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REFLECTIONS FROM THE 64TH GRAND CONSUL

by Keith Krach, Purdue 1979

One of the things I have enjoyed as Grand Consul is the face-to-face interaction with Sigma Chis across North America. I have made it a priority to travel and attend as many Fraternity activities as possible during my term. Everywhere I visit, our brothers always greet me with open arms and are willing to share their experiences. While I cannot recount all of these stories, there is one in particular that I want to take a moment to discuss.

About 10 months ago, I began a dialogue with a group of alumni brothers from the Alpha Beta Chapter at California-Berkeley. This conversation was initiated by one of my first electronic communications—Sigma Chi: In The LEAD—to our entire membership on our definition of leadership. These Alpha Beta brothers explained how this message had elicited feelings from an incident that affected their chapter nearly 40 years ago and remains an emotional topic.

In 1968, the General Fraternity removed Alpha Beta's recognition for initiating a black man when the Fraternity's governing laws did not permit it. As difficult as it is to believe today, it did happen. For this, I am apologetic to these brothers and any other brothers who were impacted by similar actions at their own chapter. The decision to remove recognition from Alpha Beta and other chapters at this time was a mistake. It was a misguided time in our nation's history and despite the hopes of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, racial biases continued to plague our country and many organizations. Sigma Chi was not immune.

However, we should not lose sight of the impact of these brothers' actions during this time on Sigma Chi during the last four decades. Because of their courage, changes have been made to Sigma Chi governance that permanently prevents these mistakes from being repeated.

While we have made many strides to step out among fraternities in North America, we recognize that this issue still affects many of our members today. The Winter 2003-2004 issue of *The Magazine* may have demonstrated best how this change has positively impacted our organization. It chronicles not only the impact of civil rights on Sigma Chi, but also how we have continued to build upon our diverse membership and embrace it as a part of our organization's lifeblood.

As we look forward, I enlist your assistance in seeking men that meet the Jordan Standard, who are of diverse temperaments, talents, and convictions, and who will assist Sigma Chi in achieving its vision to be the preeminent collegiate leadership development organization—aligned, focused and living our core values.