

omega psi phi fraternity history

omega psi phi fraternity history traces the development of one of the most influential African American fraternities in the United States. Founded in the early 20th century, Omega Psi Phi has a rich legacy of brotherhood, scholarship, and community service. The fraternity's origins, key founders, and its contributions to civil rights and education highlight its enduring impact. This article explores the detailed history of Omega Psi Phi, including its founding principles, expansion, notable members, and ongoing influence in society. Understanding the fraternity's past provides valuable insight into its role within African American culture and the broader context of American social movements. The following sections will cover the fraternity's founding, its mission and values, historical milestones, prominent members, and its philanthropic efforts.

- Founding and Early History
- Principles and Mission
- Expansion and Growth
- Notable Members and Contributions
- Philanthropy and Community Impact

Founding and Early History

The omega psi phi fraternity history begins with its founding on November 17, 1911, at Howard University in Washington, D.C. It was established by three undergraduate students and their faculty advisor, who sought to create an organization that emphasized scholarship, perseverance, and uplift

within the African American community. The founders were Edgar Amos Love, Oscar James Cooper, and Frank Coleman, with the fraternity's spiritual founder, Dr. Ernest Everett Just, serving as an influential faculty member. This foundation marked the beginning of a fraternity devoted to academic excellence and social progress during a time when African Americans faced significant racial discrimination.

Founders and Their Vision

The fraternity's creators were committed to establishing a brotherhood that fostered leadership and intellectual growth. Edgar Amos Love was a theology student who later became a bishop, symbolizing the fraternity's spiritual and moral guidance. Oscar James Cooper was a medical student, and Frank Coleman was a chemistry student, reflecting the fraternity's emphasis on diverse academic disciplines. Dr. Ernest Everett Just, a renowned biologist, provided mentorship and inspiration, reinforcing the fraternity's commitment to scholarly achievement. Their collective vision was to build a lifelong bond that supported members academically and socially while contributing positively to society.

Initial Challenges and Establishment

Upon its inception, Omega Psi Phi faced challenges common to African American organizations during the Jim Crow era. Despite racial segregation and limited resources, the fraternity quickly established its identity and purpose. The founders created the fraternity's cardinal principles—Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift—which remain central to its mission. Early activities focused on academic support, community service, and fostering leadership skills among African American men. These efforts laid a strong foundation that would enable the fraternity to grow and thrive nationally in subsequent decades.

Principles and Mission

The core of omega psi phi fraternity history is its unwavering commitment to four cardinal principles.

These guiding ideals shape the fraternity's programs, initiatives, and member conduct. The principles embody values that encourage personal development, academic achievement, and social responsibility. The fraternity's mission extends beyond collegiate life, emphasizing lifelong brotherhood and contributions to the African American community and society at large.

Cardinal Principles

The four cardinal principles are Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift. Each principle plays a vital role in the fraternity's ethos:

- **Manhood:** Encouraging maturity, integrity, and responsibility among members.
- **Scholarship:** Promoting academic excellence and intellectual growth.
- **Perseverance:** Inspiring resilience and determination in overcoming obstacles.
- **Uplift:** Committing to the advancement and betterment of the African American community.

These principles guide the fraternity's educational programs, leadership development, and community engagement efforts, fostering a culture of excellence and service.

Mission Statement and Vision

Omega Psi Phi's mission focuses on providing a support system for African American men to excel academically and socially while giving back to their communities. The fraternity promotes leadership development, cultural enrichment, and civic engagement. Its vision is to cultivate men of character who exemplify the cardinal principles and who work tirelessly to create positive social change. This enduring mission continues to inspire generations of members to pursue excellence and social justice.

Expansion and Growth

The omega psi phi fraternity history features significant expansion from a single chapter at Howard University to a national and international presence. The fraternity rapidly established chapters at other historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and, eventually, beyond the United States. The growth reflected the fraternity's appeal as a vehicle for empowerment and community leadership during periods of social upheaval and change.

National and International Chapters

After the establishment of the Alpha chapter at Howard University, Omega Psi Phi's Beta chapter was founded at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1914. This milestone marked the beginning of the fraternity's national expansion. Over subsequent decades, the fraternity chartered chapters across the United States, especially at predominantly African American institutions. The fraternity later expanded internationally, with chapters in countries such as the Bahamas and South Korea, reflecting its global reach and influence.

Growth in Membership and Influence

The fraternity's membership has grown substantially since its founding, encompassing thousands of members worldwide. This growth has been fueled by its reputation for academic excellence, leadership development, and community service. Omega Psi Phi has played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement and has been a platform for African American professionals, educators, and leaders. The fraternity's influence extends into politics, education, business, and the arts, cementing its status as a cornerstone of African American fraternity culture.

Notable Members and Contributions

Omega Psi Phi fraternity history is distinguished by the accomplishments of its members who have

made significant contributions across various fields. From civil rights activism to the arts, science, and public service, members have used the fraternity as a foundation for leadership and societal impact. Highlighting notable members underscores the fraternity's legacy and its role in shaping African American history.

Prominent Members

Several prominent figures have been affiliated with Omega Psi Phi, including:

- **Langston Hughes:** Celebrated poet and social activist whose works contributed to the Harlem Renaissance.
- **Jesse Jackson:** Influential civil rights leader and politician.
- **Michael Strahan:** Former NFL player and television personality.
- **Ron Brown:** The first African American Secretary of Commerce in the United States.
- **Willard Scott:** Well-known television weather presenter and personality.

These members exemplify the fraternity's commitment to excellence and leadership across diverse areas of American life.

Contributions to Society

Beyond individual achievements, Omega Psi Phi has contributed significantly to social justice, education, and community development. Members have been active in the civil rights movement, voter registration drives, and educational initiatives aimed at improving opportunities for African Americans. The fraternity's emphasis on scholarship has led to programs supporting academic achievement and mentoring youth. Its commitment to uplift has fostered numerous community service projects and

philanthropic efforts nationwide.

Philanthropy and Community Impact

The philanthropic efforts of Omega Psi Phi are a vital aspect of its fraternity history. The organization has a long-standing tradition of community service, focusing on health, education, and social welfare. Its national programs and local chapter initiatives demonstrate a sustained commitment to addressing critical issues facing African American communities.

National Programs and Initiatives

Omega Psi Phi sponsors several key programs that reflect its mission of uplift and service, including:

- **Achievement Week:** Celebrates academic and leadership accomplishments of members and the community.
- **Talent Hunt Program:** Encourages young people to develop their artistic talents.
- **Dare to Care Foundation:** Provides scholarships and supports youth mentoring.
- **Social Action Program:** Addresses social and civil rights issues through advocacy and education.
- **Health Initiatives:** Promotes awareness of health issues disproportionately affecting African Americans, such as hypertension and diabetes.

Local Chapter Activities

Individual Omega Psi Phi chapters actively engage in community service tailored to local needs.

Common activities include organizing blood drives, mentoring programs, voter registration campaigns, and educational workshops. These efforts embody the fraternity's principle of Uplift by improving quality of life and creating opportunities for future generations. Through such initiatives, Omega Psi Phi sustains its legacy as a fraternity committed to making a measurable difference in society.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was Omega Psi Phi Fraternity founded?

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was founded on November 17, 1911.

Who were the founders of Omega Psi Phi?

The founders were Dr. Ernest Everett Just, Dr. Oscar James Cooper, Dr. Frank Coleman, and Bishop Edgar Amos Love.

What was the original purpose of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity?

The fraternity was established to promote academic excellence, community service, and the upliftment of African Americans.

Where was Omega Psi Phi founded?

It was founded at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

What are the official colors of Omega Psi Phi?

The official colors are royal purple and old gold.

What is the motto of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity?

The motto is 'Friendship is Essential to the Soul.'

How has Omega Psi Phi contributed to civil rights and social justice?

Omega Psi Phi has a long history of activism, supporting civil rights movements, community service initiatives, and educational programs.

What are some notable members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity?

Notable members include Langston Hughes, Michael Jordan, Bill Cosby, and Shaquille O'Neal.

Additional Resources

1. *Omega Psi Phi: A Legacy of Brotherhood*

This book provides a comprehensive history of Omega Psi Phi fraternity from its founding in 1911 at Howard University. It explores the fraternity's impact on African American culture, education, and civil rights. The narrative highlights notable members and key milestones that have shaped the organization's legacy.

2. *The Founders of Omega Psi Phi: Visionaries of a Brotherhood*

Focusing on the four founders—Bishop Edgar Amos Love, Dr. Oscar James Cooper, Professor Frank Coleman, and Dr. Ernest Everett Just—this book delves into their lives and the motivations behind establishing Omega Psi Phi. It examines the social and historical context of early 20th-century America and how it influenced the fraternity's principles.

3. *Omega Psi Phi: The History of a Proud Tradition*

This title chronicles the evolution of Omega Psi Phi, from its origins to its growth into one of the most influential historically Black fraternities. It covers the fraternity's contributions to community service, leadership development, and advocacy for civil rights across decades.

4. *Men of Omega: Stories from the Brotherhood*

Through personal stories and interviews with members, this book offers an inside look at the fraternity's culture and brotherhood. It highlights how membership in Omega Psi Phi has impacted the

lives of men from various generations and backgrounds.

5. *Omega Psi Phi and the Civil Rights Movement*

This book explores the fraternity's active role in the struggle for civil rights in America. It documents the involvement of Omega Psi Phi members in key protests, legal battles, and community organizing efforts during the mid-20th century.

6. *The Omega Psi Phi Directory of Distinguished Members*

A comprehensive biographical collection, this volume profiles prominent Omega Psi Phi members who have made significant contributions to society. It includes leaders in politics, education, arts, and sciences, showcasing the fraternity's influence beyond campus life.

7. *Omega Psi Phi: Pillars of Scholarship and Leadership*

Highlighting the fraternity's commitment to academic excellence and leadership, this book discusses scholarship programs, leadership training initiatives, and the fraternity's role in promoting higher education among African American youth.

8. *Omega Psi Phi's Role in Historically Black Colleges and Universities*

This work examines the fraternity's deep ties with HBCUs, focusing on its impact on student life, alumni networks, and institutional growth. It also discusses how Omega Psi Phi has helped shape the culture and traditions of these historic institutions.

9. *The Rituals and Symbols of Omega Psi Phi*

An insightful guide into the fraternity's rituals, symbols, and traditions, this book explains their meanings and significance. It provides context for how these elements foster unity and identity among members while preserving the fraternity's rich heritage.

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omega psi phi fraternity history: Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 1995*

omega psi phi fraternity history: The History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. (an Update for the Period 1960-2008) Vernon Steve Weakley, 2009-05-01 This literary work is an update of the History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. for the period 1960 to 2008. This book humbly takes up where Omega men Herman Dreer, Robert L. Gill and their outstanding committees stopped. This new update was officially sanctioned and commissioned by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. via the 38th Grand Basileus, the honorable Warren G. Lee, and the elected Supreme Council for the 74th Grand Conclave. This Omega History Book project will provide a clear and accurate history of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and its impact on America and African Americans in particular for the period 1960 to 2008. This new History update will serve to clearly demonstrate how Omega Psi Phi fraternity Inc. has, not only made a significant positive difference in the lives of Black people, but the entire world. It is this committee's fervent hope that this update will not only enlighten, be a beacon and shed light on our illustrious history but will also be an inspiration to young people, the general public at large and all Omega Men, past, present and future. This new update involved the comprehensive gathering of historical data on Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. from all across America and internationally for the period 1960 to the 2008. It endeavored to encompass all significant contributions, all noteworthy efforts and the resulting factual recordation of Omega Psi Phi fraternity and all Omega men who have had pertinent impact on America and Omega Dear during this period. This project was massive and took over two years to complete. The resulting final product will be a self perpetuating income generating source for Omega Psi Phi fraternity for many years to come. Please be clearly advised readers that this is an update of the previous history books written by the honorable Herman Dreer, Robert L. Gill and their committees. This book, with the exception of containing some basic historical information to enlighten a person who has no knowledge of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, will not routinely cover past historical information shown in the great works of Dreer and Gill occurring prior to this update period. The history rich period for this update has provided many interesting challenges for Omega and its members. The Founders of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity did not shrink from the task, nor did they pity themselves for being given the tremendous burden to uplift the African American race. W.E.B. DuBois' talented tenth assertion must be our rallying cry in that it crystallizes the fact that Omega men must be in the forefront in lifting the Black community to higher heights. Omega men are indeed the cream of the crop endowed with the divine gift of greatness. And, our great history and our individual and unified deeds bare witness to this fact and with that our readiness to step to the fore. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. is filled with many great Omega men who have had significant positive impact on America during this update period. There are undeniable facts, inspiring legends, and exceptional Omega men who have accomplished great things in their districts and at the international level, as well as in their personal lives and in their gallant exploits across the nation. It is time that the world knows of our extraordinary contributions to the greatest country on earth and our proud race. We pray that this HISTORY OF OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY INC. for the period 1960 to 2008 accomplishes this goal and be a guiding light to live by and be a positive uplifting force for all that reads it.

omega psi phi fraternity history: The Omega Psi Fraternity and the Men who Made Its History Robert Lewis Gill, 1963

omega psi phi fraternity history: A Summary History of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., 1911-1991 John S. Epps, 1991

omega psi phi fraternity history: The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Men who Made Its History Robert Lewis Gill, 1963 The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was founded in 1911 at Howard

University, a university primarily attended by African Americans. .

omega psi phi fraternity history: *The History of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity* Herman Dreer, 1940

omega psi phi fraternity history: With Faith in God and Heart and Mind Maurice J. Hobson, Eddie R. Cole, Jim C. Harper, Derrick P. Alridge, 2025-05 When Edgar A. Love, Oscar J. Cooper, Frank Coleman, and Ernest Everett Just founded the historically Black fraternity Omega Psi Phi on November 17, 1911, at Howard University, they could not have known how great of an impact their organization would have on American life. Over the 110 years that followed, its members led colleges and universities; served in prominent military roles; made innumerable contributions to education, civic society, science, and medicine; and at least one campaigned for the US presidency. This book offers a comprehensive, authoritative history of the fraternity, emphasizing its vital role through multiple eras of the Black freedom struggle. The authors address both the individual work of its membership, which has included such figures as Carter G. Woodson, Bayard Rustin, Roy Wilkins, James L. Farmer Jr., Benjamin Elijah Mays, James Clyburn, Jesse Jackson, and Benjamin Crump, and the collective efforts of the fraternity's leadership to encourage its general membership to contribute to the struggle in concrete ways over the years. The result is a book that uniquely connects the 1910s with the present, showing the ongoing power of a Black fraternal organization to channel its members toward social reform.

omega psi phi fraternity history: *Leading Figures in the History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.* Judson L. Jeffries, 2025-02-04 Highlighting 21 members of this illustrious historically Black fraternity Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., was founded in 1911 at Howard University to cultivate and nurture a generation of leaders who would work toward racial uplift and influence American society. In an unprecedented two volumes, Judson Jeffries brings together original works on 21 of the fraternity's accomplished and influential members. Written by a diverse group of scholars, these profiles highlight the national importance of these figures in their chosen fields of endeavor as well as the enormous impact of this great fraternity. Volume 2 discusses Brigadier General Charles Young; artist and activist Charlotte Lottie Wilson, affectionately considered the fraternity's lone female member; modern civil rights activists T.R.M. Howard, Bayard Rustin, Lawrence Guyot, Jesse L. Jackson, and Emory O. Jackson; and scholars Lewis V. Baldwin, Asa Grant Hilliard III, and Benjamin E. Mays. Jeffries concludes by celebrating the recent rise in scholarship that draws attention to the fraternities and sororities that have connected other Black trailblazers such as these. Including both widely recognized and little-known individuals and featuring people who were on the front lines of the struggle for racial equality and those whose work took place behind the scenes, these volumes show the contributions of Black leaders in the areas of science, civil rights, athletics, the arts, the military, politics, education, and more. *Leading Figures in the History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.* is a testament to the significance of Black Greek-letter organizations, whose members have made history through lives of struggle, accomplishment, triumph, and uplift. Contributors: Judson L. Jeffries | Qiana M. Cutts | Francis V. Gourrier, Jr. | Dereck J. Rovaris | Kyle Brooks | Brian G. Shellum | Kimberly Mangun | Cynthia Hawkins | William J. Southerland | Raymond Sommerville | Jeaninne D. Wallace

omega psi phi fraternity history: *The Soul of Omega* Kyle S. Yeldell, 2021

omega psi phi fraternity history: The History of the Theta Epsilon Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Anthony Terrell Teat, Troy Alfred Wiley Priest, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Theta Epsilon Chapter (Brown University), 1989

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on 21 accomplished and influential members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., demonstrating the enormous impact of the fraternity. Volume 2 discusses military figures, artists, modern civil rights activists, and scholars, and celebrates the rise of recent scholarship on Black Greek-letter organizations.

omega psi phi fraternity history: The Founders Gerald Curry, 2025-07-04

omega psi phi fraternity history: *The Divine Nine* Lawrence C. Ross, 2019-08-27 This comprehensive history of African American fraternities and sororities celebrates the spirit of Black Excellence in higher education that has produced American leaders in politics, sports, arts, and culture such as Kamala Harris, Colin Kaepernick, Michael Jordan, Thurgood Marshall, and Toni Morrison, and is sure to be a treasured resource for generations to come. America's Black fraternities and sororities are a unique and vital part of 20th century African American history, providing young black achievers with opportunities to support each other while they serve their communities and the nation. From pioneering work in the suffragette movement to extraordinary strides during the Civil Rights era to life-changing inner-city mentoring programs, members of these organizations share a proud tradition of brotherhood, sisterhood, and service. Today, America's nine black fraternities and sororities are millions of members strong with chapters at HBCUs, Ivy League Schools, and colleges across the nation including Stanford University, Howard University, and the University of Chicago.

omega psi phi fraternity history: Pi Chapter Sets the Pace Edwin T. Johnson, 2003 This study proposes that men initiated into Pi Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. made a significant contribution to Morgan State University, the Fraternity, the nation and the world. For almost eight decades, the men of Pi Chapter have persevered through segregation, the great depression, World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the Civil Rights Movement among other obstacles. The thesis discusses an overview of the Fraternity's founding on Howard University's campus, and the founding of Pi Chapter at Morgan, with its distinction as the oldest undergraduate chapter of the Fraternity in Maryland, and the initial role of Black Greek lettered organizations on the Historically Black College Campus. In addition, the thesis discusses the intense involvement of Omega men in Morgan's development from 1920 to 1940, the contributions of Pi Brothers from the 1950s and the 1960s, including their participation and impact in the Korean, Vietnam Wars, and the Civil Rights and other protest movements. Finally it discusses Pi Chapter from 1970 to 2002, and includes the evolution of the Chapter's new identity, the outlawing of the pledge process, and the birth of underground pledging. -- Abstract.

omega psi phi fraternity history: Black Greek-letter Organizations in the Twenty-First Century Gregory S. Parks, 2008-06-13 During the twentieth century, black Greek-Letter organizations (BGLOs) united college students dedicated to excellence, fostered kinship, and uplifted African Americans. Members of these organizations include remarkable and influential individuals such as Martin Luther King Jr., Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, novelist Toni Morrison, and Wall Street pioneer Reginald F. Lewis. Despite the profound influence of these groups, many now question the continuing relevance of BGLOs, arguing that their golden age has passed. Partly because of their perceived link to hip-hop culture, black fraternities and sororities have been unfairly reduced to a media stereotype—a world of hazing without any real substance. The general public knows very little about BGLOs, and surprisingly the members themselves often do not have a thorough understanding of their history and culture or of the issues currently facing their organizations. To foster a greater engagement with the history and contributions of BGLOs, *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun* brings together an impressive group of authors to explore the contributions and continuing possibilities of BGLOs and their members. Editor Gregory S. Parks and the contributing authors provide historical context for the development of BGLOs, exploring their service activities as well as their relationships with other prominent African American institutions. The book examines BGLOs' responses to a number of contemporary issues, including non-black membership, homosexuality within BGLOs, and the perception of BGLOs as educated gangs. As illustrated by the organized response of BGLO members

to the racial injustice they observed in Jena, Louisiana, these organizations still have a vital mission. Both internally and externally, BGLOs struggle to forge a relevant identity for the new century. Internally, these groups wrestle with many issues, including hazing, homophobia, petty intergroup competition, and the difficulty of bridging the divide between college and alumni members. Externally, BGLOs face the challenge of rededicating themselves to their communities and leading an aggressive campaign against modern forms of racism, sexism, and other types of fear-driven behavior. By embracing the history of these organizations and exploring their continuing viability and relevance, *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century* demonstrates that BGLOs can create a positive and enduring future and that their most important work lies ahead.

omega psi phi fraternity history: African American Fraternities and Sororities Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, Clarendia M. Phillips, 2012-02-29 The rich history and social significance of the “Divine Nine” African American Greek-letter organizations is explored in this comprehensive anthology. In the long tradition of African American benevolent and secret societies, intercollegiate African American fraternities and sororities have strong traditions of fostering brotherhood and sisterhood among their members, exerting considerable influence in the African American community and being in the forefront of civic action, community service, and philanthropy. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Toni Morrison, Arthur Ashe, and Sarah Vaughn are just a few of the trailblazing members of these organizations. *African American Fraternities and Sororities* places the history of these organizations in context, linking them to other movements and organizations that predated them and tying their history to the Civil Rights movement. It explores various cultural aspects of the organizations, such as auxiliary groups, branding, calls, and stepping, and highlights the unique role of African American sororities.

omega psi phi fraternity history: *The Crisis*, 1940-11 *The Crisis*, founded by W.E.B. Du Bois as the official publication of the NAACP, is a journal of civil rights, history, politics, and culture and seeks to educate and challenge its readers about issues that continue to plague African Americans and other communities of color. For nearly 100 years, *The Crisis* has been the magazine of opinion and thought leaders, decision makers, peacemakers and justice seekers. It has chronicled, informed, educated, entertained and, in many instances, set the economic, political and social agenda for our nation and its multi-ethnic citizens.

omega psi phi fraternity history: Black Greek 101 Walter M. Kimbrough, 2023-09-12 *Black Greek 101* analyzes the customs, culture, and challenges facing historically Black fraternal organizations. The text provides a history of Black Greek organizations beyond the nine major organizations, examining the pledging practice, the growth of fraternalism outside of the mainstream organizations, the vivid culture and practices of the groups, and challenges for the future.

omega psi phi fraternity history: *A Pledge with Purpose* Gregory S. Parks, Matthew W. Hughey, 2024-02-06 Reveals the historical and political significance of “The Divine Nine”—the Black Greek Letter Organizations In 1905, Henry Arthur Callis began his studies at Cornell University. Despite their academic pedigrees, Callis and his fellow African American students were ostracized by the majority-white student body, and so in 1906, Callis and some of his peers started the first, intercollegiate Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO), Alpha Phi Alpha. Since their founding, BGLOs have not only served to solidify bonds among many African American college students, they have also imbued them with a sense of purpose and a commitment to racial uplift—the endeavor to help Black Americans reach socio-economic equality. *A Pledge with Purpose* explores the arc of these unique, important, and relevant social institutions. Gregory S. Parks and Matthew W. Hughey uncover how BGLOs were shaped by, and labored to transform, the changing social, political, and cultural landscape of Black America from the era of the Harlem Renaissance to the civil rights movement. Alpha Phi Alpha boasts such members as Thurgood Marshall, civil rights lawyer and US Supreme Court Justice, and Dr. Charles Wesley, noted historian and college president. Delta Sigma Theta members include Bethune-Cookman College founder Mary McLeod Bethune and women’s rights activist Dorothy Height. Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, who left an

indelible mark on the civil rights movement, was a member of Phi Beta Sigma, while Dr. Mae Jemison, a celebrated engineer and astronaut, belonged to Alpha Kappa Alpha. Through such individuals, Parks and Hughey demonstrate the ways that BGLO members have long been at the forefront of innovation, activism, and scholarship. In its examination of the history of these important organizations, A Pledge with Purpose serves as a critical reflection of both the collective African American racial struggle and the various strategies of Black Americans in their great—and unfinished—march toward freedom and equality.

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