

*When did alumnae associations come into being? Did our Founders plan for ways in which Kappas would gather together to promote Kappa friendships after a member's collegiate days ended?*

The earliest form of the Constitution does not mention classes of membership, but as amended by chapter vote in June 1874, *honorary* members were defined, so it became necessary to mention *active* members. The Conventions of 1876 and 1878 made no change in this classification but when the Constitution was rewritten at the Convention of 1881, it provided that members should be of three grades, *active*, *honorary* and *silent*. (We wonder if some members out of college had been giving unwelcome advice.) However, this impression is corrected by this definition: "Silent members are those young ladies who have not completed a college course and who no longer pay the fees and perform the duties of the Fraternity. Alumnae and silent members may become active by paying the fees and performing the duties of the Fraternity, unless their chapter deems fit to excuse them from fees and duties."

So *alumna* members were recognized after all. When the Constitution was amended at the Convention of 1882 the omission was supplied and the rather unfortunate term *silent* was changed. Four grades of membership, *active*, *alumna*, *associate* and *honorary* came to be. The last *honorary* member was initiated in 1884 and such membership was abolished in 1896.

Until *The Golden Key* was first published in 1882, source material regarding alumnae is meager. Editorials in *The Key* during 1889 and 1890 called frequent attention to the desirability of alumnae associations or "chapters" as they were then called. Not until 1892 however, when meetings of alumnae were held in Chicago and New York, was the movement successful. Even then the organization of alumnae associations received no encouragement from the active membership until the Grand Council meeting in 1901. By this time, the value of such associations was recognized and it was voted that the organization of alumnae should be urged and encouraged and that the direction of such associations be given to the Fraternity Council members' deputies. At the Convention of 1902, a whole day was given to the alumnae and called "Alumnae Day." The spirited discussion created by the interesting programming of that day proved to be the popular feature of that Convention.

The first successful attempt at organization of alumnae was in 1892 by alumnae living in Chicago. This "chapter" was very successful for some time. It had the responsibility for and was in charge of the Kappa corner at the World's Fair, also Kappa's part in the Pan Thugyterian Convention held there in 1893. The early association (chapter) was given the next chapter name in order, thus the Chicago Association was listed as "Beta Theta." These alumnae had the status of "active members" and had to conform to many regulations as to meetings, reports, dues, etc. Since they found this burden difficult Beta Theta surrendered its charter at the 1894 Convention. Following the Convention of 1896, the Fraternity *Standing Rules* provided for the formation of alumnae associations of at least 12 members who should meet at least four times a year and elect a secretary who would be responsible for Fraternity documents. Such an association had the right to send, at its own expense, a delegate who would have the privilege of speaking on the floor, but no vote.

While alumna activity was being fostered at home, a very spontaneous expression of Kappa interest was shown abroad. Seven Kappas found each other in Berlin, Germany, and enjoyed "pleasant" meetings. They sent a group picture to *The Key* in June 1892, a greeting from the "Berlin Chapter." This was the first alumnae organization "established" by a women's fraternity in a foreign country.

It is difficult more than 130 years after our founding to realize what the Fraternity was like years after that event, before the place of the alumnae was recognized either by the alumnae or the active chapters. So important is the part played now by alumnae that everyone agrees "Active chapters plus alumnae equal Fraternity."