta Research and Education Foundation Study Tour*, DELTA, Winter 1990, at 13.

302. DELTA RES. & EDUC. FOUND., <http://www.deltafoundation.net/about-us> (last visited Apr. 13, 2016). Marcia L. Fudge was born on October 29, 1952, in Cleveland, Ohio. She is a 1971 graduate of Shaker Heights High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business from Ohio State University in 1975. She earned a law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1983.

Fudge was the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1996-2000. She is a co-chair of Delta Sigma Theta's National Social Action Committee. Fudge worked as a law clerk, studied legal research, and worked in the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. She also worked as an auditor for the Estate Tax Department, an occasional visiting judge, and as the Chief Referee for Arbitration.

Fudge was the Mayor of Warrensville Heights from January 2000 to November 18, 2008. She served as the Chief of Staff to 11th District Congresswoman, Stephanie Tubbs Jones during Jones' first term; she has also served on the Board of Trustees for the Cleveland Public Library. She is currently the U.S. Representative for Ohio's 11th congressional district since 2008. She was also the Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus in the 113th Congress.

303. DELTA RES. & EDUC. FOUND., *supra* note 302.

304. Melanie L. Campbell was born in Mims, Florida in August 1979. While earning an undergraduate degree from Clark University, Campbell joined Delta Sigma Theta sorority. She then went on to become certified in nonprofit management by the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute Executive Program.

where she brought together women of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds to support and advocate for women's rights policies. A few other projects Campbell has collaborated on have included the Unity Voter Empowerment Campaign, Unity Diaspora Coalition Census 2010 Campaign, the ReBuild Hope NOW coalition to aid Hurricane Katrina survivors, and Black Youth Vote, one of her most renowned achievements in which she received the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Emerging Leaders Legacy award. Campbell works endlessly building influential coalitions that unite diverse Americans to achieve social progress. Similarly, Karen McGill Lawson has served as a predominant figure of civil rights activism and education. She is the Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund.³⁰⁵ Prior to her work with the Leadership Conference, Lawson worked as the Education Monitor for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and wrote extensively on race.

Conclusion

Our review of Delta Sigma Theta's accomplishments illustrates the wide-array of outstanding service and leadership displayed by the sorority and its members over the years. The lobbying, volunteerism, campaigning for civil rights and women's rights, networking, fundraising, and mentorship—along with efforts to expand educational and employment opportunities, health care, and literacy, and voting rights—are but some of Delta Sigma Theta's good deeds. While many BGLOs primarily practiced passive activism, Delta Sigma Theta members were adept at expanding their advocacy to be proactive and visible in their communities and on a national—as well international—stage. The archival data mined for this project provides detailed accounts of alumnae and undergraduate chapters' work on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta—

305. After graduating with a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University, Lawson went on to earn a master's at Notre Dame University.

sometimes together, but also apart, as members branched out to accomplish their goals. There is much still to learn about individual chapter activities, the resources members utilized to accomplish their goals, and the relationships between individual chapters (particularly between alumnae and undergraduates) working on joint projects. In particular, the newsletters point to the flexibility and effectiveness Delta Sigma Theta members exhibited in their efforts to address issues such as the need for medical care and understanding of mental health concerns, housing, literacy and international affairs. Delta Sigma Theta members have demonstrated an ability to be ahead of the mainstream discussion on pertinent issues, including support for single mothers, addressing unemployment and illiteracy in rural and low-income areas, and the benefits of early childhood education by participating in Head Start programs, to name a few initiatives.

The 21st century is proving to be just as fraught with challenges to Black lives and the well-being of Black communities as the 20th century. The social, economic, political, and cultural context for African Americans specifically—and race and gender relations more generally—are different, but work remains to be done in order for all members of society to be treated fairly and equally valued. Delta Sigma Theta members, along with other BGLOs, could be among the leaders in the fight for social justice. In a global society, connected by technology and a continuous cycle of information, the potential for doing good deeds seems to be an achievable but daunting task. What causes will rise above the information clutter as worthy of Delta Sigma Theta's energy, time, and expertise?

Are the previous partnerships with other social organizations and civil rights groups still intact and viable? What, if any, new partnerships may be formed with the government, nonprofits, and corporations? Does a generational divide between alumnae members and undergraduate members exist, and how might members at different stages of their lives, careers, and educations agree on issues to address? How might members and chapters use their resources, knowledge and expertise more effectively in the new world order? Given the tepid response by some BGLOs' leadership

to the visibility of their members participating in recent social movements—such as Black Lives Matter—it remains to be seen if sororities are prepared to push past the boundaries of community service and philanthropy, yet again, to be active participants in the struggle for justice.³⁰⁶ Given Delta Sigma Theta’s impressive legacy of service and leadership, it is imperative for contemporary members and leadership to remember their past to guide future strategies and initiatives.

306. Donna M. Owens, *Sister Soldiers: A Look at Black Sororities in the Black Lives Matter Movement*, ESSENCE (June 8, 2015), <http://www.essence.com/2015/06/09/sister-soldier-look-black-sororities-black-lives-matter-movement>.

Appendix

Osceola Macarthy (Adams) was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1890. She was a senior at Howard University, majoring in Dramatics, at the time of Delta Sigma Theta's founding. The majority of her time and effort was dedicated to the world of American theatre. She was a leader of the Howard College Dramatic Club and played roles such as *For One Night Only*.³⁰⁷ After graduating from Howard as a skilled actress, Adams was accepted into the American Repertory Theatre.³⁰⁸ From there, her theatre career took off. She performed on Broadway, directed plays for a number of theatres, and taught at the American Negro Theatre and Bennett College. Adams oversaw and witnessed the acting debuts of two world-renowned artists of the stage and screen: Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte.³⁰⁹ Along with her passion for theatre, Adams was also committed to public service and social activism. In 1921, she, along with other members of the sorority, chartered the Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in Chicago, Illinois. Adams served as the first President of Lambda Chapter and subsequently Delta Sigma Theta's National Treasurer.³¹⁰ Adams was also a devoted wife and mother of one. In 1915, she married Numa P. G. Adams, a Howard University alum and member of Alpha Phi Alpha.³¹¹ Osceola Macarthy Adams entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1983.³¹²

Little is known about the life of Delta Sigma Theta founder Marguerite Young (Alexander). However, what may be deduced from her place among the twenty-two founders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is that she was a woman of foresight, purpose, and deed. Coming to Howard University from Chicago, Illinois, Alexander established herself as a true renaissance woman on campus. Aside from her active membership in a myriad of campus organizations,

307. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 36–37.

308. *Id.* at 67.

309. *Id.*

310. *Id.* at 90.

311. *Id.* at 66–67.

312. *Id.* at 36.

she studied romance and classical languages. Putting her training to use upon her 1913 Howard graduation, she launched a career as a French and Spanish correspondence secretary for a prestigious Chicago business firm.³¹³ Apart from her career, marriage and motherhood, Alexander held fast to her commitment to seeing Delta Sigma Theta thrive and expand into a sustainable national organization. In addition to remaining a supporter of Alpha Chapter's projects and programs, as previously mentioned, she was a charter member of the sorority's Lambda Chapter in her home city of Chicago.

Winona Cargile (Alexander) was born in Columbus, Georgia, on June 21, 1893. After graduating as her high school class salutatorian, she followed in her father and uncle's footsteps by moving north to attend Howard University.³¹⁴ During her four years at Howard, Alexander made a name for herself by becoming active as a student leader and garnering popularity. She was a member and Secretary of the Social Science Club, a member of the College Classical Club, Class Vice-President, and the first custodian of the Alpha Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.³¹⁵ After her 1913 graduation, Alexander taught for a few years before entering New York University's School of Social Work. A pioneer in the field, she was the first black social worker with New York City and New York County Charities.³¹⁶ She later became a social worker with the Duval County Welfare Board. She was married to Florida attorney Edward Alexander. Winona Cargile Alexander entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1984.³¹⁷

Ethel Cuff (Black) was born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1890. With grandparents who were second-generation free blacks and landowners and an entrepreneur father in the banking and retail industries, she arrived at Howard University among the upper echelon of the black community.³¹⁸ While at Howard, Black was heavily involved on campus. She was a member of Howard

313. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 65.

314. *Id.* at 32.

315. *Id.* at 39, 41, 47–48.

316. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 4.

317. *Id.* at 4.

318. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 34.

University's choir, chairperson of the YWCA's collegiate committee, and the first Vice-President of Alpha Chapter.³¹⁹ After graduating from Howard in 1915, Black taught social studies at several public schools and courses at Delaware State College in Dover, Delaware.³²⁰ Black went on to become the first black teacher in Richmond County, New York. In 1939, she married New York City real estate agent David Horton Black.³²¹ Black remained very active in community affairs, and helped charter the Queens Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in June 1951.³²²

Bertha Pitts (Campbell) was born in 1889 in Winfield, Kansas.³²³ Campbell was a scholar; she graduated high school as the valedictorian of her class and went on to Howard University in 1909.³²⁴ At Howard, Campbell developed much of the racial and gender consciousness that inspired the activism of her adult life. Among the main topic of discourse, were the subjects of racism and women's suffrage.³²⁵ In the spring of 1913, Campbell graduated with honors from the Teacher's College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and accepted a teaching position at the Topeka Industrial Educational Institute.³²⁶ After one year there, Campbell traveled back to Washington D.C. for a job with Howard's Teacher's College and, soon after, an appointment as Assistant Dean of Women in Minor Hall.³²⁷ In 1917, she married Earl Allen Campbell and later moved to Seattle.³²⁸ With a strong interest in activism focused on race and race relations, Campbell became an active member in several organizations including: the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Seattle Urban League, the National Urban League, and the YWCA.³²⁹ On April 17, 1933, Campbell helped charter the Alpha Omicron Chapter

319. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 36, 39, 48.

320. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 4.

321. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 189.

322. *Id.* at 259.

323. *Id.* at 28.

324. *Id.* at 8-12.

325. *Id.* at 57.

326. PAULINE A. S. HILL & SHERRILYN J. JORDAN, TOO YOUNG TO BE OLD: THE STORY OF BERTHA PITTS CAMPBELL, A FOUNDER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. 23 (1981).

327. *Id.* at 24-27.

328. *Id.* at 29.

329. *Id.* at 33.

(now Seattle Alumnae Chapter) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.³³⁰ Bertha Pitts Campbell entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1990 at the age of 101.

Zephyr Chisom (Carter) was born in 1891 in El Paso, Texas. While at Howard, Carter was a member of the Howard College Dramatics Club. As an actress, she was best known for her role as Mistress Quickly in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.³³¹ Carter was actively involved with the Literary and Social Club on campus and served as the group's critic.³³² Carter was also active in the fight for racial equity and joined the Howard branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Carter's "leading spirit in the organization," followed Carter into Delta Sigma Theta, as she served as Alpha Chapter's Reporter.³³³ After graduation, Carter returned to Texas to teach in San Antonio. Later, she moved to California where she "worked as a security officer for the state's Department of Employment—perhaps to help support her love for singing chorus background music for films and television shows."³³⁴ Zephyr Chisom Carter entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1976.

Howard University was not new territory for Delta Sigma Theta founder Edna Brown (Coleman). A native of Washington D.C., Coleman's father, Sterling Nelson Brown, was a professor of religion at Howard for thirty-one years. Coleman graduated valedictorian from Howard Academy in 1909.³³⁵ During Coleman's tenure at Howard, she was active in a number of campus organizations and held several leadership positions. Described by many as brilliant, Coleman was her class valedictorian. After leaving Howard, she attended graduate school at Oberlin College and married Omega Psi Phi founder and future Howard physics Professor Frank Coleman.³³⁶

330. HILL & JORDAN, *supra* note 326, at 35.

331. *Id.* at 37.

332. *Id.* at 39.

333. *Id.* at 41.

334. *Id.* at 69.

335. *Id.* at 34.

336. *Id.* at 66.

Hailing from Galveston, Texas, Jessie McGuire (Dent) graduated from East District High School, one of the first Black high schools in the state of Texas.³³⁷ Dent's involvement in her hometown was quite remarkable. During the 1940s, a time when African-American teachers throughout the South were lobbying for better and equal pay, Dent successfully sued the Galveston Independent School District and won equal pay for black teachers in the city.³³⁸ Although Dent married and gave birth to a son, her son unfortunately passed away at a very young age. Jessie McGuire Dent entered Omega Chapter in 1948.³³⁹

Frederica Chase (Dodd) was born in 1892 in Dallas, Texas. Dodd was an educator, social worker, and activist. Her father was a successful Texas attorney and her mother was a well-known teacher. After graduating from the Dallas Colored School Number 2 in 1910, she attended Howard University.³⁴⁰ After graduating from Howard in 1914, Dodd returned to her hometown of Dallas, Texas. There, she worked as an English instructor in the Dallas High School. Dodd was influential in establishing a branch of the YWCA for black women in Dallas. She was also a key player in chartering the Eta Beta Chapter (now Dallas Alumnae Chapter), which was the first Greek letter organization in the city.³⁴¹ Dodd went on to attend Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) for graduate school. In the 1930s, she began a career as a social worker and became one of her state's first black social workers. Dodd began her career with the Texas Relief Commission as its Director of the Emergency Relief Station for African Americans and later worked for United Charities.³⁴² Dodd married Dallas physician and Howard University Medical School graduate Dr. John Horace Dodd in 1920.³⁴³ Frederica Chase Dodd entered Omega Chapter in January of 1972 at eighty years old.

337. HILL & JORDAN, *supra* note 326, at 35.

338. *Id.* at 208.

339. *Id.* at 261.

340. *Id.* at 35.

341. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 4.

342. *Id.* at 4.

343. *Id.* at 94.

Myra Lillian Davis (Hemmings) was born in Gonzales, Texas, in 1895. While a student at Howard, Hemmings was a member of the Alpha Phi Literary Society and worked very closely with Howard's instructor of Music, Lulu Vere Childers.³⁴⁴ In 1912, when the idea for the new sorority was conceived, Hemmings was the president of Alpha Kappa Alpha, but supported the idea to reorganize and revamp the structure of the sorority to devote its efforts "to larger matters than those with which they previously had been concerned."³⁴⁵ Hemmings went on to help form what would become Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in 1913. She was elected the first President of the Alpha Chapter, a position she held until her May 1913 graduation from Howard University. Hemmings went on to earn a master's degree in speech and dramatic arts from Northwestern University and teach in her home city of San Antonio, Texas. In 1944, Hemmings starred in *Go Down Death*—now a black film classic.³⁴⁶ She was an active member of the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, and was a charter member of the San Antonio Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.³⁴⁷ Hemmings also served as the sorority's Grand Vice-President during the tenure of sixth national president Jeannette Triplett Jones.³⁴⁸ In 1922, she married John "Pop" Hemmings, a former Broadway actor.³⁴⁹ Myra Davis Hemmings entered Omega Omega chapter in December of 1968 in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas.

Like fellow founder Edna Brown Coleman, Olive C. Jones was also a native of Washington D.C. A member of Howard's class of 1913 and an accomplished pianist, she went on to teach music in the D.C. public school system.³⁵⁰ Although holding no position among the executive board of Alpha Chapter, during her final three months on campus, Jones continued her support of the chapter post-

344. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 35, 39.

345. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 12.

346. See *Go Down, Death!*, IMDB, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036870/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2016).

347. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 259.

348. *Id.* at 154.

349. *Funeral Program for Myra D. Hemmings*, PORTAL TO TEX. HISTORY (Dec. 14, 1968), <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph246982/m1/2/>.

350. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 154.

founding. Unfortunately, throughout the years, Jones lost touch with the sorority and not much else is known about her life after Howard. Nonetheless, she stands among the circle of twenty-two as the underpinning of a legacy and tradition that remains a viable institution in our communities.

A native of Lynchburg, Virginia, Jimmie Bugg (Middleton) arrived on Howard's campus in 1909. Middleton was an active member of the Howard community. In 1913, Middleton graduated from Howard's Teacher's College with honors.³⁵¹ She later returned to Howard during the 1930s to acquire a master's degree. Middleton enjoyed an extensive career as an educator; first as a teacher, then as a librarian, and finally as a Dean of Girls at a high school in Raleigh, North Carolina. On May 7, 1938, Middleton helped to establish the Alpha Zeta Chapter (now the Raleigh Alumnae Chapter) of the sorority.³⁵² Active in a myriad of civic and educational endeavors, Middleton served as President and National Treasurer of the National Association of College Women (NACW). In 1944, she was appointed to the Scholarship Board of New York State's 22nd congressional district during the first tenure of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.³⁵³ Middleton married Dr. Charles Clayton Middleton and the two went on to have two daughters.³⁵⁴ Their first daughter, Catherine Brown Middleton, was born in January of 1916, and a second daughter, Amanda Belle, was born in 1917.³⁵⁵

The first treasurer of Alpha Chapter, Pauline Oberdorfer Minor was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. According to Paula Giddings, "by her own submitted biography to the sorority, [she] did not know who her parents were or the exact date of her birth ... [and] was reared by an aunt and uncle in Philadelphia."³⁵⁶ After graduating from the Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1910, Minor went on to enroll in the Teacher's College at Howard University. Aside from her teaching career, Minor was also a gifted musician. After

351. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 36.

352. *Id.* at 189.

353. *Id.* at 191.

354. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

355. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 67.

356. *Id.* at 36.

graduating valedictorian of the Teacher's College in 1914, she embarked upon a career as mezzo-soprano recitalist and published hymn-writer.³⁵⁷ Among her publications was a book entitled *Soul Echoes*, which featured forty of her own compositions including "My Lord Is a Refuge" and "Get Off the Judgment Seat."³⁵⁸ Minor entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1963.

Lula Vashti Turley (Murphy) was born on February 22, 1884, in Washington D.C.³⁵⁹ After high school, Murphy went on to teach elementary school.³⁶⁰ When Howard opened its doors to Washington teachers, Murphy entered Howard as a member of the class of 1914. During college, Murphy kept her job as a teacher, but was also an active member of the student branch of the NAACP, and Class Vice-President.³⁶¹ Murphy was an active member of the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter. In addition to her service to Delta Sigma Theta, Murphy was a member of Baltimore's National Association of College Women branch, supporter of the Maryland School for Girls, a staunch supporter of the YWCA, and a member of the NAACP—as she was at Howard.³⁶² After graduation, she married Carl Murphy, alumnus of Howard and Harvard Universities. Together, they parented five daughters—four of whom became Delta Sigma Theta members. Their granddaughter, the Reverend Vashti Murphy McKenzie, became the National Chaplain of Delta Sigma Theta, as well as the first female Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Vashti Turley Murphy entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1960.

Naomi Sewell (Richardson) was born in Washingtonville, New York, in September 1892. The first African American graduate of the Washingtonville High School, Richardson entered Howard as a student in its Teacher's College.³⁶³ In 1914, after graduation, she was appointed to teach elementary aged students in the segregated

357. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 67.

358. *Id.* at 69.

359. ELIZABETH M. MOSS, *BE STRONG! THE LIFE OF VASHTI TURLEY MURPHY, CO-FOUNDER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. AND HER IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF OTHERS* 4-5 (1980).

360. *Id.* at 5.

361. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 41.

362. *Id.* at 36.

363. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

public school system of East St. Louis, Missouri.³⁶⁴ Later in her career, Richardson taught in Princeton, New Jersey, and New York City, New York. While in New Jersey, she met and married Clarence Richardson.³⁶⁵ Richardson and her husband lived in New York City for over twenty years and the two were very active in the community. After a life of service, Richardson entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1993 in her hometown of Washingtonville, New York.

Mamie Reddy (Rose) was from Gonzales, Texas.³⁶⁶ As a student at Howard, Rose was very active, and served as the president of the literary and social club.³⁶⁷ She graduated from Howard in 1913 and soon after, she married Rev. James E. Rose.³⁶⁸ Rose elected against a career outside of the domestic sphere, and as such, became a homemaker. After four years of marriage, Rose became very ill. Sadly, Mamie Reddy Rose became the first of Delta Sigma Theta's founders to depart this earthly life. She entered Omega Omega Chapter on February 17, 1919.³⁶⁹

Eliza Pearl Shippen was born in Washington D.C., in 1888. Her family was well-known throughout the city and her father was an alumnus of Howard University.³⁷⁰ Shippen was educated at the Minor Normal School in D.C. and graduated first in her class.³⁷¹ At Howard, she became a member of the Teacher's Club and graduated from the Howard College of Arts and Sciences *magna cum laude* in 1912.³⁷² She went on to earn a Master of Arts degree from the Teacher's College at Columbia University in 1928 and a Ph.D. in English Language and Literature from the University of Pennsylvania in 1944.³⁷³ Eliza Pearl Shippen entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1981.

364. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 65.

365. *Id.* at 66.

366. *Id.* at 35.

367. *Id.* at 39.

368. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

369. *Id.* at 38.

370. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 38.

371. *Id.*

372. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

373. *Id.*

Another native of Washington D.C., founder Florence Letcher (Toms) graduated from the Armstrong Manual Training High School. Her high school graduation ceremony was particularly memorable when President William Howard Taft awarded her with a diploma and scholarship.³⁷⁴ At Howard, Toms was active in a number of student organizations on campus; primary among her involvement was her role in the founding of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. After graduating from Howard, Toms began a successful career in education. She served as an assistant principal at Garnet-Patterson Junior High School in Washington D.C., and went on to earn a master's degree from New York University.³⁷⁵ Throughout her life, she was active in a plethora of civic groups and organizations oriented toward education. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the Family Welfare Association, a member of the Federation of the Parent-Teacher Association, and the Intercultural Vocation School. Florence Letcher Toms was a life-long educator and public servant. Toms was married to attorney Charles H. Toms. She entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1972.

Ethel Carr (Watson) grew up in Parkersburg, West Virginia. She graduated from the Sumner School and, thereafter, entered Howard University as a freshman.³⁷⁶ At Howard, Watson was a member of the College Classical Club and the treasurer of the Literary and Social Club—an organization comprised of other Delta Sigma Theta founders.³⁷⁷ After graduating from Howard University, she worked as a teacher until May 28, 1948, when she began her very active career as a dramatic performer.³⁷⁸ Among one of her most well-known dramatic performances, Watson once presented *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Smoot Theater in her hometown of Parkersburg, West Virginia.³⁷⁹ Although the exact year of Watson's death remains unknown, it is known that by 1963, the year of the

374. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 38.

375. *Id.* at 189.

376. *Id.* at 34.

377. *Id.* at 39.

378. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

379. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 68.

sorority's golden anniversary, Watson had entered Omega Omega Chapter.

Wertie Blackwell (Weaver) was born in Kansas City, Missouri. After graduating from Howard, she returned to her home state and taught elementary school in East St. Louis, Missouri. After marrying Dr. Darrington Weaver, the two made their home in Los Angeles, California, and parented three sons.³⁸⁰ While in Los Angeles, she was an active member of the Nu Sigma Chapter of the sorority. Weaver was the author of a novel entitled *The Valley of the Poor*, a book that shed light on issues of racism and class in the South. Just years prior to her death, Weaver said, "You will never know just how happy and proud, I, as one of the founders of Delta Sigma Theta, feel watching the remarkable progress you and other sorors have made; thus, making Delta Sigma Theta members stand out as one of the greatest beacon lights of the many fraternal organizations."³⁸¹

Madree Penn (White) arrived at Howard University after graduating with honors from Central High School in Omaha, Nebraska. White turned down scholarships to attend the University of Iowa and the University of Nebraska in order to attend Howard University.³⁸² As a student at Howard, White became the first woman to hold an office in a student organization as the editor of the campus paper, *The Howard University Journal*.³⁸³ She was also a member of the College Classical Club, President of the campus chapter of the YWCA, Vice-President of the student branch of the NAACP, Vice-President of the Social Science Club, and Class Journalist, Class Vice-President, and Class Treasurer.³⁸⁴ In 1912, Madree Penn (White) first conceived of the idea of founding what became Delta Sigma Theta and was responsible for selecting the Greek-letter symbols of the new sorority. In 1913, Madree Penn White served as President of Alpha Chapter.³⁸⁵ It was during her

380. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

381. *Id.* at 50.

382. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 42.

383. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 19.

384. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 65.

385. *Id.* at 50.

presidency that the sorority's second chapter, Beta Chapter, was established at Wilberforce University on February 5, 1914.³⁸⁶ White's service to the sorority continued long after her days at Howard. Outside of sorority involvement, White launched a career in journalism. She was the publisher and president of the Triangle Press Company, a publishing and printing company in St. Louis; the associate editor and business manager of the *Omaha Monitor*; and executive secretary of the YWCA in Charlotte, North Carolina.³⁸⁷ Madree Penn (White) married Dr. James E. White and later, they parented two children. Madree Penn White entered Omega Omega Chapter in 1967.

Edith Motte (Young) arrived to Howard University as a native of North Carolina. An accomplished pianist and student of Howard's Teacher's College, she graduated Howard one year earlier than anticipated and began work at Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Shortly thereafter, she married and made her home in Youngstown, Ohio. Together, she and her husband had four children, two girls and two boys. After detecting the musical talent of her two daughters, Young and her husband moved to Oberlin, Ohio, and enrolled them in the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.³⁸⁸ While in Oberlin, Young worked on her master's degree in Biblical Literature. Edith Motte Young, along with the other founders, rest at the core of an enduring legacy of vision, leadership, and service that is Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc.

386. VROMAN, *supra* note 17, at 20.

387. DELTA, Jan.-Feb. 1979, at 5.

388. GIDDINGS, *supra* note 3, at 36.