



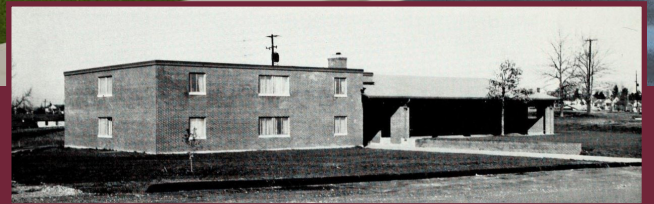
ThetaGram

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY • MISSISSIPPI THETA CHAPTER OF SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON • SPRING 2020



The Time Is Now

ΣΑΕ ANNOUNCES \$3 MILLION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR NEW CHAPTER HOUSE



For more than a century, Sigma Alpha Epsilon has built a legacy of true gentlemen at Mississippi State University. When we look back on our own experiences, the countless memories and forged friendships remind us of the truly irreplaceable experience we shared together.

Generations of our brothers each sought to make our Clyde Q. Sheely Circle house a home, not only for themselves but for posterity. In fact, nearly 70 years ago our predecessors saw a need that resulted in our first Chapter house on campus. Yet again, 25 years ago our brothers in the 1990s saw another need which resulted in an exterior renovation, yielding a new façade.

*If only those walls could talk, what do you think they would say? **The time is now to pay it forward.***

Building the Future

To begin this new phase for Mississippi Theta, we are excited to announce *The Time Is Now* capital campaign. Large-scale renovations are

already widespread across the Mississippi State campus. While we all know the quality of our membership, our physical structure must not only meet the needs of this membership but also facilitate development of friendships as well as provide a safe living environment.

Therefore, through careful assessment and evaluation of long-term needs, the house corporation has devised a plan which will provide us with a competitive edge and keep our focus on safety, academics, and recruitment.

Our Plan

This campaign will provide for a renovated house as well as an all-new dormitory, rebuilt from the ground up. That new dorm will be moved west (where the basketball/back courtyard is now) to create a large courtyard with a loggia connecting new and old. The structure's many other features will include an expanded kitchen and new and separate dining facility, modern safety and security features, and a modern study

(Continued on page 2)

CAMPAIGN STATUS AT-A-GLANCE

As of March 3, 2020

**\$3 MILLION
FUNDRAISING GOAL**

**\$2,141,750
CONTRIBUTIONS**

**92
BROTHERS**

**6.2%
PARTICIPATION RATE**

Thank You, Early Supporters!

The Time Is Now—Join This List Today



We are very grateful to the following alumni and friends whose early commitment to *The Time Is Now* campaign is making a difference. Your generosity demonstrates a sense of gratitude for your personal experience. Now that the campaign has officially begun, we need commitments from the rest of our alumni to reach our goal and complete this major project. All supporters of the project pledging \$5,000 and above will be recognized on a prominently displayed plaque in our renovated Chapter house. We apologize if there's an error in recording your gift or your name. We're working hard to record this vital information, so please advise our campaign coordinator at (785) 843-1661 to make any corrections. Thank you for your support! *Please note, all years shown next to each brother is his year of initiation. For an updated donor list, please visit SAEDawgs.com.*

Phoenix Society (\$250,000 and above)

The Hixon Family
Tom Hixon
Miriam Hixon
Tommy Hixon
Shane Hixon
Lillajo Hixon Ford
Henry Beattie '74

Minerva Society (\$100,000 to \$249,999)

The Barrett Family
Noel Barrett '76
Liz Scott Barrett '82
(SAE Little Sister)
Scott Barrett '06
Harris Brumfield '83
Solon Scott '84

Lion Society (\$75,000 to \$99,999)

Tommy Nusz '78

True Gentleman Society (\$50,000 to \$99,999)

The Fullen Family
Jerry Thames '66
The Hayes Family
Hoyt Hayes '70
Brad Hayes '95
Josh Hayes '98

Robert Jones Hussey III '82
In memory of
Marvin "Big Moon"
Sigmon '82
Frank Brumfield '85

Phi Alpha Society (\$25,000 to \$49,999)

Stewart H. Bridgforth Jr. '62
In memory of
Stewart Bridgforth '42
John M. Dean Jr. '62
The Barnes Family
Trip Barnes '65, and
Dudley Barnes '67
In memory of
Harris H. Barnes, Sr. '38
D. Hines Brannan '66
In memory of
Hal Brannan '71
The Billingsley Family
Jack Montgomery Harris '71
James B. Randall III '72
In memory of
Mr. W. T. Robertson '40
and
Mr. James Robertson '42
Jerry D. Solomon '72
Champ Thomson '76
In memory of
Chazzy Moor '76

Bertram S. "Buddy"
Mortimer '79
Elyette and James C.
Robertson '80
In memory of
Mr. W. T. Robertson '40
and
Mr. James Robertson '42
Vernon W. Barrow III '81
Stephen Farr '81
Joseph P. Bowen Sr. '82
Tommy Harvey '83

Mississippi Theta Society (\$15,000 to \$24,999)

George D. Pillow Jr. '66
Howard R. Davis Jr. '73
John Garrard '80
Farley Owens '83
Ronnie Cockayne '84

Archon Society (\$10,000 to \$14,999)

Roy R. Bowman Jr. '63
John Nutie Dowdle '65
Jerry D. Davis '70
Lawrence Long '74
In memory of
Mr. W. T. Robertson '40
and
Mr. James Robertson '42

Waters Family Gift
Raymond Michael Waters
III '75
David Vaughan Waters '77
ML Waters '78
Allan Ine Waters '83
Joshua Lloyd Waters '08
Richard Vaughan Waters '08
Winfield Liggett Waters '22
John Kevin Watson '75
Dr. Todd Fincher '76
Ben E. Kilgore Jr. '80
Richard Kimmel '82
Edwin Barry Bridgforth '83
William F. King Jr. '84
Matt McWilliams '87
In memory of
Tommy McWilliams '63
In honor of
Clayton Converse '19
Michael William McGuire '88
Jeremy Tabor '88
Clark Converse '93

Old Gold Society (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

Ed Thurmond Jr. '60
E. Russell Black Jr. '63
John W. Hartlein '70
Larry P. Galloway '75
John Miller Bush '79
Earl Grochau '80

John Emmett Marchetti '80
Joel Cary "Jody" Moor '80
David Campbell,
Florida Beta '81
Dean Cumbaa '81
Dave Dinkins '81
Eddie Hammond '81
Reggie Sims '81
Tommy Baine '83
Russs Bourne '83
Rodney Brantley '83
Jim Knight '83
Nicky Cobb '84
Tom McElroy '84
Johnny Ray '84
John D. Stewart III '84
Raymond Abraham '86
Alan Henson Hargett '86
Rusty Clark '87
Roger Simpson Jr. '88
Howard Dyer IV '90
Whitt Witten '90
William Gregory Young '92

Royal Purple Society (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

David C. Barton '61
Jimmy R. Comer '64
Ben W. Pentecost '76
Phillip Ray McClellan '83
Patrick Curtis Thomas '89
Ray Arthur Comer '94
Will Barrett '06

ΣΑΕ ANNOUNCES CAMPAIGN

(Continued from page 1)

space with Wi-Fi coverage and conference rooms. This new Chapter house will provide ample space for our undergraduates and serve as a communal space for alumni returning to campus.

How Can You Help?

While we know this project sounds daunting, the Mississippi Theta House Corporation is more than ready to get to work and the timing could not be more fortuitous. With low interest rates and early commitments totaling approximately \$2.1 million from more than 90 generous donors, we're starting out our race to \$3 million campaign goal strong. It will take support from every brother to get us across the finish line.

As you receive more details on the campaign in the coming weeks, we encourage you to reflect on why you joined this fraternity and the predecessors that provided for us. Each of us committed to a lifetime membership in Sigma Alpha Epsilon during initiation. Now it's time to



pay it forward to ensure that membership still benefits undergraduates and alumni alike.

Phi Alpha,
Jack Harris '73, Randy Randall '74, Stephen Farr '84
John Dean '66, Rusty Clark '90, Matt McWilliams '91, Will Barrett '09

Striking a Chord

Bob Morrison, MSU Class of 1964, Shares How Music Influenced His Life and Career

The song “Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places” made famous by the movie *The Urban Cowboy* was not only written by a Mississippi State graduate but also by an ΣAE. Who is that brother? **Robert Edwin “Bob” Morrison**, MSU Class of 1964!



Far left: Bob Morrison at Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame Induction in 2016.

Bob grew up in Biloxi, Mississippi, and was a gifted high school track athlete particularly in middle distance. Bob's father was a juke box operator and had juke boxes scattered all over the Mississippi gulf coast. Helping his father change out those records helped nurture Bob's love of all kinds of music.

Bob accepted a scholarship offer to run track for Mississippi State upon his high school graduation in 1960. Not only would Bob become the first in his family to graduate from college, but also his chosen field of study, nuclear engineering, might also surprise you. As a freshman at State, Bob not only made the mile relay team, but that relay team also won the SEC. Unsure how he would perform in the classroom, Morrison decided it best to hold off joining a fraternity. Ultimately, Bob would pledge ΣAE at State because, like identifying the right melody or lyrics for a song, “ΣAE just felt right”; he was initiated in February of 1963.

Brother Morrison was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the College of Engineering his junior year. He was also tapped to join honorary fraternities including Phi Kappa Phi and Tau Beta Pi. Bob even had the opportunity to write about Johnny Cash's visit to Starkville while on assignment for *The Reflector*. However, no matter the experience, Bob's love of music remained a constant. “I was pretty shy in my early years at State and realized that my talent of playing the guitar made it easier to meet girls. So, **Dave Shirley**, initiated into MS Theta in 1962, and I would play at the ΣAE house at State.”

When asked what songs he liked to play, Bob listed Motown, The Beatles, Credence Clearwater Revival, the Rolling Stones, and Peter Paul & Mary. “I gravitated toward Paul Stookey. I even went to Paul's apartment in the Village in the city, met his wife; I also enjoyed time around Mary Travers.”

In the summer of 1964, Bob moved back to the coast and began working at a club called Trader's Johns in Biloxi during the folk music era. A patron heard him and connected him with a gig working in Ocean City, Maryland, a summer resort area outside of Washington, D.C. Running track at State made it difficult for Bob to finish his final three courses, but he was determined to get that sheepskin! After researching colleges in the D.C. area that had the courses available and a cost that was affordable, Bob chose to finish his course study at Howard University, a historically black college in D.C.

Getting accepted to Howard required a) a federal judge's approval “because it was 1964 and I was a (white) Mississippian with a license plate to prove it” as well as b) the green light from Dr. Dean W. Colvard, President of MSU. Once Colvard found out that Howard University was accredited, Colvard allowed the courses that ultimately got Morrison his degree from MSU. You

may recall Dr. Colvard's leadership from another controversial event in Mississippi State history. Colvard defied Mississippi law by allowing the MSU Basketball team to play in the NCAA tournament now known widely as *The Game of Change*.

“When I was going to Howard, I played in the bar of The Rotunda restaurant, a well-known Capital Hill establishment. I was discovered by legendary producer John Hammond and signed a contract to Columbia Records—the first of 5 recording contracts signed by Morrison—and moved to New York in 1966.

I was at a Kentucky Derby party in New York in May of 1966 and met Barbara, the love of my life. We married in 1967 after we had moved to Hollywood. I was signed by Screen Gems and paid \$250/week as an actor, but never got picked up on a show. I got to be friends though with some of the actors that made it like David Soul of *Starsky and Hutch* as well as Susan Saint James of *McMillan & Wife* fame.”

“After six years of struggling in the TV business as well as putting out an album with Capitol Records that didn't sell well, I met Bill Justis who was trying to write scores for movies in Hollywood, but, like me, he didn't make it. Bill convinced me to join him in moving back to Nashville to become a songwriter in 1973 almost 47 years ago. I came not knowing what I was going to do but write songs...I loved that idea and took yet another chance. I worked under the mentorship of Bob Beckham and Johnny MacRae at Combine Music for five years.” MacRae was such a demanding song appraiser that he turned down the first 100 songs that Morrison submitted. Some 53 years later, Bob and Barb Morrison are still married and live in Nashville. They have two daughters, and one granddaughter.

Morrison's biggest break to date came in 1980 when his song “Lookin' for Love” was chosen from a basket of demo tapes to be the musical centerpiece of the movie “Urban Cowboy”. It was a three-week No. 1 single for Johnny Lee and even rose to No. 5 on the pop charts. Twenty-one artists turned down the song, Morrison said, before it was chosen for the movie.

The rest, they say, is history because over the next 15 years over 350 songs would be recorded that Morrison wrote for such artists including Reba McEntire, The Carpenters, Sammy Davis Jr., Dottie West, Barbara Mandrell, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Oak Ridge Boys, Olivia Newton-John, and Kenny Rogers including the classic “You Decorated my Life”. Morrison was awarded Songwriter of the Year in 1980 by the Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) and has earned more than 40 ASCAP songwriting citations. Morrison was ASCAP's Country Songwriter of the Year in 1978, 1980, 1981 and 1982, and was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2016.

At his Hall of Fame induction, Morrison said, “You have to be a whole lot lucky and a little bit good”...well done, Brother Morrison, well done!

*Interview and article by Stephen Farr '84

SAVE THE DATE:

Founder's Day 2020

When? Saturday, March 28
Time? 6 p.m. Reception, 7:30 p.m. Dinner
Where? Sigma Alpha Epsilon Chapter house
Attire: Business Casual

RSVP at sfarr@alliant.com

Springing into the New Semester

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Colten Reed Hutchison

Madison, Mississippi
Germantown High School
Keith and Carole Hutchison

Jacob Killebrew

Madison, Mississippi
Tri County Academy
Marc Killebrew and Becky Gunn

Wyatt McNamee

Madison, Mississippi
Tri County Academy
Joe and Angela McNamee

Josh Skelton

Flora, Mississippi
Tri County Academy
Scott and Amy Skelton

Garner Cheney III

Jackson, Mississippi
Jackson Academy
Nancy and Bill Cheney

Mayson Reeves

Yazoo City, Mississippi
Tri County Academy
Bill and Tracie Reeves

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Lawrence, KS 66049-2100

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Attention: This newsletter is intended for Mississippi Theta Chapter alumni and parents. If your son is still attending Mississippi State University, he will receive a copy at the Chapter house. If he is no longer in school, please send us his permanent address to update our records.

Looking to the Future

Mississippi Theta Leadership Committed to and Excited for Campaign

On behalf of the Mississippi Theta undergraduates, I am pleased to express our full support of the capital campaign. We are committed to what the future holds for our Chapter and take great pride in our history and the reputation alumni have created for us to uphold.

Growing and Giving Back

This past year has proven another successful milestone in our Chapter's history. Not only did we gain 58 total new members (52 in the fall, 6 in the spring), we hosted two philanthropy events: Bats and Barbecue, raising nearly \$7,000 for Young Life; and the Transylvania Blood Drive, which helped Mississippi Blood Services meet their quota to provide for those in need. Brother **Matthew Roberson** was elected to serve on the Interfraternity Council as vice president.

Family Gatherings

We are also thankful for all the great Mississippi Theta parents out there! In 2019, we hosted the first-ever Father/Son Scramble and Steak Dinner, in which we enjoyed food and golf with our dads. Then, to show our gratitude to the mothers of Mississippi Theta, we hosted a mother-son event, E'Moms Sweetheart Dinner, in February. We look forward to future events to thank our families!

Join Us in Supporting Our Chapter's Growth

The plans for the new Chapter house will allow two major things to transpire. First, they will provide members with a state-of-the-art facility to live in, fostering a better atmosphere for members to thrive. Second, the renovations will help the Chapter remain competitive with the recruitment of new members. Most other Mississippi State chapter houses have recently been updated and this is our chance to remain a top contender in the Greek community.

Thank You, Alumni

Mississippi Theta is entering a very critical time in our journey, and we realize that your support is valuable. Your time and support will be paramount as we undergo this transition in the hopes of continuing the excellence we have worked so diligently to create. I ask that you take the time to reconnect with your brothers and the foundation of ΣΑΕ to make this house a home for posterity.

Fraternally,
John Iovinelli
Chapter President
jsi39@msstate.edu
(901) 849-0757