

Highlights of BETA SIGMA PHI



1931 Walter W. Ross, a young man with great plans for the future, founds Beta Sigma Phi with the first chapter in Abilene, Kansas.



1932 The first issue of *The Torch* comes off the presses. The first Founder's Day celebration was held in Vinita, OK. The first Preferential Tea was held at the Phillips Hotel in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. It was hosted by Walter's wife Dorothy (the first Beta Sigma Phi!) and Ellen McMullen of the International Field Staff.

1933 Pennsylvania Beta, Harrisburg, becomes the first chapter to take the Ritual of Jewels degree. Chapter traditions begin with the "pass of the chocolates" to announce exciting news like the birth of a baby, an engagement, a new home, and so on.

1934 Members gather in Waterloo, Iowa to enjoy the very first Beta Sigma Phi convention.

1935 Beta Sigma Phi becomes International when a members moved from California to Canada and established a chapter there.

1937 Twenty-eight members make history when they sailed to Hawaii on the first Beta Sigma Phi Ramble.

1938 The Valentine Contest is introduced. Honorary Member and actress Jean Parker McDonald was the first ever Valentine Queen.

1939 The number of chapters reaches a milestone with 1,000 on sorority's ninth anniversary. Cary Grant is the first Valentine Judge. The first Nu Phi Mu chapter was established in Greenville, Illinois.

1940 The Exemplar degree is conferred on 12 members in Danville, Illinois.

1941 The first International Beta Sigma Phi convention was held in Kansas City, Missouri – another will not be held until 2016. Beta Sigma Phi launched a travel program and had its first "Ramble" to Canada.



1942 Sorority members accept a challenge from the U.S. government to sell \$14 million in war bonds. Not only do sisters meet the challenge, but sell an additional \$8 million in bonds.

1943 Alaska Alpha is installed at Anchorage. The first International City Council for

Beta Sigma Phi is established between Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York.

1944 More than 1,000 sisters are members of the armed forces serving in Canada, the United States, and overseas. Beta Sigma Phis invest nearly \$3 million in war bonds and stamps. Twenty-six U.S. Army nurses organize Alpha chapter in North Africa. Eleanor Roosevelt speaks at Founder's Day in Washington, DC.

1945 Less than a year after the war ends in Europe, the first overseas chapter is established in Great Britain.

1946 Barbara Ann Scott, Olympic Ice Queen, is installed as Honorary member of Nu Phi Mu by Ontario Delta, Ottawa. Kansas City chapters hold nine in-state area meetings.

1949 Alpha chapter is established in Cuba. Alpha chapter is established in Frankfurt, Germany. Canada's first lady, Madame St. Laurent, becomes an International Honorary member. Japan Alpha, Tokyo, is established.

1950 Sisters enjoy a Beta Sigma Phi Ramble to England, Scotland and France.

1951 The financial need of a member after a tragic automobile accident sparks the creation of the International Loan Fund, which begins with contributions from individual members.

1955 The Order of the Rose degree is established to honor members of 15 years or more who have distinguished themselves within the organization.

1956 The Silver Anniversary of Beta Sigma Phi sees the creation of the Achievement Band, through which members can acquire paid-up annual fee status. Nu Phi Mu is brought into Beta Sigma Phi as a degree of membership. The Fellowship program welcomes new pledges to higher degree chapters.

1957 The Daughter Enrollment Plan – later known as the Legacy Program – is announced. Walter W. Ross' three granddaughters, Linda, Judy, and Laura, are the first Legacies.

1958 Alpha chapter in Sydney becomes the first Australian chapter. The Envoy program is established.



1959 The International Office announces the Preceptor degree.

1960 Beta Sigma Phi reaches a total of 150,000 members in 7,000 chapters in 14 countries.

1961 The Program Presentation Contest is announced.

1962 The Beta Sigma Phi World Headquarters Building becomes a reality at 1800 W. 91st Place, Kansas City, Missouri.

1963 The Librarian Service Award is announced.

1964 The first International Award of Distinction is presented.

1965 Employers write "Why I like My Employee to be a Beta Sigma Phi." Winner receives a paid trip to International.



1966

The International Office announces conversion to a computer system for record-keeping, enabling more efficient communication with members.

1967

The Girl of the Year pin is announced.

1968

Some 16,500 members are honored with the Order of the Rose by this year.

1969

Founder Walter W. Ross dies on June 14. The Walter W. Ross Memorial Scholarship Fund is established.

1970

The Founder's Award Contest is announced. Some 114 Founder's Memory chapters are organized.

1971

Sorority's 40th Anniversary is celebrated. A new tradition begins with the passing of the convention lamp from city to city. The Founder's Fund Insurance Plan is announced.



1972

Girlstown, USA, the longest continuing Beta Sigma Phi project for the Endowment Fund, receives some \$267,000 by this year.

1973

Pearl Buck is posthumously awarded International Honorary Membership.

1974

A new degree, Preceptor Laureate (now Laureate) is introduced for members with at least eight years of membership in a Preceptor chapter. A Friendly Venture chapter is established in Karamursel, Turkey.

1975

Encyclopedia Americana recognizes Beta Sigma Phi in its latest reference books. Members all over the world show support for International Women's Year with various projects. The International Flag Design contest is announced.

1976

Endowment Fund donations exceed the \$1 million mark. Rosebud Alpha, the first active Legacy group, is formed in Denton, TX. The Silver Circle Ritual for 25-year members is introduced.

1977

New computer terminals are installed for even faster and more convenient service for

members. Founder's Day finds sorority in 24 countries around the world. The International Theme Contest is introduced.

1978

Beta Sigma Phi's Life Insurance program begins. Alpha chapters begin in six new countries: Hong Kong, Cuba, Ecuador, New Zealand, Iceland, and the Netherlands.

1979

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Walter W. Ross Memorial Scholarship Fund. Some \$89,000 in scholarships were awarded during the first 10 years.

1980

Golden Anniversary activities are launched. A history book of Beta Sigma Phi is produced. Members can earn gold stars for their achievement bands by recommending friends who pledge. "People Helping People" awards are created so chapters and city councils can honor outstanding citizens in their communities. Dorothy Ross, wife of our founder and the first Beta Sigma Phi, dies on December 1. The Water W. Ross Memorial Scholarship Fund becomes the Dorothy and Walter Ross Memorial Scholarship Fund.

1981

"Idea Fair" contest brings out the best ideas for chapter service projects, socials, ways and means projects, and programs. Members begin

forming "Golden Anniversary" chapters worldwide. U.S. president Ronald Reagan and Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau recognize Beta Sigma Phi's Golden Anniversary.



1982 Beta Sigma Phi launches a contest to find the "Ideal New Beta Sigma Phi."

1983 The Golden Circle Ritual for 50-year members is introduced at Founder's Day. New "Programs A La Carte" offers members more than 100 program topics to choose from. City councils introduce an annual "Guest Day" in their communities to welcome new members and build chapters in their cities. The new Bed and Breakfast program allows members to meet sisters during their travels.

1984 The Beta Sigma Phi Ambassador Program introduces city mayors and chambers of commerce to our sorority. A special service effort to raise money for the restoration of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island is announced. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 for this worthy project before Lady Liberty's 100th

birthday (July 4, 1986). The Envoy membership program for men is offered as a way to honor men for their support of Beta Sigma Phi efforts.

1985 International Endowment Fund giving reaches the \$2 million mark. A new, flexible approach to sorority, the Career Chapter, is introduced.

1986 Beta Sigma Phis raise \$130,000 for the Statue of Liberty Restoration project, exceeding the goal by 30 percent.

1987 A Chapter Pen Pal Program allows chapters to correspond and share ideas for projects, programs and parties. Bed and Breakfast hostesses now number more than 1,000 worldwide.

1988 The Master Degree is introduced for members who have been Laureates for 10 years or more. The first Master chapter is formed in Kansas City, Missouri.

1989 Saudi Arabia chapters enjoy a country-wide Founder's Day celebration hosted by Xi Alpha of Dhahran. Five Alpha chapters are reactivated by existing members, chapters and councils. The Exemplar Fund becomes dedicated to scholarships for sorority sisters continuing their education - 11 are awarded in the first year. U.S. first lady Barbara Bush becomes an International Honorary Member.

1990 Beta Sigma Phi sisters help recover from the devastation of Hurricane Hugo by donating some \$16,500 from 257 chapters across the United States. Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder is named a Beta Sigma Phi Envoy. The 60th Anniversary celebration kicks off with birthday cards from members committing to introduce friends to sorority, create Celebration Chapters and earn plaques at International.

1991 Members go into high gear in support of the troops in the Middle East. A new International Beta Sigma Phi "Legacy Day" is created, to be celebrated the Saturday before Mother's Day



each year, Russia Alpha, St. Petersburg, is formed in September.

1992

The Beta Sigma Phi Disaster Fund is created to help sisters who were victims of Hurricane Andrew and Iniki. More than \$180,000 is raised and distributed within a few months.

1993

Honorary member Hillary Clinton of Little Rock, AR becomes the U.S. first lady. New transplantation immunology center at Stanford University Medical Center is named for Beta Sigma Phi in recognition of our many years of generous support.

1994

Breast Cancer Research Endowment Fund begins. Chapters and councils donate their rushing allowances to fund a high risk clinic and breast cancer vaccination research at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Beta Sigma Phi promotes "Random Acts of Kindness" worldwide.

1995

Members of Beta Sigma Phi International and chapters enjoy a seminar and cruise in the Caribbean. Beta Sigma Phi "Best Friends of Your Life" program gives sisters the opportunity to honor their own with recognition and awards.

1996

Beta Sigma Phi hits the information superhighway. The Internet gives sisters a way to chat internationally, instantly, through newsgroups, email, and the International home page. The "Catch a Dream" contest sends a lucky sister to an East Coast cooking school.

1997

Vision 2000 Cruise to Alaska with International's Bill Ross attracts 106 sisters and husbands for a seminar on the future of Beta Sigma Phi. A new chapter, Gamma, is formed in Belgium.

1998

Beta Sigma Phi soars into space as Idaho Honorary Member Barbara Morgan is tapped for a space shuttle adventure. International Honorary Member roster continues to increase with the addition of Nancy Goodman Brinker, founder of Race for the Cure.

1999

Laura Ross Wingfield is named president of the Beta Sigma Phi International Executive Council. Beta Sigma Phi reaches 200,000 members in the year 2000. A membership drive is launched.

2000

The new century begins with the "Beta Sigma Phi Millennium Baby" contest being announced. The winner is David Claiborned, grandson of a

delighted member. The Beta Sigma Phi Pen Pal program is highlighted in The Torch and garners many new participants.

2001

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, Beta Sigma Phis around the world reach out with donations and other types of support. To date, Beta Sigma Phi has donated nearly half a million dollars to breast cancer research, with breakthrough news coming from recipient Dana Farber. An oncologist at the institute, Donald Kufe, MD, works on a vaccine that will benefit women with recurrent breast cancer.

2002

Members gather in Port Canaveral, Florida, to celebrate the first Beta Sigma Phi Online Convention. Congresswoman Joann Davis is installed as an Honorary Member.

2003

The first full color issue of The Torch is released. The PACE Award (Participation, Attitude, Commitment, Enthusiasm) is announced at Founder's Day by Bill Ross.

2004

One of the largest natural disasters in history, a massive tsunami that ravaged southern Asia, brings the world together to try to help. Beta Sigma Phi members around the world, along with millions of others, make donations.

2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit, leaving people homeless. Many victims are Beta Sigma Phi members. East Texas is also devastated by wild fires. To date, the Beta Sigma Phi Disaster Relief Fund has given more than \$240,000 to victims and their families to help rebuild their lives. Online chapters are recognized as official chapters. The Diamond Circle Ritual is introduced at Founder's Day.

2006 Beta Sigma Phi celebrates its 75th anniversary, with a yearlong celebration that includes reactivating Alpha chapters. Chapters were very successful in getting the word out – press coverage was at a 50-year high.

2009 International's Water W. (Bill) Ross dies on January 1. The Beta Sigma Phi web site is brought in-house in July.

2010 International's John J. (Jack) Ross dies on March 20. The Torch of Beta Sigma Phi, which had been published online only for more than a year, is offered again in print form through subscription. The inaugural Torch, presented in a new and rich format, was printed in August 2010.



2011 Beta Sigma Phi celebrates its 80th anniversary. Members are encouraged to post YouTube videos and inform media outlets about sorority. The Torchbearer Degree is introduced for members who have been Masters for 12 years or more. A massive earthquake rocks the northeastern coast of Japan, triggering tsunami waves and leaving thousands dead. Beta Sigma Phi sisters reach out to aid the devastated country.

2012 The first Torchbearer chapter is formed in Alton, Illinois. Sending chapter minutes to International electronically through the web site is introduced.

2013 A shorter version of the Order of the Rose ritual is introduced, as well as an informal graveside service ritual. Members-at-Large gain the ability to use excess moths toward progression through program work.

2014 The Chapter Yardstick now includes points for review of The Torch and International's web site, as well as the Book of Beta Sigma Phi. The Rushing Department introduces the Friendly Venture Wall of Fame. The Torch department produces "large print" versions of the Book of Ritual, the Book of Beta Sigma Phi, and Invitation to Life.

2015 The Legacy Pen Pal program is reintroduced. The Gifts Department holds its first-ever Cyber Monday sale. The Torch department publishes the Collected Poems of Jack Ross as part of its print-on-demand program.

2016 The Book of Ritual is published in e-book format. The 85th Anniversary Cookbook is published. A Digital Yearbook Division is added to the Yearbook Contest. Some 1,500 members come to Kansas City for the 2nd International Convention – the first since 1941.

