

AUGUST ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

Lesa Aymami Phillips, *Epsilon Beta*, University of New Orleans



Alumnae Chapter: Tampa Bay Alumnae Chapter
Occupation: Law Enforcement
Education: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Master of Education in Higher Education Administration
Professional/Civic Activities: Almost Home Rescue volunteer, Sunshine State Jack Russell Terrier Club Member
Family: Husband, Mike, and their three canine children: Jack, Chloe and Clifford

Favorite things to do when not doing Sigma Kappa work: Outdoor activities with the dogs, including

Jack Russell Racing, and volunteer work in support of animal rescue

Sigma Kappa Volunteer Activities: Currently website coordinator and philanthropy chair.

What is the best part of being involved in Sigma Kappa as an alumna?
When I first moved to Tampa, it was a great way to meet people and develop new friendships. I particularly enjoy our activities in support of good causes.

How has Sigma Kappa helped you in your life? Personally, by strengthening my appreciation for service. Professionally, by enabling me to develop a rapport with total strangers.

What is the your most memorable Sigma Kappa moment? My initiation day.

Words to live by: You can make someone's day better by just taking a minute to listen.

What do you think about the new Virtual Violet Spotlight? Let us know your feedback, email virtualviolet@sigmakappa.org

FEATURES

WELCOME



Sigma Kappa Sorority, Psi Chapter, University of Wisconsin, Madison homecoming decorations in 1952

Welcome to the homecoming edition of *Virtual Violet*! October brings Trick-or-Treaters, fall air, and football. Whether you're watching the big game in person or at home, this issue celebrates the "home" in homecoming.

Every year my husband and I bundle up the kids to watch the homecoming parade at our beloved alma mater. It's so exciting to cheer as the floats, cheerleaders, and band take to the streets. Most of all, I love standing with my sisters and feeling the pride of being a Sigma Kappa! Our alumnae chapter kicks off the weekend with hot chocolate before the parade. Saturday brings the joint tailgate with our assigned collegiate chapter. On Sunday, the weekend is topped off with an open house and light brunch at the chapter house. You can't beat spending time with sisters of every age. Homecoming weekends are filled with sharing old memories and experiencing new ones. *(continue on pg 3)*

FEATURED STORY

BACK TO HOMECOMING

by Gail German Sullivan

Women in their 30s are busy. We are wives, mothers, career women, home owners and everything else in-between. Somehow in the mix of all of this busyness, we need to remember that we are alumnae as well.



I am a 1999 graduate of West Virginia University and an alumna of the Theta Chi Chapter of Sigma Kappa. The four years I spent in Morgantown, and the women I established relationships with are extremely important to me. I am proud of the sisters that I have remained close with after graduation. We always make time for each other in our demanding lives. However, we sometimes forget how important it is to keep in touch with our collegiate chapter as well.

There is an entire weekend dedicated for alumni to come back to their alma mater, homecoming. It is such a great way to keep in touch with sisters and establish relationships with current members.

Instead of taking advantage of such a great weekend, we let life get in the way.

Early in 2009 a small group of sisters started chatting on Facebook about the possibility of going to homecoming in the fall. Before we could blink there were twenty women who had graduated in the 90s making room reservations and buying football tickets. We were so excited to be spending a weekend together. I contacted the vice president of alumnae relations at WVU and let her know to expect a big crowd. She was thrilled.

When we arrived in Morgantown, we were welcomed with open arms. The current chapter members were so excited, not only meet us, but to get to know us. We were thrilled to tour the sorority house and reminisce. The current members were eager to hear old stories and we couldn't wait to share them.

Touring the sorority house was so much fun. We were able to visit our old rooms, where we used to study, laugh, and pour our hearts out to each other. We couldn't believe that we let a decade of homecoming celebrations go by without being a part of them. It was then that we vowed that we would attend homecoming as often as we could. Homecoming 2009 was a weekend that I will remember for the rest of my life.

This is an invitation to you. An invitation to reconnect, make new friends, reminisce, laugh and have a great time. I invite you to attend your college homecoming. You won't regret it.

Sigma Love,
Gail German Sullivan

FEATURES (CONT.)

In this issue of the *Virtual Violet*, you will meet the new Director of Alumnae Expansion, Mary Ellen Elkins, as she shares some of her homecoming memories. We also have an article showcasing the homecoming memories of one sister. You will also find some great tailgating recipes in this issue! The alumnae team wants to celebrate homecoming with you. We are always home in the Mystic Bond!

~ Loyally,

Amy

HOMEcomings MEMORIES

While I was an active member of the Gamma Lambda chapter at East Tennessee State University, homecoming meant a busy week for the student body. Many different student organizations participated in events such as Skit Night, banner painting competition and canned food castle creations. Several Greek chapters held homecoming teas or receptions for their alumni and Sigma Kappa was no different. I enjoyed greeting alumnae as they entered our newly redecorated suite and remember meeting, in particular, Sister Sissy Wiggins Martin, Gamma Lambda, East Tennessee State University. The entire chapter had heard stories about how Sissy Wiggins was the most popular Sigma Kappa on campus and the Homecoming Queen in the late 1960s. Because her daughter, Amy McBroom Helms, was an active member with me at the time, we were able to meet the illustrious Sissy Wiggins and bask in her presence.

My favorite homecoming memories come not from my collegiate years, but after I had begun my alumnae experience. In October 2006 the Gamma Lambda chapter celebrated its 50th anniversary during ETSU's homecoming weekend. I was fortunate enough to be a part of the anniversary planning committee and got to work with both collegians and alumnae on insuring the weekend was a success. The celebration began with a Friday night cocktail party and silent auction, as well as karaoke and renditions of Sigma Kappa songs and chants through the decades. Saturday morning, Past National President Angela Guillory was the keynote speaker for the anniversary's "Sisters Only" brunch, which included current chapter members and alumnae. ETSU President, Dr. Paul Stanton, joined Sister Guillory in making the evening's remarks at the formal dinner celebration Saturday night. The most memorable part of the evening was when Sister Guillory honored the 50 year members. She asked them to stand if they were able, then from across the room, asked the 2006 new member class to stand. It was incredibly moving to see the founders of the Gamma Lambda chapter look into the faces of the future of Sigma Kappa at ETSU. It was a physical reminder of how many lives Sigma Kappa has touched, how it was special in 1956 to those founding chapter members and its significance to many more women today.

I am so thankful I was able to be a part of such an important event. I made lasting connections with both then collegians and alumnae. I will always treasure the memories and friendships made during both my collegiate and alumnae years. However, planning for the celebration of that homecoming weekend will remain one of my favorite Sigma Kappa memories.

~ Mary Ellen Elkins, Gamma Lambda, East Tennessee State University
Director of Alumnae Expansion; Collegiate Province Officer

PEARL COURT AWARD

The Ernestine Duncan Collins Pearl Court Award is designed to recognize alumnae who are, and have been, the backbone of our chapters and clubs. Named after a distinguished and dedicated alumna, the Pearl Court Award provides alumnae chapters the opportunity to recognize and celebrate those alumnae who work tirelessly in support of Sigma Kappa and the entire Greek community.

In 1936, Ernestine Duncan was initiated into the Mu Chapter at the University of Washington. Ernestine quickly found a home

in Sigma Kappa, gaining sisters she had not had by birth. As a collegian, Ernestine held various chapter positions including that of chapter president. An active alumna, she quickly became involved in the leadership of Sigma Kappa at a national level. She was elected to national council as vice president of membership and served in this capacity for four years. In 1952, Ernestine was elected national president where she served for two years. She was again elected president in 1976, continuing to serve for another four years. During her two terms as national president, gerontology became Sigma Kappa's third philanthropy, the Order of the Triangle was adopted as part of our ritual, the bylaws were amended to combine two NVPCCs into one position, 14 collegiate chapters were installed, and the national council emblem was adopted.

Along with her various roles within Sigma Kappa, Ernestine continued to support the greater Greek community. For 18 years she was advisor to the University of Washington's Panhellenic. During those years, the University consistently ranked highest in the nation in the percentage of those who participated in recruitment and who pledged. Ernestine worked tirelessly to make sure the women of the University of Washington found a new home within the Greek community.

In a memorial article included in the Summer 1997 issue of the Sigma Kappa Triangle, Cindy Eder Porter, Alpha Phi, stated "She always exemplified Sigma Kappa, and everything I do for and with Sigma Kappa will reflect the contributions and impact of Ernestine Collins."

Do you have an alumna to which you could not do without? One whose very presence brings support and enthusiasm? Who readily volunteers and is happy to be called on? Who works tireless behind the scenes to promote a stronger, more vibrant Sigma Kappa? The Ernestine Duncan Collins Pearl Court Award would be a perfect way to recognize such an alumna for her work and dedication. The Award works on a national level, gives uniform recognition, and is not limited to one recipient per biennium. It is suggested that recognition be made in 5-year increments (i.e., 5, 10, 15, 20, etc. years of service to Sigma Kappa).

If you are interested in presenting an Ernestine Duncan Collins Pearl Court Award to a member(s) of your chapter, you can find out more about the process and award criteria by downloading this PDF.

TAILGATING RECIPES

Nacho Chip Dip

Ingredients:

16 oz sour cream

1 Taco seasoning package

16 oz can of refried beans

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Tortilla chips

Optional Ingredients: Tomatos, onions, black olives, peppers

Directions: Mix taco seasoning with sour cream and set aside. Start layering the ingredients in a 13X9 baking dish. Spread the refried beans, then the sour cream mixture. Finish by covering with cheddar cheese. You can sprinkle the optional ingredients on top of the cheese. Chill for at least an hour. Enjoy with chips

Cream Cheese Corn Chip Dip

Ingredients:

8 oz package cream cheese

2 chicken bouillon cubes

1/3 cup water

2 tsp minced onion

2 tsp lemon juice

Virtual VIOLET

sigma kappa alumnae news

Directions:

Set cream cheese out to soften. Put bouillon cubes and onion in boiling hot water to soften. Add water, bouillon, and onion mixture to cream cheese. Beat until well-blended. Mix in lemon juice; beat. Chill for at least an hour. Enjoy with corn chips.

Morning Tailgating Quiche

Ingredients:

1 pre-made pie crust

½ cup milk

6 eggs

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

Optional Ingredients: Browned sausage, cooked bacon, spinach, tomatoes, mushrooms

Directions: Scramble eggs with milk, salt, and pepper. Add in cheese and any extra ingredients. Pour mixture into pie crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Haystack No Bakes

Ingredients:

5 ½ oz butterscotch chips

5 ½ oz chocolate chips

7 oz potato stix (you can substitute pretzels)

Directions:

Melt chips according to package directions. Stir in potato stix. Drop by spoon full on waxed paper and let harden.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sigma Kappa is working to make a new and updated Membership Directory available to the entire membership. Alumnae & collegiate members will be sent an email or postcard from Publishing Concepts Inc. with a phone number to call. Please call this number to update your information as soon as possible to help Sigma Kappa stay in touch!

SHOP SIGMA KAPPA

Herff Jones is featuring the Sigma Kappa Hearts United Ring on sale in time for the upcoming holidays! The Hearts United Ring in Sterling Silver (normally \$123.00) is on sale for \$95.00 and the Hearts United Ring in 10k gold (normally \$302.00) is on sale for \$250.00!

Also, Herff Jones is offering complimentary shipping and handling on orders over \$50.00. Use the promo code [0000] when you check out!

For more information, please contact Pamela Levy, associate director of finance, at plevy@sigmakappa.org, phone (317) 381-5508 or the Herff Jones website.

HAVE A LEGACY?

Recommend a New Member: Have a potential new member to recommend? Go to the Recruitment Introduction Form on SigmaKappa.org > Discover > Forms & Policies > Recruitment Introduction Form

ANNUAL REPORT

The 2009-2010 Annual Report is now available. Download the PDF here or on Sigmakappa.org > ACHIEVE > Annual Report.