

Alumni of the Sigma Alpha Chapter of **DELTA KAPPA EPSILON**



and **DELTA KAPPA SIGMA** P.O. Box 18231, Richmond, Virginia 23226

January 5, 2020

Alumni Association/Chapter Update

Dan Johnson, Alumni Board Chairman (S'74)

Dear Fellow DKE/DKS Brothers, Parents and Friends:

Well due to the laziness of our crack editorial staff and too much eggnog, the infamous and renowned Holiday Season DKE Newsletter version was not forthcoming. Nonetheless we have a New Year's resolution to get out four quarterly newsletters for 2020. What a novel concept of four quarterly issues. But to the defense of our staff that spends too much time in Canada, three US quarters does equal one Canadian dollar. Now on to the news! The Hokie football team had a down, then up, then finished down season, in stark contrast the DKE Tailgates which started strong and kept going all season. We had a great turnout for the Annual designated DKE game of VT-UNC which the Hokies won in 6 OT's. We had over 80 DKE alumni return and of course the DKE tailgate was the biggest one of the year. As part of the weekend festivities, there was the annual "Alumni vs. Actives" football game played on Friday at the park located at the old Blacksburg High School grounds (referring to the now gone BHS on Patrick Henry Dr. that was actually new back in the days). Now what I thought was going to be friendly game of flag football was actually a sandlot tackle football game. Not for the fainthearted to say the least (or any sane alumnus beyond 25 years old), but I am happy to report the lack of broken limbs, or deaths, during the game. The Alumni team, led by QB **Pete Schmitz** S'15, and RB's **Tim Keenan** F'17, and **Ryan Grady** S'15, trounced the Actives by a score of something like 20-0. In an interesting pregame player personnel maneuver, the Alumni had stipulated that Ryan Grady had used up his 5-year eligibility as an Active, and was therefore 'declared' as a reclassified Alumnus for the game. As a side note Ryan and fellow 'extended student' **Jake Riedelshiemer** F'14, both graduated this past semester from Virginia Tech. Congrats guys, a long time coming!

Sticking with some chapter news, I am pleased to announce that **Conor Schauer** F'17, is the 2019 recipient of the Dave Calhoun Academic scholarship for having the highest GPA of DKE House residents for the Fall semester. Congratulations to Conor, and it goes to show that DKE House living and academics are not incompatible with one another. Speaking of **Dave Calhoun** S'76, he was just appointed the CEO of Boeing. Not too shabby but, just one of your typical examples of the virtuous acumen one gains through being a DKE and attending VT. We have also awarded the 2019 Daniel Johnson Leadership Scholarships to **Blake Wickham** F'17, and **John Bellucci** F'18, for attending the DKE Leadership Conference this month. Blake is the new chapter President (Brother Beta) and John is the Risk Manager commencing 2020. Now you just gotta love the Dekes electing a guy name John 'Brother Bluto' Bellucci as the Risk Manager. Just remember, it wasn't over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor either.

Based on the resounding success of the 60's Dekes and 70's Dekes mini-reunions over the past two years, you guessed it we are now planning on the 80's Dekes mini reunion for this summer. We have already reserved the Inn at VT for the July 17-19 weekend, so if you attended VT at any time during the 1980's you are **obligated** to attend this event. **Charlie Webb** S'85 has graciously taken on the role of reunion chairman and several others [**Stephen Gillespie** W'83 and **Craig Scimeca** W'80 (really Linda)] have also offered to serve as co-organizers for the event, but could use more. As a first order of business, we still need to track down current contact information for all the 80's Dekes. You can help us out. If you an 80's Deke please return the enclosed donation card with interest on attending; updated email and cell phone numbers; and of course a donation wouldn't hurt either. Check out the vtdke.com website (there is still the schedule of events for the 70's reunion up there) and take a look at the Alumni Roster list. If you can look at the list, and check the accuracy of your pledge class listing and provide any corrections and/or updates to us we would be obliged. We would like to invite everyone tied to the 80's and that includes DKE Little



Sisters from the day of whom we have next to no information or even listing. So if you know of others not on the list that may want to attend let us know. 80's Dekes can expect to get a save the date note card in the coming weeks (and if you don't just email Charlie Webb). You may have noticed familiar names from above that the chapter brotherhood has three 'Son of a DKE' from the 80's.

The DKE Chapter remains unrecognized by Virginia Tech as a registered student organization, however the DKE Brotherhood are determined to grow and carry on in becoming a top tier fraternity in terms of size and reputation. The DKE House is still standing as of today and with your support will still be standing decades from now. I thank everyone for their support in 2019 and look forward to the continued support.

The active chapter report can be found further down in the letter. Spring semester 2020 starts in a week and the chapter expects to have around 70 dues paying members return this semester. The lifeblood of the fraternity is new membership. If you have son, brother, friend or neighbor attending VT this year and you want to experience the DKE brotherhood let us know by returning the enclosed card with his information or contact a DKE brother. If you know of the contact information of any of these brothers please pass it on by mailing it in or emailing us at sigmaalphadekes@gmail.com.

Make plans to attend at the Parent-Alumni Open House prior to the Spring Game and if you are Blacksburg for any reason in the coming months stop in and say hello to the guys. FFTHF, Dan Johnson '77

Active Chapter Report - *Blake Wickham F'17 Chapter President*

Brothers and Friends,

It was another busy and successful semester for the Sigma Alpha Dekes. We have continued our operations off campus and are thriving. We welcomed 13 new in the Fall 2019 pledge as Brothers into the hallowed halls of 302 East Roanoke St DKE Fraternity: **John Branche Jr.; Hunter Cochran; R.J. Giarrusso; Caleb Hash; Evan Hellmig; William Hillhouse; Christopher Koehler; Raymond Martini; Kevin O'Meara Jr; Kyle Prundl; Ferdinando Sansone; Robert Sean Zechman; and Zack Weaver**. Among the new Brothers are DKE legacies: Evan Hellmig (brother **Alex Hellmig S' 15**); Kyle Prundl (brother **Doug Prundl S'18**); and Zack Weaver (brother **Jake Weaver S'17**) who join the existing five current DKE legacy brothers (**Bannon, Bradley, Coley, J Otwell, JT Otwell**) bringing the total of 10 current DKE brothers who are multi-family-member Dekes. That is 15% of our brotherhood! The DKE bloodlines run thick and if any of you have a recommendation for a relative or any other current or future VT student that may be interested in joining Dekes, please don't hesitate to contact us directly. With our newly initiated brothers Dekes expects to have approximately 70 active, dues-paying Brothers for the start of 2020 semester; which ranks near the top tier in size for off campus fraternities at Virginia Tech.

We also held elections for new Chapter officers in November. The new Executive Board consists of: President, **Blake Wickham F' 17**; VP, **David Alexander S'19**; Treasurer, **Gabriel Giudice F'17**; Secretary, **Leif Allison F'18**; and Risk Manager, **John Bellucci F'18**. In addition to the Executive Board members other Chapter officers include: Social Chair: **Andrew Zych F'17**; Co-Rush Chairs - **Conor Schauer F'17** and **Carter Frazier F'18**; Pledgemaster - **Bryce Barnes S'18**; and Philanthropy Chair - **Ricky Christian S'18**. We pay special homage to the recently "retired" DKE Chapter officers who guided us through 2019 and have positioned us well for the future.

We look forward to another exciting semester in the Spring which will include: driving focus to expand our brotherhood with DKE worthy men; and active social calendar and of course the Annual DKE Spring Game - Alumni/Parents weekend in April. Make plans to visit Blacksburg and DKE Fraternity House.

FFTHF, Blake Wickham - Brother Beta



Page 3 Column – Now and Then - VT-DKE Alumni Assn

OK, Another lack of a Page 3 columnist so just a recap of the **VT-DKE Alumni Association** since its rebirth in 1999. In 1999, the Town of Blacksburg passed a new zoning ordinance stating that no more than four (4) unrelated people could live in the same residence; which in effect prohibited any future fraternity houses in Blacksburg. Beyond wanting to force fraternities out of town, and on to campus housing; another part of reason behind the rezoning change was the deteriorating and dilapidated condition of many of the fraternity houses. The DKE House, which had fallen into disrepair, and was condemned by the town in 1999 and yellow-taped off as “unfit for human habitation”. Now of course the question at that time should have been ‘who is talking about humans?, these boys are Dekes’. Regardless the DKE House was shut down and the fraternity had shrunk 25 brothers or so.

Back to the topic at hand.....arising out of this situation a group the DKE alumni rallied to the cause, raised some money and in the aftermath formally constituted the *Alumni Association of the Sigma Alpha Chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon* which is commonly known as the VT-DKE Alumni Association. The initial group was run by co-Presidents **Dick Anderson W’64** and **Jim Daniel F’84**. They, with the help of others got the alumni association going. They put together a DKE Alumni Directory; started a newsletter and phone calling campaign in order to raise funds; with a purpose to assist the chapter to get back on its feet. The response of DKE Alumni was incredible and the program also required the chapter members to also pitch in to have skin in the game. A total of 105 Dekes answered the call in 1999 donating a minimum of \$100 per person and raised almost \$20,000 that first year. That was essentially to start of our VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund efforts; that have continued to this date. The Alumni funds were used in the early years: to hire an accounting firm to collect dues and house rents; pay off debts to DKE International; subsidize the chapters liability insurance costs; and of course, resurrect alumni functions by organizing the VT-DKE 60th Reunion in 2001 at the now defunct Red Lion Inn.

VT-DKE Alumni participation levels steadily increased from these early including: 120 DKE block seating for VT-USC game at FedEx Field; 70th and 75th reunions in Roanoke and Blacksburg respectively; mini-reunions for the 60’s and 70’s Dekes and this year the 80’s Dekes; 11 consecutive years of hosting DKE Tailgates in Lot 4; scholarships to DKE students; management of DKE House including room leases and capital improvement projects; 9 consecutive years of Habitat for Inhumanity weekends; Bowl Game and ACC championship (not enough of these) tailgate gatherings; Annual Parents/Alumni Spring Game; and, all done as a band of brothers, spanning generations, making new friendships, all with a few beers (OK more than a few) and a barrel full of laughs.

Over the 21 years of VT-DKE Annual Giving; a total of 446 unique individuals from our alumni group have made at least one donation, and that has amassed to over \$500,000! The overwhelming portion of this has been spent on the DKE House (yes it’s true, we have spent over \$450,000 in capital upgrades and repairs over the past 15 years). Hard to visualize it, looking at the DKE House today. But it goes without saying, without the strong support of DKE Alumni, it is highly likely that the house would be ‘gone’ and Sigma Alpha Chapter of DKE gone with it. Recognition to the following “20-year Club” donors [**Jack Baker W’79, Chuck Bradley W’76, Dan Johnson S’74, Dave Mason S’82, and Hank Mattox S’70**] and a special shout out to our Scholarship Tier level donors [**Dave Calhoun S’76, Mickey Hayes S’62, Dan Johnson S’74, and Peyton Winfree F’85**] for all their support.

Which brings us to today. The 2019 Annual VT-DKE Giving Fund has come to a close. We had a **record 167** individual Dekes make cash and in-kind donations in 2019 totaling \$49,606!!! This represents a 45% increase in number of donors over 2018, and as well, many of our donors multiple donations throughout the year. Our giving has been linked with VT for the past 2+ years whereby your donations to VT can be earmarked to DKE. We guarantee that the funding will be put to good use. Since 1999: the cost of in-state tuition at Virginia has increased from \$3500 to \$11,093, a whopping 316% rise; the price of a 6-pack of Budweiser beer has increased by 98%; yet the recommended VT-DKE Annual Dues has stayed constant at \$50. You never knew that giving to DKE is such a deal!



Alumni Treasury Report -

Wesley Johnson F'08

We have closed out the 2019 year in strong financial position. Thanks to **Troy Turner S'93** we got the 2018 tax returns filed as well as the chapter return for FY 2019 which runs through June 30. As our Alumni Association financial accounts are now tied through the chapter, this year's return required a more extensive effort this year. Our VT-DKE Alumni operating account has \$22.6k at year end (12/31/19) and we have receivables (VT-DKE Fund donations remittances) from VT of approximately \$15K. The SAP LLC account has \$22.6k. We are in the process of getting the rooms in the DKE House rented for 20-21 academic year. We are looking to undertake major renovations to the DKE House including a new rear cellar door access/entry and basement floor/drainage. This is combined with the ongoing and seemingly never ending upkeep and repairs costs. And as always looking to fund the DKE Tailgates and support the 80's Dekes mini-reunion events next year. Please show your support with a donation to help kick off the 2020 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund and get doubly recognized for supporting the VT Capital Campaign also. Thanks! FFTHF, Wesley Johnson

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