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# Greek Letter Black Fraternity Output

## A Threat Or A Promise?



### For Your Information

BY Herman T. Jones

We hold ever aloft, noble ideals and aims,  
Carrying out earth's and heaven's grand command,  
Our true hearts ever strive, success' goal to gain,  
That our fraternity's praises may be sung.

The above verse is from the hymn of a Greek letter black fraternity. I dare say that many of the Prairie View members of this hymn. However, it may be assumed that many members of all of the Greek letter black fraternities at Prairie View would subscribe to the sentiments set forth in this verse.

If this assumption is accurate, some members of alumni chapters of black fraternities at Prairie View are concerned about their organizations accomplishing so little in comparison to what their members set out to achieve. These critics claim that alumni chapters of Greek letter black fraternities cannot become a great force for the political and social betterment of their members and of other black people by placing a high priority on collecting money to engage in formalized activities such as parties and banquets; and by engaging in intense rivalry with each other, instead of engaging in the protest of social and political injustices.

One may observe that although many alumni members make these criticisms or are aware of them, the pattern of an active social life in alumni chapters is so traditional, that those members who do not like it cannot escape it without cutting off much of their relationship with their fellows and without losing some of their prestige.

Seemingly, if the alumni chapters attempt to reorder their priorities to placate their critics by becoming primarily organizations for Negro protest and black betterment, members will have little opportunity to hold elaborate parties and banquets so "That our fraternity's praises may be sung." On the other hand, if alumni chapters continue to place high priority on elaborate social functions, secret rites and elaborate rituals, they will be out-of-step with the general pattern of other voluntary associations; and will become a mere vestige of what they were intended to be.

These questions then arise: How can alumni chapters of Greek letter fraternities harmonize what they say with what they do? How well are they carrying out their commitments to scholarship, service and fellowship? Reliable sources report the following helpful information on alumni chapters in the Prairie View area:

#### AFFILIATES, DEGREES, EARNING POWER

NAME	No. AFFILIATES	DEGREES		
		Masters	PHD.	
Alpha Phi Alpha	50	33	17	
Kappa Alpha Psi	19	19		
Omega Psi Phi	35	28	7	
Phi Beta Sigma	20	17	3	
	124	97	27	

#### Average earning power of affiliates:

97 with masters degrees or equivalent	@\$12,000 average per year.....	\$1,164,000
27 With doctorated or equivalent	@\$16,000 average per year.....	432,000
Total estimated earned income per year.....		\$1,596,000

#### SCHOLARSHIP COMMITMENT

**Potential:** Substantial financial resources reside in alumni Chapters of black fraternities as well as in affluent members who desire to become immortal through tax deductible gifts for scholarships, fellowships and research. In light of the estimated earned income of \$1,596,000 per year, each member could afford a minimum of \$50 per year toward this commitment, which would amount to \$6,200 per year. Less rivalry and more cooperative efforts among the chapters could produce much more, thereby enhancing the images of all chapters.

**Performance:** A combined total of \$500 was given for scholarships by alumni chapters of fraternities at Prairie View for the school year of 1972-73.

**Evaluation:** Apparently, alumni chapters of fraternities at Prairie View are a long way from total scholarship commitment.

#### SERVICE COMMITMENT

**Potentials:** Unlimited human resources reside in alumni chapters of black fraternities at Prairie View. These resources may be used to initiate and support projects for civic educational, recreational, health and political services in Waller County.

**Performance:** One alumni chapter is doing a very effective service in voter registration. Other chapters serve in voter registration. Other chapters are locating and helping the poor during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Evaluation:** There is a wide gap between what services the chapters are able to render and what services they are rendering.

#### FELLOWSHIP COMMITMENT

**Potentials:** Total active participation in all activities of alumni chapters is a desirable objective. A total of 124 college graduates sharing ideas through inter-fraternal activities would be a commendable achievement.

**Performance:** A total of 79% of the affiliates of the alumni chapters is active. As party time approaches other inactive affiliates will become active.

**Evaluation:** Rivalry is substituted for fellowship between alumni chapters.

Commitments of Greek letter black fraternities, no doubt, grew out of a determination of needs for better scholarships, special services and sincere fellowship among blacks. These needs appear to be valid and to serve as the bases for the perpetuation of viable alumni chapters of Greek letter black fraternities. To abandon the pursuit for meeting these needs may pose a threat of extinction and result in alumni chapters becoming as vestigial to human society as the appendix is to the human body. To renew these commitments, in the light of analysis and evaluation, may hold out a promise of fulfillment not only for those who serve but also for those who are served.