

## THE HISTORY OF EPSILON ETA CHAPTER OF SIGMA NU FRATERNITY (1960's)

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In April of 1960, UT flags flew at half-mast for two days, when Mom Stange, Sigma Nu housemother for almost two years, died of a heart attack while visiting relatives in Iowa. Members of Sigma Nu put aside the books temporarily to attend the funeral where she was buried beside her husband. A member of Delta Delta Delta Sorority she had come to UT in the early 50's and was known to counsel people other than Sigma Nu's on campus.

Mom Shannon, responsible for the paintings of the three crests, served as Mom Strange's replacement. It was under her leadership that the tradition of placing a valentine outside the girls' dorms was initiated.

In 1964 (EH 7) Howard Henry Baker, Congressman from the state of Tennessee from 1951 to 1964 died. A Memorial Fund in his honor was created to aid in financing the construction of the new fraternity house.

Ground was broken on January 19, 1966 for the new Fraternity Park. Dr. Lee Alton Absher, President of the House Corporation, and Commander Lynn Sorrell participated in the groundbreaking ceremony attended also by university President Andrew Holt and Governor Frank Clement. Other notables attending the ceremony included: William Slayden, member of the house corporation; Jack Nelson, chapter advisor; Al Abernathy, architect for the new house and EH alumnus; Alan Wheeler, Delta editor; and Charles Emory, contractor and also EH alumnus.

The breaking of ground for the new quarters of a million dollar house symbolized the close to an era of bad finances, organizational problems, and poor scholarship that had recently plagued the chapter.

A plaque was placed in the new house in memory of Congressman Howard Henry Baker. It would seem appropriate that the first fifty years of Epsilon Eta would begin and end with the individual who made that history most deserving of being recorded. For this reason I dedicated this history of the first fifty years of Epsilon Eta to Congressman Howard Henry Baker.

## UPDATES FROM THE DELTA (1960's)

Winter 1960

Epsilon Eta members have earned victories in swimming, tennis, badminton, ping pong, and indoor track to lead University of Tennessee fraternities in intramural competition. Larry Perry is a member of the Advisory Board for Convocations. The chapter will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in April. Epsilon Eta Chapter entertained a group of children from a local orphanage during the Christmas holidays.

## THE BEATS

February 1960

The “Beat Generation,” or “Beatniks” as they are more commonly called, has set off a craze of activities which seems destined to replace the hula-hoop and Davie Crockett caps as America’s most fashionable fad.

To be a true beatnik requires the memorization of untold lines of modern (and dis-jointed) verse, dressing in the shabbiest clothing obtainable, and (for men only) the growing a small goatee, while offering profound opinions on the moral decay of civilization.

Epsilon Eta chapter felt compelled to see what all the shouting was about, and so they staged their own Beatnik party in the safe confines of the chapter house.

The event was of such consequences that the college student paper sent their ace Beatnik report to analyze the doings, which he faithfully reported in his column the next day. His impression: “As the shades went down on the 10 beat of October, Sigma Nu went into orbit. Cool daddy. The cats sowed grass on the Snake Pit Deck and made the scene incognito. The ultimate was reached when two cats picked out the beat and spoke the word, ‘crazy’!”

Spring 1962

The chapter held its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in late April. Brother Bill Robinson was selected as pledge class president of Tau Beta Pi, engineering honorary. Epsilon Eta ranked second among fraternities in scholarship last semester on the Tennessee campus. Plans are underway for a new chapter house.

Fall 1962

Commander Bill Robinson was elected to Who’s Who. Epsilon Eta has won all the trophies thus far in campus intramural competition. Jim Heigel was recently elected president of the ACE board of engineers. Robinson, Heigel, and Larry Perry have been invited to membership with the campus executive club. B. J. Downing was honored by the chapter as the active member with the highest grade average on campus. Charlie Miller is new pledge president, presiding over the 30 new fall quarter pledges. Epsilon Eta is moving into a temporary home soon pending the finishing of the new house.

Winter 1962

The big project here at Epsilon Eta this quarter has been extensive remodeling of a great portion of the house. We have added a twenty-seat addition to our dining room, under the direction of Brother Walter B. Yater and Brother Boyd Evans, our advisor and co-advisor, and have completely repapered and refinished the old dining area. In addition, completely new shower and washroom facilities have been ordered. When all is complete, our house should be one of the sharpest on

campus and we expect great things, both in our own happiness, and in rushing, from our new surroundings.

Our White Rose Ball, held at the C'est Bon supper club, was a smashing success. Miss Wanda Jones, a Zeta Tau Alpha, was crowned White Rose Queen. Arnold V. Lindseth, Jackson, Tenn., was awarded the Outstanding Novice Paddle, and Peter W. Cawling, Memphis, Tenn., was given the Diller C. Wood Scholarship Award. Our thanks to Brother Jim Crum, Social Chairman, and Orville Dodson, Larry Thurman, and Ron Yarbrough for a grand time.

Under the leadership of Rush Chairman Nathan Harsh, the chapter has gained seven pledges since winter quarter began.

On Sunday, January 19, initiation was held for the following new men: Patrick C. Malone, Timonium, Md.; Peter W. Cowling, Memphis, Tenn.; William Cole, Rockwood, Tenn.; Arnold V. Lindseth, Jackson, Tenn.; and Angelo R. Zigrino, Rome, NY. We hope to initiate many more before the year is over.

Two new trophies are at rest in the Sigma Nu house, the results of our triumphs in intramural swimming and relays.

#### Winter 1963

Epsilon Eta chapter at the University of Tennessee boasts more blisters and fall arches than any other Sigma Nu chapter, the products of a record sixty mile hike in ten degree weather. Take President Kennedy's challenge to heart, some twenty-five members of the chapter took off one Saturday noon from the chapter house in Knoxville for a sixty mile hike jaunt (uphill all the way) to Newfound Gap. Included in the hikers was the chapter's White Rose Queen, Nancy Lambert, who made thirty miles before dropping out. By the time the members had reached Sevierville, some thirty miles from the starting point, they had used up fifteen rolls of tape and four cans of foot powder. At Gatlinburg the group established a new fifty mile hike record, and when, on Sunday morning at 6:30 am, Jim Hiegel and Russell Houser reached the top of Newfound Gap (the temperature read seven degrees) Epsilon Eta laid claim to new hiking honors. While the marines could only cover 50 miles in 18 hours, Sigma Nu's hardy walkers had covered 62 miles in less than 19 hours.

#### Summer 1963

Chapter ranked above all-men's average, was lead-off group for Knoxville Leukemia Drive. House value at \$18,500, holds ten men. One member was president of the sophomore class, and another was magazine editor. One brother was named Torchbearer, the highest campus honor, and was also named to Who's Who and to Sigma Pi Sigma. One was tapped to Pi Tau Sigma, one was president of ASEE, and two were named to Tau Beta Pi, one as president. Two each were named to Phi Eta Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi, two received fellowships for graduate studies and four were members for Omicron Delta Kappa.

Winter 1965

The chapter was selected as the fraternity most improved in scholarship...In the area of service, Brothers collected money for underprivileged children, served as chairman of the all-Greek children's Christmas party, and won the Muscular Dystrophy funds drive...Over the holiday's a comprehensive alumni visitation program resulted in personal contact with alumni in every major city in the South.

BLOOD MONEY

Fall 1965

Creating a Howard Baker Memorial Fund, active members of Epsilon Eta Chapter of Sigma Nu Fraternity has literally put the pulse of life into the chapter's new house by giving \$360 through the sale of their blood.

In honor of the late Rep. Howard H. Baker (R-Tenn.), the amount was presented by Chapter Commander Lynn Sorrell to Dr. L. Alton Absher, president to the house corporation , at the annual Alumni Banquet on May 19. A plaque to the late Representative Baker's memory will be placed in the new 30-bed house when its construction is completed some months hence.

Representative Baker was the second commander of Epsilon Eta Chapter, and his daughter Beverly Baker was the chapter's White Rose several years ago. Mrs. Baker, the Congressman's widow, has been a generous donor to the new house. While a student at the University of Tennessee, the late Congressman was president of the All Students Club, was prominent in statewide debate tournaments, and was a member of several honorary societies. Formerly a resident of Huntsville, Tenn., the late Mr. Baker had, when not busy in Washington, made his home in Knoxville during more recent years.

Presentation of the memorial fund was remarkable for a strange coincidence. The official recipient of the check, Dr. Absher, had some years ago donated blood to the late Congressman's father James F. Baker when the elder Baker was critically ill. Then a student at U-T, Dr. Absher had volunteered for the transfusion as a fraternity brother of Representative Baker. The physician and the congressman were close personal friends, and had maintained an interest in their Epsilon Eta chapter for many years. With Dr. Absher serving as president of the housing corporation, Representative Baker was the principal speaker at the chapter's fortieth anniversary banquet several years ago.

Nearly 30 active members of Epsilon Eta gave the blood which enabled the Howard Baker Memorial Fund during the months of March through May at Blount Memorial Hospital at nearby Maryville, Tenn. Still more members of the active chapter as yet expected to contribute, adding somewhat to the amount of the memorial fund.

Summer 1965

The chapter ranked above both the all men's and all-fraternity averages, and won the Scholarship Improvement trophy. Another trophy was taken for participation in the Muscular Dystrophy Drive.

#### Winter 1966

The fall pledge class number 57. Tom Scott is president of Pi Tau Sigma, and a member of Tau Beta Pi along with Mike Gritzner, John Shoemaker, and Charles Sharpe. In Alpha Chi Sigma are Gritzner, Shoemaker, Larry Bredeson, John Turk and Lynn Sorrell. G. Eugene Spenser was named to Eta Kappa Nu, and Shoemaker and Bredeson to Phi Eta Sigma. John Tindall and Don Fancher are in Scabbard and Blade, and Harold Brown to Arnold Air Society. Tindall and Richard Tipton are Colonel and Lt. Colonel, respectively, of Army ROTC. The chapter took first in intramural swimming.

#### Summer 1966

The chapter won the IFC trophy for the highest fraternity scholastic average, maintaining the high average that on them the scholastic improvement trophy for the preceding year, and the pledge class also won the IFC plaque for the highest average. Next fall Epsilon Eta will move into a new house valued at \$220,000 and housing 30 men. The chapter cleaned and painted the Knoxville Girls Club as a community service. Four brothers were in Phi Eta Sigma, four in Tau Beta Pi, two in Phi Mu Alpha Symphonia, and one was President of Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity.

#### TENNESSEE DIGS IN

#### Winter 1966

January 19, 1966 was a banner day for Epsilon Eta Chapter at the University of Tennessee. January 19 was the day that University broke ground officially for its new fraternity park, and Epsilon Eta Chapter will be one of the participating fraternities.

All of which accounts for most of the smiles on the faces on the people in the photograph below. Some of the jollity, of course, must be accorded to Tennessee's jovial Governor Frank Clement who wielded one of the shovels enameled in University of Tennessee Orange, and exchanged wisecracks with UT President Andy Holt, who holds a shovel at the left of the photo. At right is Brother Alton Absher, President of the Epsilon Eta House Corporation, also holding a shovel. In the center is Chapter Commander Lynn Sorrell, with a white shovel.

Also in the picture are Brother Bill Sladden, member of the house corporation; Jack Nelson, Chapter Adviser; Al Abernathy, Epsilon Eta alumnus and architect for the new house; Boyd Evans, Secretary of the House Corporation; Delta Editor Alan Wheeler; Bill Cate, House Corporation Lawyer; and Brother Charles Emory, Epsilon Eta alumnus, and contractor for the new house.

Incidentally, the chapter is proud that the Epsilon Eta House will be only one in the new park designed and built entirely by members of its own fraternity.

#### Fall 1968

The chapter ranked above the all men's and all-fraternity averages. Five men were in Phi Eta Sigma and one in Who's Who.