

Founders' Day Proclamation 2003

Dear Sisters,

Happy Founders' Day! At no time during my years as a sister of Theta Phi Alpha have I been more proud of where we are going as a Fraternity. This past year has been energizing and exciting. When Amelia and the other women founded our Fraternity, I often wonder what they hoped Theta Phi Alpha would be like in the year 2003. I believe that they would be very proud of our collegians and alumnae and all that we have accomplished in the past 90 years.

As I travel to campuses across the country, I am more proud each time when asked, "What sorority were you in, and I say I AM a Theta Phi Alpha, not WAS a Theta Phi Alpha." I believe that our founders would be proud of our accomplishments this past year and how as a family of sisters, we have set our course firm and secure to move Theta Phi Alpha forward. We are embarking upon our Centennial Celebration and I can promise you on this Founders' Day, that we will be a stronger bond of sisterhood as we approach the year 2012 and beyond.

As a Fraternity, we are ensuring our future by expanding to new campuses, helping to strengthen our existing chapters and alumna associations, and clearly studying and defining who we are and sharing that with our sisters, the fraternity and sorority world, as well as campus administrators, parents, and other interested constituents.

As I began writing this proclamation, I read many of the previous proclamations that were written by past presidents. It was overwhelming to me that so much of what we are experiencing today is a result of many courageous women who lived our ritual and had vision. They believed in us and presented us with challenges. There were several profound examples that I will share with you:

"On this day, when we honor our founders, I ask each of you to think, if only for a few moments, of what you would have missed had Theta Phi Alpha never been born? For those of you who have just recently joined the circle, the answer may be simply a float parade or a White Rose Ball or perhaps the hush and thrill of Initiation. But for those of you who have not missed a Founders' Day celebration for many years than you care to tell, the answer I am sure will be friendships which have endured through bad times as well as good and a bond of mutual experiences, ideals and goals. We owe a great debt to our founders but it is one that each of us can repay. Our founders gave us Theta Phi Alpha. We can repay them by doing our part to see that the ideals, which inspired them, are perpetuated and that Theta Phi Alpha becomes ever stronger. I ask each of you to ask yourself what you have done in the past year for Theta Phi Alpha."
~ Mary Ammon, 1961

"And so, with our Golden Jubilee behind us, what of the future? There will be growth surely, as we widen our circle of friendship to include new members, new campuses. But how great and how rapid that growth depends on the efforts of every one of us. It is each member's example, her recommendations, her interest in girls approaching college and in the campus life of colleges in her community that will bring to Theta Phi Alpha the best in new members and new chapters. It is the obligation of each of us, throughout our lives, to contribute to that growth wherever and whenever we can." ~ Betty Comer McDaniel, 1963

"It is at times like these, when we recall how much our sorority means to us, that we should, to paraphrase the words of our late President, 'Ask not what Theta Phi Alpha can do for you, but what you can do for Theta Phi Alpha.' If we are to move forward confidently in this new 'dynamic, evolutionary era,' we must look to you, and you, and you, to help with extension. The formation of new chapters, the inspection and instruction of probationary groups, the building of leaders who stand for our ideals, is EVERYONE's business."
~ Rose McKee Everson, 1967

This past year we embarked upon possibly one of the most important endeavors that we have in many years. At our Long-Range Planning Meeting in Pittsburgh in January 2001, many sisters came together to set the course for the Fraternity. We were modeling what our founders did in the early 1900s. We were asking ourselves, who are we and where do we want to be in years to come? One of the main points that came from that meeting was that we needed evaluate our identity, not to change it, but to define it and share with others. This past year, we have done just that. Sisters young and old were asked, "What words do you feel best describe what Theta Phi Alpha means to you? What words do you feel best exemplify the true meaning of our Fraternity?" We evaluated surveys, gathered focus groups of both collegians and alumnae, and looked at our songs, mission statement, historical documents, and most importantly, our ritual.

See pages 20-21 for updates on the long-range strategic planning process.

Today, it is my privilege to share with you Theta Phi Alpha's new tagline, *Ever Loyal Ever Lasting*. The logo that accompanies the tagline is a beautiful graphical representation of the everlasting chain that unites us together in sisterhood. Plans are underway to incorporate the tagline and logo into future activities and communications. We hope that this encompasses your feelings, thoughts and love for our Fraternity.

My hopes and prayers for you today are that the words of our creed and ritual remind you that we share a bond that transcends time. And that our love for our beloved Fraternity will truly be *Ever Loyal Ever Lasting*.

Yours in the bonds of sisterhood,

Mari Ann Callais

Mari Ann Callais, AB
National President



Learn more about Theta Phi Alpha's new tagline, *Ever Loyal Ever Lasting*, in the next issue of *The Compass* and at Leadership Conference this summer.