

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



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

March 5, 2020

## **Alumni Association/Chapter Update**

*Dan Johnson, Alumni Board Chairman (S'74)*

Dear Fellow DKE/DKS Brothers, Parents and Friends:

Welcome to the new decade of VT Dekes. As we say good-bye to the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Delta Kappa Epsilon in 1844, we are rapidly approaching the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Dekes at Virginia Tech. We still make claim to being the longest continuous, fraternity in the history of Virginia Tech with some sort of DKE organization in existence since our chapter founding in 1941. And of course for the last 52 years in the DKE House location at 302 East Roanoke Street. With the fraternity growing in age, it also means that we regularly get word of the passing of our Brothers of yesteryears. With great solace, we lost the following DKE Brothers over the past year: **Capt. Bruce Beam '56; Stephen Williamson '54; Col. Thomas Williams III '59; and Dr. Robert McClanahan Jr. '52.** My neighbor **Floyd Adams '56** was a classmate of Capt Beam and shared with me his remarkable career in the Navy following graduation from Virginia Tech. Likewise, in it's a small world after all, the print shop owner the VT-DKE Alumni Association recently used is the son of Col Thomas Williams III. We recently received a note from Stephen Williamson's surviving spouse notifying us of his passing and making a donation in his memory. In recent, 'breaking news' category we are also sad to announce that **Jon Taillon '98** passed away in mid-February. So if you are drinking while reading this letter (always reads a lot better after a few beers); raise a glass to our fallen Brothers of Delta Kappa Epsilon.

After that listing of sad news, we go to the other end of the spectrum. The chapter remains in good shape. The DKE House is still standing; and there are zero reports from the Town, University or any other authorities of complaints against the brotherhood (at least up to the time of this reporting); and no one has contracted the Coronavirus (at least the strain of virus that is NOT associated with Corona Beer). The chapter currently has 8 pledges for the Spring semester and looks to finish the semester with a healthy brotherhood size of some 75 brothers. The larger numbers provide for financial stability as well as a 'healthy' social calendar budget throughout the year. The lifeblood of the fraternity is a constant stream of new members, so if you know of anyone (son, relative, neighbor or friend) that is or will be a student at Virginia Tech and would be interested in joining Dekes please let us know information by returning the enclosed card or emailing us at [sigmaalphadekes@gmail.com](mailto:sigmaalphadekes@gmail.com). More chapter news can be found in the Brother Beta report below. We do want to encourage everyone who is attending the Spring Game this year on April 18<sup>th</sup> the chapter is holding its Annual DKE Open House for Parents and Alumni prior to, and after the game at the DKE House. This likely means that the DKE House gets cleaned up for the day, which is always worth seeing in that condition.

Now on the heels of our successful 60's Dekes mini-reunion in 2018 and 70's Dekes mini-reunion in 2019; we have planned ..... wait for it..... an 80's Dekes mini-reunion for this summer for the July 10-12 weekend in Blacksburg. (We apologize for feeding out the wrong weekend dates in the last newsletter but a last minute change occurred after we went to print) We have a separate newsletter mailed out to our list of Dekes that were there sometime during that decade, so if you didn't receive that letter you need to file a complaint. Seriously send us and email if you didn't/don't receive separate 80's reunion newsletter to email address listed above. We had 110 attendees for the Dekes 70's reunion last summer, so we are getting pretty good at. Charlie Webb S'84 has graciously 'volunteered' as the chairman of the event. So if you were in Dekes in the 80's this is an event you don't want to miss. And if you do miss it, you will be chastised and shamed by your fellow brothers.



Now some other dates to remember besides the Open House and 80's Reunion. We have scheduled our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual *Habitat for Inhumanity* weekend for June 26-28 this year. This is always a fun-filled weekend where the potent combination of power tools and beer are combined to do upgrades and repairs to the DKE House. We had close to 20 alumni and students participate last year. Any/all help is welcomed and the place is always in need for sturdy secondhand furniture, appliances and other items that you no longer have a use for. And talk about some real forward planning, we have already designated the VT-GT football game on Saturday, October 3, 2020 as the Annual VT-DKE Alumni Game. Last year's alumni game we purchased 60 tickets for a DKE block seating and had over 70 alums in attendance that weekend and at the expanded DKE Tailgate; and a few folks actually survived to make it to the DKE House party post-game. Mark your calendar now and make plans to attend this Fall!

While we don't have a Page 3 columnist (again) this issue we have decided to use the space to promote the the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual VT-DKE Giving Day in conjunction with Virginia Tech's Giving Day set for a 24 hour period on March 18-19. We had ninety (yep that 90!!!!) Dekes make donations earmarked to Delta Kappa Epsilon last year on the day. Check out Page 3 for details on how you can participate this year. And thanks to everyone that has contributed to the 2020 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund. If you want to go the old fashion route there is still the enclosed information/donor card and accompanying blue envelope enclosed!

On the business front, we continue to try to get the final leases in hand to fill the DKE House for next academic year. We are still waiting on the final two leases to be returned. To make DKE House living more attractive, the policy moving forward is to restrict access to the second and third floor to DKE House tenants only. This policy will hopefully cut back on the amount of trashing and destruction of the personal living spaces and associated bathrooms. So, just because you lived in the DKE House xx years ago does not give you squatter rights to your old room in perpetuity. Please respect that we do have student tenants who are actually trying to get an education. Penalties for breaking policy are that culprits gotta buy all the beer!

Final reminder to 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,

The Spring semester is flying by at Sigma Alpha Dekes. Just waiting on the Spring weather to show up. We had a successful rush, welcoming eight new potential new members who we look forward to initiating into the brotherhood in the coming weeks. With Spring Break quickly approaching the semester is half over and we still have a lot to do. On the philanthropy front, on April 4, 2020, the fraternity will take part in the Virginia Tech's Big Event, as we look to have everyone volunteer to give back to the Blacksburg community. The following weekend on April 10, 2020, we will participate in Virginia Techs Relay for Life.

To close out the month of April we will have our annual Spring Game, Parents Weekend on the April 18-19 weekend. There will be catered food and drinks at the Deke house for all those visiting. We encourage all Alumni in the area or in town for the game to stop by the DKE House for our Open House. At 2pm we plan to take our annual "DKE Family" photo with all Brothers, Parents, Alumni, friends and guests at the front of the house. Please make a point of being there for that.

The whole brotherhood would like to thank **Mathew DeJager, S'18** for his work on our wonderful new bar top for the basement bar constructed and installed over the Xmas break. You have to come by and see it to appreciate it. Has led to vastly improved our social events in the basement. Make plans to visit Blacksburg and DKE Fraternity House. FFTHF, Blake Wickham - Brother Beta



## Page 3 Column – Annual VT-DKE Giving Day Mar. 18-19

Virginia Tech holds its Annual Giving Day in a couple of weeks from when this is mailed and likely only a few days from when you guys receive this. The Giving Day concept, quite a common at most universities was instituted at Virginia Tech by none other the **Charlie Phlegar S'75** VP of Advancement. According to VT, the 2018 Giving Day had over 4,600 donors totaling in excess of \$1.6 million. The 2019 Giving Day had over 6,600 donors totaling in excess of \$2.8 million. We are sure that Charlie and VT have bigger targets for this Giving Day in terms of donors and dollars. Now of course included in the VT numbers are the subset of VT-DKE Giving Day numbers.

While we are certain that many VT- Dekes made Giving Day donations that weren't earmarked to DKE, we only have records of those who earmarked their donations to go to Delta Kappa Epsilon. In 2018, DKE had 17 donors contribute \$3,275. In 2019, DKE had 91 donors make donations totaling \$7,500 Giving Day

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 60<sup>th</sup> 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; 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> 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

I am glad to report that our VT-DKE Alumni Association and Sigma Alpha Properties LLC are in stable financial position thanks to everyone's support. Our 2020 Annual Giving Fund is off to a reasonable start as we have received \$10.7k donations and in-kind services from 25 individuals so far this year. We have over \$50k in our two operating accounts as we look to take on some major DKE House upgrades this summer. We are still in the process of getting the rooms in the DKE House rented for 20-21 academic year. To enable the DKE House operations to cover operating costs we have raised the room rents by \$50/month. As well we are looking to set up a separate common area lease with the chapter to set up a formal arrangement. Currently we charge the chapter a utility surcharge of up to \$200 per month depending on the number of tenants living in the house (i.e. more tenants lower the surcharge). Please show your support to the fraternity with a donation to the 2020 VT-DKE Annual Giving Fund. Remember you also get recognized for supporting VT and their Capital Campaign also. Thanks! FFTHF, Wesley Johnson

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Alumni Association of the Sigma Alpha  
Chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity  
P. O. Box 18231  
Richmond, VA 23226