

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



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

June 1, 2022

Alumni Association/Chapter Update

Dan Johnson, Alumni Board Chairman (S'74)

Dear Fellow DKE/DKS Brothers, Parents and Friends:

Welcome to a special edition of your DKE Newsletter. Special, in that we have return of a Page 3 Guest Columnist; and because of that, an expanded 5+ page newsletter in lieu of our normal 3+ page newsletter. This has required more of my incoherent ramblings. This may take more than one sitting to make it to the bitter end and digest all this invaluable information being bestowed on you all. Now on to the news.

The Page 3 column is a tribute to the life of Brother **Cliff Phillips** who passed away last year, as written by his son and fellow VT-DKE **Bob Phillips** (S'78) with maybe an assist from **Eric Phillips** (F'81). We had to move it to Page 4 as the length exceeded a normal Page 3 column and even our editorial staff refused to edit it. Still called Page 3 Column but on Page 4 today. Cliff had an extraordinary life and was a regular and generous donor to DKE (I am sure that Bob and Eric will follow Cliff's generosity in that regard). We did a little research on the Phillips family ourselves. After consulting with the curator of the VT-DKE section of the Smithsonian Institute, we have determined, beyond a shadow of doubt, that Cliff, and his sons Bob and Eric were/are the FIRST generational VT-DKE legacy family of our fraternity! A great man no doubt and thanks again to Bob for sharing with us the tribute to Cliff.

Recently heard of the untimely passing of **John Collins** (S'74) in March of this year. I received the sad news while on an overseas trip through the 'DKE grapevine' and was unable to attend the services. Big John was President of the VT-DKE chapter in 1976-77; one of my pledge class brothers; and my roommate at the DKE House. John was also a VT-DKE legacy, the younger brother of **Herb Collins** (W'71). He will be missed, and our hearts go out to the Collins family. John will be remembered for his DKE days for his leadership and had deep, booming voice, that I think is still echoing in the DKE basement. John was a regular on the DKE House driveway basketball court in its inaugural season in 1976, as well as an avid golfer. Our records indicate that he teamed up with his little brother **Dave Calhoun** (S'76) to win the coveted fraternity intramural golf championship trophy for DKE. No small matter as this was heralded at the time as a coveted feat, and considered by most people in the know, to be the "Green Jacket" of the Blacksburg and VT area golfers. Rest in Peace Big John.

On a sunnier note, congratulations to **Andrew Gregory** (F'09) and his new bride Hannah are in order, who were married two weeks ago in the Charlottesville area. In attendance were fellow Dekes: **Wes Johnson** (F'08); **Mike Konyha** (F'06); **Dave Marshall** (F'09); **Steve Mattoon** (F'09); **Mark McNeas** (S'12); **Dave Myers** (F'05); **Colin Reef** (F'08); **Tim Sweet** (F'09) and **Mark Wilson** (F'09). A real testament to their bonds of brotherhood first developed a dozen years ago. Having known these guys since their days at VT, DKE Tailgates, and on occasion when some of them would visit Wes in Richmond, all I can say is maybe Reef can lend the rest of you guys some of his hair. Colin had traveled back from Colorado and Wes from Utah to attend the nuptials. Wes currently acts the VT-DKE Alumni Assn Treasurer, however given his recent move to Salt Lake City in January, we are looking for Richmond based VT-DKE Alumni to transition into the Treasurer role. Basic knowledge of QuickBooks (how to turn on) is preferred.

As writing this the Hokie baseball team got wiped out in the ACC tourney game but is a top 5 ranked team and likely in position for hosting first two rounds in the NCAA's. The women's softball team is losing big in deciding game against Florida in the super regional match up with the winner off the World Series event with the remaining 8 teams.



VT has released the Hokie Football schedule along with a few game times. The Hokies open on the road against ODU and have three straight home games against: BC (9/10 at 8pm); Wofford (9/17 at 11am); and WV (Thursday, 9/22 at 7:30pm). If you want to plan ahead, we have designated the Miami game (10/15) as the designated VT-DKE Alumni Game (expanded tailgate, block tickets for those who need them; DKE Open House weekend). And given that WVU Thursday night game is a big we have designated that as VT-DKE Alumni Game #2 with an expanded tailgate starting at 3:30pm. Every home game the DKE Tailgate begins at least 3 hours in advance of kickoff in our familiar Lot 4 location. Yes, this means the tailgate for the pesky Wofford Terriers game will start at 8am! A new coach, a new approach, consistent winning Hokie football, packing Lane Stadium and return of the Terror-Dome atmosphere, are all correlated to the 13th season of DKE Tailgates! Well not really correlated, but enthusiasm starts each game in Lot 4. Need a ticket?...come by lot 4 DKE Tailgate as there are normally extra tickets available. Want a 50-yd ticket?...make a donation (if you haven't already) to the 2022 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund and be eligible for a pair of 50-yd seats selected for each game. Yes, we once again have secured a pair of 50-yd seats to give away to our DKE Alumni. The randomness of our 'random' draw for each game is strongly influenced by requests/desires for specific games under the premises that you are going to use the tickets. I can almost guarantee that if you want to win the Wofford game tickets, we will somehow see that you win the draw. This is also a great gift idea to students who want to bring Parents/family members to a game. And since this newsletter is to Brothers, *Parents*, and Friends addressed to active members permanent home residences; Parents, please consider this as an open invitation to attend any DKE tailgate or other function.

We have our 12th Annual Habitat for Inhumanity weekend scheduled for the June 24-26 weekend later this month to undertake maintenance and upgrades to keep the DKE House in shape to hopefully survive yet another year of DKE occupancy. To put it bluntly, the place needs a lot of work, as the level of "de-struction" outpaced the level of "con-struction" over the past year. Major projects on this year's list include: refurbishing/rebuilding/replacing the main staircase and railing system; repairing/fortifying damage walls; replacement of fence gates; basement upgrades; along with the usual deep cleaning and upkeep of the property from top to bottom. We may also have to carve a new peg leg for our master carpenter **Jack Cullen** (W'75) depending on the outcome of his recent hip replacement surgery. This is a joint alumni-chapter event we have held for the past 11 years and has been vital to keeping the DKE House erect. Last year we had over a dozen alumni participants along with a few students and expect even more this year. To say the least, we can use all the help we can get, at time during the weekend. Likewise, if you have any items (e.g., sturdy frat house furniture, tools, kitchen supplies, painting supplies, etc.) that you think would be of use to the DKE House; bring it on down. We will supply food and drink to our Habitat crew members. **Mike Wright** (F'74) and I have made a couple of trips to Blacksburg to do some minor repairs and source some of the special-order items needed for the Habitat weekend. Would like to say we are organized, but it is more about gathering Dekes together for a common cause (or an excuse to do so). We have also employed a couple of DKE students to undertake some jobs in advance of the Habitat weekend (mainly floor sanding/refinishing/resealing) over the next several weeks while the occupancy/use of the DKE House is at a minimum. This is a great opportunity to reconnect with your fellow DKE Alumni, chapter active brothers, and support your fraternity.

The day-to-day 'use' of DKE House by the chapter/residents have resulted in "less than acceptable" standards of upkeep and cleanliness (which you have to admit "acceptable" standard is a low threshold to meet). This is a self-perpetuating condition that is detrimental to making the DKE House the showcase it can and should be, as well as a desirable place to live in. The DKE House operations require that all eight rooms are rented each year as this is the source of income that pays most of the financial obligations of owning and operating the property. The chapter is responsible for ensuring all rooms are filled, yet we still have two rooms that are uncommitted for the next academic year. We normally have firm commitments in place (leases signed) for all rooms in January of each year. So, one can see the predicament of the situation. We have discussed this amongst the VT-DKE Alumni Assn board and other concerned alumni and decided to form a blue-ribbon panel to determine changes going forward. Well, the 'blue ribbon' panel turned out to be moving forward with some immediate changes after having a few PBR's. Effective at the start of the new rooms leases terms in August, use of the second and third floors of the DKE House will be restricted



to DKE House residents only. Signs will be posted on the staircases leading to those levels and on each of bathroom doors on those levels. The small lounge areas on these floors will also be restricted to use by house residents only. Personal use of the laundry room facilities and kitchen facilities will also be limited to DKE House residents only. With these restricted areas also comes the responsibility of the house residents to maintain and regular clean their own and 'common' areas on the second and third floor. We expect that by August and post Habitat improvements the DKE House will be at an 'acceptable' standard condition and that the chapter and its residents will maintain this standard going forward. We will have regular periodic inspections by alumni to ensure the improved standards are kept up with. We want all our VT-DKE alumni to support and honor these restrictions, which is saying respect the private living spaces of the DKE House residents. In terms of the other common areas of the DKE House, we will also set some standards of cleanliness and upkeep. First and foremost is the safety of all our residents, brothers and guests. Having a 'clean' property operating appropriate risk management protocols are keeps steps to a safe DKE House experience for everyone. Furthermore, we need to address and repair any maintenance issues as they arise. We also have regular alumni inspections to ensure that these standards are met. We want the chapter to hold destructive behavior immediately responsible, and the VT-DKE Alumni Assn will do the same for any alumni who cause destruction. We believe with these changes will: improve chapter/alumni relations; increase the desirability to want to live at DKE House; improve the culture and respect of the DKE House; make the DKE House an asset for new recruitment efforts; and finally make for healthier, safer environment for all. Enough said; we will report back on progress and hopefully it will be a noticeable improvement and self-evident to everyone who lives in or visits our DKE House.

And moving on from that rant, our 2022 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund is moving forward. We have 157 individuals/entities making at least one donation so far this representing over \$36k in gifts of cash and in-kind services. VT-DKE Alumni Assn continues to acknowledge every gift [and should you also thank you note from VT - **Charlie Phlegar** (S'75)] and we also recognize every VT-DKE donor of \$50 or more, with our annual VT-DKE appreciation gift. Still a way to go to match/exceed our 214/\$60k from last year; and as usual we have included our complementary donor card and pre-addressed blue envelope. You can always go to vtdke.com and donate online through the link there. Either way your donation is great way to support both VT and Dekes! I do want to point out that VT-DKE, despite runaway inflationary pressures, continues to keep it baseline dues donation at \$50, *and* despite demands for more money and threats of organizing a union; has steadfastly refused raises in pay for our board, management, and our highly rebellious editorial staff. **Tom Wilkinson** (W'80) continues to administer) the tier gift program for our donors that have reached milestones of \$1,000; \$5,000; 10,000; and \$25,000 in cumulative giving as well as 10-year and 20-year club members. Tom should be all but caught up for pre 2022 tiers by now, and if you haven't received anything (assuming you have met criteria) ask Tom!

We reported last newsletter that **Charlie Webb** S'85 had become the 5th DKE Alumni to attain the heralded 'Scholarship' giving tier in reaching \$25k in cumulative gifts. The VT-DKE Alumni Assn is glad to announce the Charlie Webb Presidential Scholarship starting this Fall and will consist of one month's rent (\$500-\$600) each semester to the DKE chapter president when living in the DKE House. Charlie was the chapter president in his day and the VT-DKE Alumni Assn recognizes that the chapter president has the most responsibility and greatest influence on the brotherhood (and requires the largest time commitment to Dekes). As part of this program, Charlie will endeavor to attend a chapter meeting in November each year in advance of the chapter elections and provide his views on the importance and time commitments expected of the Chapter President. Thanks again Charlie for all your support to Dekes.

Hope that everyone gets chance to be back in Blacksburg this year. We have alumni functions for: Habitat, DKE tailgates/football; Parent's weekend; Open Houses; and of course, our reunions. The DKE House is always open to alumni (just not the upper floors!) and we are always in need of new member references. Thanks for your support and participation.

FFTHF, Dan Johnson '77



Page 3 Column – In Memory of Cliff Phillips 8/28/1929- 8/20/2021

Bob Phillips (S'78) – Special Columnist w/ Eric Phillips (F'81)

A lot of people know our dad- Clifford Clayton Phillips. Depending on when you met Cliff, or the last time you saw him, there is probably a lot that you don't know. Here is a partial list of things that he accomplished and a few stories:

- He was born in Old Salem, NC. He was the second son of Arthur Benbow and Essie Williams Phillips. He had a sister that only survived several days. They are all buried in "God's Acre" at the Moravian Home church in the center of Winston Salem. He was called "Clayton" until College.
- Dad left HS to join the Army Air Corp towards the end of WW2. He was a bomber navigator and served as a trainer in the states despite his young age.
- From the GI Bill, dad went to college he earned a degree from Duke in Radio Engineering.
- He attended Virginia Tech and earned 2 engineering degrees: Electrical and Industrial.
- He was in two fraternities, Alpha Phi Omega (APO) was a service Fraternity and he served as President and member. The other, Delta Kappa Sigma was an unrecognized social fraternity and carried a penalty of expulsion if a member.
- He met a young lady at Va. Tech, Roberta "Bobbie" Stouch. On their first Date, Cliff took her to a Deeks "house party" in Cambria Va. According to mom, Dad led the group there in a Hokie cheer from the top of a table. In his exuberance, he shattered some lights with his hand and was bleeding pretty good. When she returned to the dorm, Bobbie swore to her roommate Tish, that she would never go out with him again.
- My grandad, Robert Charles Stouch would not let his daughters get married before they got a college degree. Following the graduation ceremony, Mom and Dad were married at the VT War Memorial chapel on Tech's campus with Family surrounding them on June 10th, 1956.

After VPI, Cliff worked for Western Electric in Winston and the family moved to a new home on the lake in Beechwood in nearby Lewisville, NC. From there, he moved the family to Melbourne, FL with Radiation, Inc. Dad & Mom built a house in Indialantic. Still with Radiation, Inc., dad was transferred to Vint Hill Farm Station in Warrenton, and we moved to Haymarket, Va.

We were never quite sure of his job but had our suspicions... Brick building with an MP that only he could enter. He was a civilian with ASA and we 3 sons had various "Uncles" in the NSA and CIA. He traveled around the world twice a year hitting all the US communication bases on his trip: First Alaska, then Japan, Korea, Istanbul and Ankara-Turkey, Berlin, Munich and other foreign cities and countries. There were some interesting stories that he told us, but whenever we asked him who he worked for directly the response was always the same: "I can tell you, but then I'd have to kill you."

After that he ran Prince William Schools and the Fairfax County Schools Maintenance departments. At Fairfax he was loaned to the EPA and was on the team that wrote their Asbestos cleanup and mitigation standards. Afterwards, he was "lent" again to EPA as he became the expert on Radon testing and mitigation and spoke at several professional conferences. He was an Eagle Scout and his sons' Troop's Scoutmaster. He earned the Silver Beaver award (like his father and his brother), the Top award given in Scouting for a lifetime of work. He was an artist, painter, wood carver, and could draw anything. Cliff was a Cheerleader at Virginia Tech and, for all of us, his entire life. While at VPI in the mid to late 1950's, he was a fraternity brother of Delta Kappa Sigma (Deeks). When we were still in middle school and High school, we visited 302 E Roanoke Street on several occasions. He took a lot of pride in Bob and Eric pledging DKE and was sworn into the new Delta Kappa Epsilon. He also had a blast coming to a couple of hell nights, including Eric's, where he assumed the role of Brother Beta. At the time, Eric was convinced he was hallucinating. He and



Bobbie attended several Deke functions and Anniversary celebrations. We still have the pictures of them posing with **Theta Bowden** (F'70), **Paul Surry** (S'78), **Manly Aylor** (S'77), **Mike O'Connell** (S'77) and so many other brothers and little sisters.

Cliff was a Master Mason and a Shriner; a Tennessee Squire (a Jack Daniel's Distillery honor); and a Red Cross Blood donor for over 60 years. He loved Gary Larson's *Farside*- so much that he would frame his favorite cartoons. Same with *Calvin and Hobbes*. Had a tremendous, irreverent and sometimes wicked sense of humor. A few examples:

- In front of many of us at a gathering, Cliff walked up put a hand on Bud Caudle's shoulder and declared loud enough for all of us to hear: "Bud, if I ever have a son, I hope he's just like you!"
- At Cliff and Bobbie's 50th Wedding anniversary, he told a group that they had only been married for 25 years and that sons Bob, Eric, & Adam were....illegitimate (he may have used a different word.)
- A few years ago, Mom told me that Dad was being "cantankerous." When I spoke to him on the phone, I kidded that if he kept it up, that I'd give Adam \$100 to smother him with a pillow. He laughed and jokingly said, "Adam won't do that for \$100..... You're going to have to pay him at least \$500!"

A Celebration of his life was held in Galax, VA in April a month ago. Cliff was so many more things that I could go on forever. A husband, father, grandfather, uncle, brother, nephew, friend, volunteer and without a doubt.....Cliff was a *gentleman, a scholar and a jolly good fellow*.
FFTHF, Bob and Eric Phillips

Chapter Update

David Alexander, Chapter President (S'19)

With the commencement of another semester, the DKE house will get a solid three months of much needed peace and quiet. Before all the Dekes left town, we made sure to take advantage of the beautiful Blacksburg weather that is hard to come by, including an extremely successful spring game tailgate, plenty of backyard day-drinks, the first of many "Liquor and Cheeseburger" brotherhood event, and a bittersweet graduation celebration at the end of the semester. Our chapter successfully graduated the following brothers, though she may have extended their stay by a year or two: **Alexander Coley** (F'17); **Matthew DeJager** (F'17); **Tyler Raney** (F'17); **Blake Wickham** (F'17); **Richard Christian** (S'18); **Jack Monahan** (S'18); **Aaron Gautreau** (S'19); **Ajay Nischal** (S'19); **Jack Branche** (F'19); **Chris Koehler** (F'19); and **Walker Hegadorn** (S'21). Congratulations on behalf of all the brothers and we look forward to seeing you back in the DKE house soon!

As our group of new alumni venture out into the real world, I would like to congratulate the newly initiated Spring 22 pledge class that will fill their shoes in the coming year: **Charlie Amacker**, **Kalen Decosta**, **Jack Crane**, **Akshath Majumder**, and **Ethan Schaefer**. You new guys will gradually become the core members of our beloved chapter and we look forward to the growth you're going to implement (and the hell you'll raise like those before you!). Aside for the rambling on in the backyard, Tyler Raney's smoked meat Saturdays, and hell raising on the veranda until sunrise, this semester saw a lot of elbow grease go into improving the DKE house. We held our bi-annual "House Appreciation" day, where the veranda got a good clean and fresh coat of paint, the bathrooms got some TLC, and the backyard/front steps got a good touch of lighting, mulch, and grass seed. Likewise, the brothers were held to a higher standard of keeping the interior of the house clean, resulting in more presentable common spaces, kitchen, and 3rd floor lounge. We plan to uphold this mindset of improving the DKE house, and I am excited to see what comes in the next semester.

Looking forward, this summer will include our annual "Habitat for Inhumanity" event, numerous brothers staying in Blacksburg, an upcoming fundraiser that will help improve the house interior, and even a NCAA Baseball Regional, so keep an eye out for details and stop by for a visit! Finally, if you have any questions regarding DKE Open House; or even the chapter in general please feel free to contact me at davidalexanderdke@gmail.com. FFTHF, David



Alumni Treasury Report -

Wesley Johnson F'08

The 2022 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund continues to move forward. Year to date we have 157 individual contributors donating a tad over \$36k in cash and in-kind services. We thank everyone for their continued support, these are robust giving numbers but below last year's record pace of 214 contributors. As of today, VT-DKE Alumni Assn operating account currently has \$29k cash balance. The SAP Housing account currently has \$56k cash balance. We are working on the tax returns for 2021 and would like to thank Troy Turner in advance for preparing and filing the returns on behalf of the SAP Housing Corp and the parent VT-DKE Alumni Assn. The chapter's fiscal year runs through to June 30 and at month end we will consolidate the accounts and submit to Troy to do his magic. As of 1/1/22 our RLF account holds roughly \$182k of assets including \$150k of those AAA-rated DKE promissory notes and some \$30k in cash which is used to fund scholarships to the DKE chapter and members. Please show your support with a tax-deductible donation to the 2022 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund and get recognized from VT also. Thanks!

FFTHF, Wesley Johnson

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