

Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc. Serving Our People Through A Cooperative Network With Other Organizations

GREEK-LETTER sororities and fraternities have assumed a far greater importance in the Black community than similar organizations in the larger society. While most of these organizations began as clubs that catered to Black social needs, they shortly became the focal point of the organized activities of the professional and intellectual leaders in the Black community.

Since the 1950's most Greek-letter organizations have engaged in a variety of community service-oriented activities. This is particularly true of Black sororities. These groups constitute the highest concentration and the most visible and easily accessible reserve of business and professional Black women. Collectively and individually, these women have made significant contributions in the fields of health, education, guidance and civil rights. They are aware of the value of voluntarism in today's Black community.

Prominent among these Greek-letter, community-building organizations is Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc., a national organization of business and professional women who strive to improve the economic, social and political status of all women.

ΓΦΔ : The Beginning

GAMMA PHI DELTA SORORITY, INC. was founded by the late Elizabeth Garner, a teacher and the late Violet T. Lewis, owner of Lewis Business College. Shortly thereafter, they were joined by 11 other teachers and friends: Annie Blakemore, Lula Gardner, Odell Glover (deceased), Eurine Harris, Ivalue Lennear, Jean Myers, Beatrice Preston, Ruby Tipton, Robelye Trumbo, Mattie Willis



Dr. Catherine Ellis Bozeman, Supreme Basileus

and Geraldine H. Winrow. These women are known as the sorority's 13 Original Pearls. Each year, 13 women, who have done outstanding work in promoting the sorority, are chosen as Pearl Pin Awardees in honor of the original pearls.

Each of the teachers pledged to organize a chapter of the sorority in her home city. The next chapter to be formed was Gamma Chapter in Indianapolis, Indiana, Ivalue Lennear's home town. As a special dispensation,

the chapter was allowed to use Gamma (instead of Beta, the second letter in the Greek alphabet) as its name.

The lofty ideals adopted by the founders as objectives included the following:

- To improve the economic, social and political status of all women.
- To motivate members to further their education/training.
- To maintain a progressive interest in the values of humanity.
- To promote refinement and culture.
- To establish and maintain a better relationship among women of all races and creeds.
- To be of greater service to community, country and each other.

Soon chapters of the sorority were organized in other cities. Gamma Phi Delta attracted businesswomen and professional women from many fields. Represented among the members are doctors, lawyers, teachers, congresswomen, administrators, social workers, accountants and other professional women.

ΓΦΔ : Activities

GAMMA PHI DELTAS work in a cooperative way with other organizations and programs which aim to eliminate the economic, educational, vocational, and social gaps that exist between the privileged and the underprivileged. They also offer on their own, educational and recreational programs to keep youth involved in worth-

(Continued on page 11.)

“Pulling Ourselves Up By Our Own Bootstraps”...A Series