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Timeless Principles...

Posted on June 22, 2011 by phidelt

By Mari Ann Callais, Ph.D.

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Director of Development – Delta Delta Delta – The Center for Living, Learning and Leading



I recently presented a breakout session to Tri Delta alumnae. We discussed how as alumnae they live The Purpose of Tri Delta. The discussions were amazing. They did not focus on what type of programs, meetings, or activities they sponsored although that was discussed, they focused on how they cared about and for one another. Isn't that what it is really about? How we care for and about one another and the manner in which we live those promises we make is what fraternities and sororities are really about.

Phi Delta Theta is clear, even to outsiders that being a good brother, obtaining a college degree, and being a person of integrity are the corner stones of whom you are.

Phi Delta Theta states: Phi Delta Theta was organized with three principle objectives, referred to as the "Cardinal Principles":

- The cultivation of friendship among its members
- The acquirement individually of a high degree of mental culture
- The attainment personally of a high standard of morality

The Founders of Phi Delt were clear about the character of the men they were asking to be a part of their inner circle. They were the exceptional men at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Today, often times we talk in terms of minimum everything. I have sat in meetings

with students and the discussion of minimum grade point average, minimum participation, minimum attendance at events, etc. I often think back to those young founders who founded organizations like Phi Delta Theta and wonder what they would think of these discussions.

In everything I have read and experienced, founders of fraternities and sororities had high expectations of their members. They expected and supported one another to be and live their best. There is a theory in higher education called Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support. I am certain this theory was not even a thought in 1848 when Phi Delta Theta was founded; however, what I do believe is that this was a theory lived each day by Phi Deltas. The belief that if we love one another and support one another as individuals, we can go beyond what we might have felt was our best. That love and support is what has continued to allow Phi Delta Theta to offer an amazing experience to young men on college campuses and older men into their alumni lives.

The "Cardinal Principles" of Phi Delta Theta are timeless. Today, the challenge is still to support one another and be brotherly in your actions and deeds. You have and will continue to be a force to be reckoned with.

Dr. Mari Ann Callais served as the Director of Student Organizations and Greek Life at Southeastern Louisiana University for 10 years. She most recently served as an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of the Student Affairs Graduate Program at Mississippi State University. She the immediate Past National President of her sorority for Theta Phi Alpha, NPC Delegate and she was a member of the Delta Delta Delta Center Board. She received a B.A. in Political Science from Loyola University, earned a Master's degree in Education Administration from Our Lady of Holy Cross College, and received a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Research from Louisiana State University.

In 1997, she received the Louisiana Youth Seminar Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 1996 and 2001 she was named the Southeastern Interfraternity Conference Advisor of the Year. She has also been honored as the Sigma Sigma Sigma Greek Advisor of the Year, the Theta Chi Fraternity Outstanding Greek Affairs Professional Award, Theta Phi Alpha National Achievement Award and the Guard of Honor, which is the highest award Theta Phi Alpha bestows on a member. She was awarded the AFA 2005 Distinguished service award. She served as the Theme Housing Specialist and Vice President for Leasing/Marketing Cottages Division for Capstone Development. Currently, Mari Ann serves as the Director of Development for The Center for Living, Learning, Leading for Delta Delta Delta Fraternity. Mari Ann is a member of the CAMPUSPEAK Team and has been a keynote and featured speaker at SEPC, SEIFC, NGLA and AFLV West and Central.

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3 Responses

1. [Mark Koepsell](#), on [June 22, 2011 at 3:55 PM](#) said:

Thank you for your words of wisdom Mari Ann! It is always good to be reminded that as members of Phi Delta Theta we live to achieve the Cardinal Principles at the highest level as opposed to good enough to get by. We strive for excellence and not mediocrity. We are men of character who do what we say we will do, not some of the time, not when it is convenient, but ALL of the time. You are an inspiration. Thank you!

2. [William G. Keaton](#), on [June 22, 2011 at 9:12 PM](#) said:

The ideas about us not only thinking about the minimum requirements of membership is something that should be remembered. Maybe we need to start adding a bit more positive psychology in to our chapters, so people can strive not to meet a minimum standard, but strive to see a challenge and strive too it.

3. [Mari Ann Callais](#), on [June 27, 2011 at 4:14 PM](#) said: