



ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

1908 - 2008 • *Service to All Mankind*

Founders The Original Group



The Founders (left to right): Anna Easter Brown, Beulah Elizabeth Burke, Lillie Burke, Marjorie Hill, Margaret Flagg Holmes, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle, Lavinia Norman, Lucy Diggs Slowe, Marie Woolfolk Taylor

Anna Easter Brown

- Born: Easter Sunday, April 13, 1879, West Orange, NJ
- Employed at Howard as chief evening librarian
- First Tamiouchos Alpha Chapter
- Graduated from Howard in 1909
- Began her teaching career in Bricks, NC;
- Taught 31 years in Rocky Mount, NC
- Traveled extensively to research & write articles for the National Urban League magazine *Opportunity* & other publications
- Presented annual exhibits of African American history; received national publicity for the 25th exhibit
- Charter member Chi Omega Chapter in 1925 in Rocky Mount, NC; served as Basileus (president)
- Charter member of the Rocky Mount, NC YWCA
- Died: 1957

Beulah Elizabeth Burke

- Born: July 20, 1885, Hertford, NC
- With her sister, Lillie, entered Howard's prep school in 1900
- Created organization name, motto & colors
- Charter member Beta Omega Graduate Chapter (Kansas City, MO) & Mu Omega Chapter (Kansas City, KS); served as Basileus (president) of both
- Served as Mid-Western Organizer (Regional Director) & 2nd Supreme Anti-Basileus (2nd vice president)
- Received A.B. degree in Latin; M.A. in home economics from Columbia University
- Taught Latin, German & English in Georgia & in Kansas City, MO
- Taught at Delaware State College & in Atlantic City, NJ
- Member Xi Omega Chapter (Washington, DC)
- Served for a time as manager of Slowe Hall, Howard University residence for graduate women students—named for school's first dean of women, Lucy Slowe
- Died: 1975

Lillie Burke

- Born: Hertford, NC
- Co-created organization motto
- Graduated from Howard's College of Liberal Arts in 1908 with A.B. in English
- Completed graduate course at the University of Pennsylvania
- Taught in Downingtown, PA, Fayetteville, NC & Washington, DC
- Participated in organizing Xi Omega Chapter (Washington, DC)
- Died: 1949



Marjorie Hill

- Graduated from Howard in 1908 with B.A. in education & political science
- Taught at Morgan College in Lynchburg, VA
- Died: 1909—first Ivy Beyond the Wall

Margaret Flagg Holmes

- Born: September 6, 1886, Greensboro, NC
- Entered Howard in September 1904 on scholarship; graduated in 1908 with English & Latin major
- Member first Constitution & Bylaws Committee
- Taught high school Latin, English & history
- Earned M.A. in philosophy from Columbia University
- Active member Theta Omega Chapter (Chicago, IL) from 1922 to 1953; served as Anti-Basileus & Grammateus
- After retirement, moved to New York, where she was a member of Tau Omega Chapter
- Died: 1976

Ethel Hedgeman Lyle

- Born: February 10, 1887, St. Louis, MO
- Graduated from Howard with A.B. in liberal arts in 1909
- Taught music
- First college-trained African American woman to receive a Teacher's Life Certificate from the State Department of Education
- Charter member Mu Chapter (Philadelphia, PA) in 1922 (which became Omega Omega Chapter)
- Elected Supreme Tamiouchos (national treasurer) in 1923, held position until 1946—longest tenure as a national officer
- Basileus (president) Omega Omega Chapter
- Named honorary Basileus (president) at 1926 Boule—a title she carried until her death & which no other woman has held
- Died: 1950

Lavinia Norman

- Born: December 14, 1882, Montgomery, WV
- Entered Howard in 1901
- Presided over the first Ivy Day celebration
- Graduated from Howard, cum laude, with A.B. degree in English & French
- Taught school in Huntington, WV for 40 years
- Earned B.A. from West Virginia State College in 1934
- Active with Beta Tau Omega Chapter (Huntington, WV)
- After retirement, returned to Washington, DC, where she was a member Xi Omega Chapter
- Celebrated 100th birthday with a gala party
- Died: 1983



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Lucy Diggs Slowe

- Born: July 4, 1885, Berryville, VA
- Attended Howard on scholarship
- Tennis champion & gifted singer
- First Basileus (president) Alpha Chapter
- Drafted organization's constitution
- Taught high school English in Baltimore, MD, while attending Columbia University; earned M.A. in 1915
- First African American woman to win a national title in any sport (American Tennis Association singles title)
- Organized & became first principal of first junior high school in Washington, DC
- Dean of women at Howard—first African American woman in U.S. to hold such a position
- Organized National Association of College Women & the Association of Advisors to Women in Colored Schools
- Died: 1937

Marie Woolfolk Taylor

- Born: December 18, 1893, Atlanta, GA
- Accompanied Ethel Hedgeman to present proposal to university administration to establish the organization
- Contacted the women of the sophomore class who were selected to complete the founding group
- Graduated from Howard in 1908, magna cum laude, A.B. in Latin & history
- Majored in religion at Schauffler Training School in Social Service in Cleveland, OH, where she was the only African American enrolled
- Helped organize Kappa Omega Chapter; first Basileus (president)
- Died: 1960



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Founders The Sophomores



The Sophomores, (left to right): Norma Elizabeth Boyd, Ethel Jones Mowbray, Alice P. Murray, Sarah Meriweather Nutter, Joanna Mary Berry Shields, Carrie Snowden, Harriett Josephine Terry

With the exception of Ethel, the original group of women was comprised of college seniors. To ensure continuity of the organization, seven Class of 1910 honor students who had expressed interest were invited to join without initiation.

Norma Elizabeth Boyd

- Born: August 9, 1888, Washington, DC
- Joined Nellie Quander & Minnie Smith on the committee to incorporate the organization
- Elected Epistoleus (corresponding secretary) on the first directorate
- Majored in mathematics; graduated from Howard with A.B. in 1910
- Enrolled in education & public relations graduate courses at several universities across the country
- Taught mathematics in Washington, DC school for more than 30 years
- Served as North Atlantic Regional Director, Basileus (president) Xi Omega Chapter (Washington, DC)
- Chaired the first committee to raise funds for the Mississippi Health Project
- Established the Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs in 1938, the forerunner of the American Council on Human Relations
- Organized the Women's International Religious Fellows in 1959
- Longest-living Founder
- Died: 1985

Ethel Jones Mowbray

- Born: Baltimore, MD
- Enrolled in Howard's College of Arts & Sciences in 1906
- Elected Anti-Basileus on the first directorate
- Became Alpha Chapter Basileus (president) the last semester of her senior year in March 1910
- Graduated from Howard in 1910 with A.B., mathematics major
- Taught math in the Baltimore, MD public schools
- Became a caterer in Kansas
- Active with Mu Omega Chapter (Kansas City)
- Died: 1948

Alice P. Murray

- Active member in the early days of the organization
- Entered Teachers' College at Howard in 1906
- Graduated from Howard with A.B. in liberal arts & education in 1910
- Had a number of articles published by the *Howard University Journal*



Sarah Meriweather Nutter

- Born: Washington, DC
- Majored in history & English
- Represented Howard at the World Student Federation Convention in 1914
- Did graduate studies at the University of Chicago in 1915
- Taught in Baltimore, MD, at Howard University & high school in Washington, DC
- Helped establish Nu Chapter in 1922 at West Virginia State College
- Charter member Beta Beta Omega Chapter (Charleston, WV) in 1934
- First African American member of the West Virginia Society for Crippled Children
- Died: 1950

Joanna Mary Berry Shields

- Born: July 7, 1884, Catharpin, VA
- Scored 98% (out of 100%) on her Howard entrance exam
- Graduated from Howard, cum laude, with A.B. in 1910; majored in social science & mathematics
- Taught in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina & New York
- Instrumental in securing help from the Rosenwald Fund to increase the length of the school year for African American children from 3 to 6 months
- Re-established active membership in the organization in Winston-Salem, NC
- Member Tau Omega Chapter (New York, NY)
- Died: 1965

Carrie Snowden

- Born: Washington, DC
- Entered Howard's School of Arts & Sciences in 1906
- Served as Epistoleus (corresponding secretary) Alpha Chapter
- Graduated from Howard with B.A. in May 1910
- Continued to take economics, social work, commerce & mathematics classes
- Last registration at Howard was in 1943
- In later years, employed at Howard as a switchboard operator
- Charter member Xi Omega Chapter (Washington, DC)
- Died: 1948

Harriet Josephine Terry

- Born: February 4, 1885, Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY
- Elected secretary of her class
- First sophomore in the founding group elected Basileus (president) Alpha Chapter; also served as Tamiouchos
- Wrote Alpha Kappa Alpha initiation hymn
- Graduated from Howard in 1910 with an A.B. in liberal arts
- Taught English for 37 years at Alabama A&M University
- During the war, worked in the Bureau of Engraving & Printing, making & inspecting money
- Helped establish Epsilon Gamma Omega Chapter (Normal, AL); served as Basileus (president)
- Returned to Washington, DC after retirement, & affiliated with Xi Omega Chapter
- Died: 1967



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The Incorporators

Believing that Alpha Kappa Alpha should influence members throughout their lives and “horrified” when met with proposals by some members to form an entirely new organization *, **Nellie Quander** initiated a dynamic plan: the organization would incorporate and expand. A committee was formed to take appropriate action. Committee members included: **Norma Boyd, Julia Brooks, Ethel Jones Mowbray, Nellie Pratt Russell and Minnie Smith**. Along with Quander, these members are referred to as the organization’s “Incorporators.” Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was legally incorporated January 29, 1913.

** The dissatisfied members withdrew from the Alpha Kappa Alpha and went on to found Delta Sigma Theta.*