



Leaders who Shaped Pi Phi History

These women are admired and adored as outstanding Pi Phis—because of them, the Fraternity remains a premier organization for women and a constant in the lives of our sisters.



AMY BURNHAM ONKEN Illinois Epsilon

It was through the leadership of Illinois Epsilon **AMY BURNHAM ONKEN** that the Fraternity gained not only strength, but its outstanding reputation in the fraternity and sorority community.

In 1904, Amy entered Northwestern University as an English major and became a member of the Illinois Epsilon Chapter. She served as class historian for four

years in addition to a myriad of other activities.

In 1912, Amy became a member of Grand Council. Eight years later, at the age of 36, she was elected Grand President and held that office for 31 years. During her tenure, Pi Phi grew from 65 to 97 chapters, and from 13,000 to 56,000 members. She installed 38 chapters and pinned the arrow over





the hearts of more than 1,500 initiates. Amy knew many of the founders and reinstalled the Illinois Alpha Chapter at Monmouth College in 1928.

From 1928 to 1953, Amy served as Pi Phi's National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) Delegate. She served as NPC Chairman from 1945 to 1947 and oversaw the merger of the Association of Education Sororities into NPC during that time. In 1934, Amy received an honorary degree from Monmouth College. Founder **MARGARET CAMPBELL** placed the hood upon Amy's shoulders at the request of Monmouth College's President,

James Grier, son of Founder **ADA BRUEN GRIER**.

At the 1952 Houston Convention, the title of Honorary Grand President was bestowed to Amy. She attended her last convention in 1962 and passed away a year later. One of Pi Phi's highest individual collegiate awards, the Amy Burnham Onken Award for Outstanding Scholarship and Campus and Community Leadership, was established in her honor. The award recognizes the contribution of a senior who has embodied the ideals of Pi Beta Phi, and it was first presented in 1935.



CAROLYN HELMAN LICHTENBERG

Ohio Alpha

Ohio Alpha **CAROLYN HELMAN LICHTENBERG** was an ardent Pi Phi alumna and served as Grand President from 1985 to 1991. Many affectionately knew Carolyn as "CHL."

Carolyn attended Ohio University, where she received a bachelor's degree in education. After college, Carolyn was an alumnae club leader and became Alumnae Province President. She was later elected to Grand Secretary in 1983 and then Grand President in 1985.

As Grand President, Carolyn was an innovative leader guiding the Fraternity forward with the establishment of Pi Beta Phi Foundation in 1990. Thanks to Carolyn's vision, critical programs

like leadership development and academic scholarships receive ongoing support through the Foundation. She was the first Grand President to have a professional strategic planner work with Grand Council to ensure the viability and sustainability of the Fraternity. Those efforts are the cornerstone of today's Fraternity infrastructure.

Carolyn was also instrumental in the development of the Fraternity's past national service project, Links to Literacy. The program marked the first time Pi Beta Phi's literacy work, which began in 1912 at the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, extended to a national focus. These efforts continue today through Pi Beta Phi's philanthropic initiative,



Read > Lead > Achieve®.

Alongside her leadership and literacy advocacy, Carolyn is known for one of the most beloved traditions at Pi Phi's biennial conventions: the Chapter Banner Parade.

In 2011, Carolyn served as Chairman for the committee that planned a celebration honoring the Fraternity's 100-year commitment to literacy service. The celebration included the dedication of a plaza in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, featuring a life-size bronze sculpture of Pi Beta Phi Settlement School's first

Pi Phi teacher, Della "Miss Dell" **GILLETTE MORGAN**, Illinois Zeta. Carolyn found the sculptor and worked with the artist to ensure the statue captured Miss Dell's character. She passed away in 2014, marking this celebration as one of her last major projects.



CARRIE LANE CHAPMAN CATT

Iowa Gamma



Iowa Gamma **CARRIE LANE CHAPMAN CATT** played a pivotal role in helping women earn the right to vote.

She enrolled at Iowa State University in 1876 and joined the newly formed chapter of I.C. Sorosis. After college, she used her Pi Phi connections to promote the woman's suffrage

movement. She spoke about "The New Revolution" at the 1890 Galesburg Convention and gave a lecture at Swarthmore College in 1901 entitled, "The Procession of Justice," which was attended by members of the Pennsylvania Alpha Chapter. Carrie worked with leaders like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She served as the President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1900–1904 and then again from 1915–1920. Her brilliant organization and oratory skills were credited with helping pass the 19th Amendment in 1920. Later, she helped found the League of Women Voters.

Many honors and degrees were bestowed to Carrie. She was the first NPC member to receive Chi Omega's National Achievement Award, a gold medal presented to a woman of notable accomplishment. Her likeness has been on two postage stamps, one in the U.S. in 1948 and another in Turkey.

Carrie was always loyal to Pi Beta Phi, especially to her

own chapter. After a chapter house fire, she gave them financial aid to rebuild. At the 1924 Eastern Conference, when the portrait of First Lady **GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE**, Vermont Beta, was presented to the nation, Carrie was the keynote speaker at the banquet. At the 1946 Swampscott Convention, the convention body voted to establish Chapter Loyalty Day as January 9, in honor of Carrie's birthday.

Carrie passed away in 1947. One of her mottoes was: "Service to a just cause rewards the worker with more real happiness and satisfaction than any other venture in life."



ELIZABETH CLARKE HELMICK

Michigan Alpha

Michigan Alpha **ELIZABETH CLARKE HELMICK** served as Fraternity Historian and wrote “The History of Pi Beta Phi,” which was published in 1915. She also played a significant role in the success of the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School in Gatlinburg.

While her husband was detailed by the War Department for duty as a military instructor at Hillsdale College, Elizabeth was asked to be a patroness of the Michigan Alpha Chapter and was initiated in 1896.

The family eventually moved from Michigan to Oklahoma to Cuba, but Elizabeth continued to be involved in the Fraternity as she followed her husband’s career. She was among the first American women to go out with the American army of occupation after the Spanish-American War. The family then went on a 56-day voyage to Paraguay. At the time, Elizabeth was the only woman allowed to accompany any expedition upon active service.

She was a member of the Washington, D.C., Alumnae Club when the idea for the Settlement School was proposed at the 1910 Swarthmore Convention. She later joined the Chicago Alumnae Club and became Chairman of the Settlement School Committee.

She was dedicated to ensuring the school was a success. Elizabeth hired the first Pi Phi teacher, Illinois Zeta Della “Miss Dell” **GILLETTE MORGAN**. She gave the Gatlinburg men the infamous ultimatum,

saying if they did not come up with their portion of the funds to purchase land for the school, Pi Phi would leave and find another community. While the Teacher’s Cottage was being built, she spent weeks in Gatlinburg overseeing every aspect of the project. She visited with, and wrote hundreds of letters to, alumnae clubs and chapters, which helped the Settlement School become a respected and valued Fraternity project.

Elizabeth remained devoted to the Fraternity after her retirement from the Settlement School Committee in 1917. After her husband’s retirement from the Army, the couple moved to Hawaii. She was a loyal member of the Honolulu, Hawaii, Alumnae Club until she passed away in 1951.



EMMA HARPER TURNER

Indiana Alpha and D.C. Alpha



Few Pi Phis have such a lengthy list of contributions to the Fraternity as **EMMA HARPER TURNER**, Indiana Alpha and D.C. Alpha. Her service was completed with a fierce devotion to ensuring women played an important role in society.

While a student at Franklin College, Emma was first a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma. After a series of misunderstandings, Kappa withdrew the charter from its chapter at Franklin. The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) had not yet been established at that time, and there was no prohibiting against belonging to more than one NPC group.

Emma then sought a charter to establish an I.C. Sorosis chapter. She was initiated as a member of that chapter in 1888 and served as the chapter's delegate to the 1888 Ottumwa Convention. Her leadership was apparent; after only

two days, the delegates elected her Grand Vice President. Two years later, at the 1890 Galesburg Convention, Emma was elected Grand President.

At the time, there were approximately 20 chapters in six adjacent states. Between 1888 and 1893, eight more chapters were installed—one of these was the D.C. Alpha Chapter at The George Washington University. Emma was the prime force behind the chapter's establishment and one of its charter members.

Emma attended the historic meeting in 1891 in Boston where representatives from seven different women's organizations met together in-person for the very first time. She was appointed Secretary of that group's first standing committee.

Her crowning achievement was establishing the first women's fraternity alumnae association. At the 1893 Chicago Convention, Emma resigned as Grand President to become the first President of the Pi Beta Phi alumnae association.

At the 1910 Swarthmore Convention, Emma, as a Washington, D.C., Alumnae Club representative, presented a plan for an altruistic project she felt Pi Phi needed. The plan was to establish a Settlement School in the Appalachian Mountains in honor of the founders, and a committee was appointed to outline and develop the project. Emma, Pennsylvania Alpha **ANNA PETTIT BROOMELL** and Grand

President **MAY LANSFIELD KELLER**, Maryland Alpha, made many trips to Tennessee to find a location where Gatlinburg was later chosen. The establishment of the school marked the formal beginning of Pi Beta Phi's more than 100-year commitment to literacy service.

At the 1924 Eastern Conference, Emma gave the opening address, welcoming more than 1,200 Pi Phis. During the conference, the women walked up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, where Pi Phi members and mothers were invited to tea with First Lady **GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE**, Vermont Beta. The lovely portrait of the First Lady, paid for by the Fraternity, was presented to the White House that afternoon.

After being an honorary guest at the 1931 Asbury Park Convention, Emma retired and moved to Glendale, California, to be near her sister, a stage and film actress. Emma was active in that city's alumnae club for several years. In 1934, she broke her hip, contracted pneumonia and passed away at nearly 80 years old.



EVELYN PETERS KYLE

Illinois Alpha

As Pi Beta Phi's Poet Laureate, Illinois Alpha **EVELYN PETERS KYLE** conveyed her pride and joy for the sisterhood through her poems. Her words and actions continue to inspire generations of Pi Phis.

After graduating from Monmouth College in 1932, Evelyn served Pi Beta Phi in numerous roles, including Alumnae Province President, Director of Programs, Grand Vice President Alumnae and Grand Vice President Philanthropy. She also served as President of the Pasadena, California, Alumnae Club and Chairman of Pi Beta Phi Foundation's **EMMA HARPER TURNER** Fund Committee.

She was named Pi Beta Phi's Poet Laureate at the 1993 Orlando Convention. In addition to her poems, Evelyn wrote the Founders and Notable Pi Phis sections of the Fraternity Heritage Manual alongside Fraternity Archivist and Historian **FRAN DESIMONE**

BECQUE, New York Alpha.

Evelyn and her husband, Stan, were loyal Pi Beta Phi Foundation donors and longtime members of the Foundation's Marianne Reid Wild Society. When Evelyn passed away in 2009, the bulk of her estate was gifted to the Foundation. In her honor, the Foundation created the Evelyn Peters Kyle Society to recognize donors who support the Foundation with gifts totaling \$1,000 or more each fiscal year. Like Evelyn, members of the Evelyn Peters Kyle Society have



a deep commitment to the future of Pi Beta Phi. Additionally, one outstanding alumna is awarded the Evelyn Peters Kyle Angel Award for Club Service each year.



GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

Vermont Beta

First Lady **GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE**, Vermont Beta, was one of Pi Beta Phi's most loyal members. In 1898, Grace entered the University of Vermont and became a charter member of the Vermont Beta Chapter. The chapter

often met in the Coolidge family home. She was also the chapter's delegate to the 1901 Syracuse Convention.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1902, she began working



as a teacher at the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts. Calvin Coolidge, also a Vermonter, graduated in 1895 from Amherst College where he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta. He later set up a law practice in nearby Northampton. One day, when Grace was in the garden of the Clarke School, she glanced up at the house next door and saw Calvin shaving in a window. He heard her laugh and made plans to meet her. They were married on October 4, 1905, and had two sons: John, born in 1906, and Calvin Jr., born in 1908.

After becoming mayor of Northampton, Calvin was elected State Senator, Lieutenant Governor and then Governor. In 1920, he was elected Vice President of the United States and the family moved to the New Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. Upon President Harding's death, Calvin succeeded to the presidency on August 3, 1923. He was elected to a full term in 1924 by the largest Republican plurality up to that point.

In April 1924, as part of the Fraternity's Eastern Conference, Pi Beta Phi presented a portrait of Grace to the White House, painted by Howard Chandler Christy. Pi Phi members contributed \$3,000 to have it painted, and more than 1,200 sisters from every state attended the presentation. Based on the nation's colors, Grace's dress is red with her Pi Phi arrow over her heart. Her white collie, Rob Roy, is at her side against the background of the White House and a brilliant blue sky. Copies of the portrait were sold to Pi Phis for \$2 each, and \$3 each



if they were signed by Grace. The proceeds benefited the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School's library.

An Arrow correspondent described the presentation of the portrait of First Lady **GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE** to the White House.

"The guests assembled in the historic East Room, forming a semi-circle about the panel on the west wall, where hung the curtains, in wine red velvet, with cords of silver blue, which covered the portrait. The presentation party was assembled in the Green Room. Promptly at 4:30, a section of the Marine Band began to play, announcing the opening of the simple ceremony. The presentation group came first from the Green Room, taking their places on the inner side of the circle, facing the portrait. On either side of the portrait stood the two collegiate girls who were to draw the curtains.

Through the double doorway appeared the Army, Naval and

Marine Aides to the President. With the Senior Aides as escort, came Grace Coolidge, First Lady of the Land. She wore a soft grey georgette crepe afternoon dress trimmed with crystal, and, as jewels, a diamond eagle on her shoulder, a chain with a crystal pendant, a gold bracelet, her wedding ring and the diamond studded arrow, which had been presented the day before by a group of personal friends in Pi Beta Phi. With arms at her side, she stood very still through the entire ceremony, except for a constant play of understanding appreciation, which lighted her expressive face.

The representatives drew the silver blue cords, the heavy wine-red curtains parted and the portrait was revealed. Then, 'to express a little of what was in their hearts,' the Pi Beta Phi Anthem was sung, with Mrs. Coolidge joining in. After the portrait was presented, the group moved to the Blue Room. A single line was formed and the guests were presented by name to the First Lady. To each she gave a smile, an individual word of greeting and a warm handshake.

The lower floors of the White House were open, so that the attendees had an opportunity to see the staterooms. At the conclusion of the reception, the group headed to the gardens, where a panoramic photo was taken. As the First Lady left the grounds after the picture, she spoke to the nearby Pi Phis, 'This is the loveliest thing I have seen here. I should like to keep you here always, to make beautiful the White House lawn.'



PI BETA PHI EASTERN CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL, 1918
"WHITE HOUSE LAWN"

Grace remained an involved alumna her entire life. She was the first President of the Western Massachusetts Alumnae Club, and in 1912, she was elected as Alpha Province Vice President, covering the area from Florida to Toronto. She became the Province President in 1915, though she later resigned to help her husband campaign.

Also in 1915, she attended the San Francisco Convention and was a passenger on the first cross-country Pi Phi convention train. It was on this train ride that several

of her Pi Phi friends formed the Robins, sending round robin letters around the group. Two Robins became prominent in Pi Phi: Massachusetts Alphas **ANNA ROBINSON NICKERSON**, a Grand Vice President, and **SARAH POMEROY RUGG**, *The Arrow* Editor.

After leaving the White House, the Coolidge family returned to Northampton where Calvin died in 1933. Grace remained active at the Clarke School for the Deaf, serving as a Trustee and President of the Board. Grace died in 1957

at the age of 78. She is buried beside her husband and two sons in the little cemetery at Plymouth Notch, Vermont.



JEAN WIRTHS SCOTT

Pennsylvania Beta

Revered and admired by all who knew her, Grand President Emerita **JEAN WIRTHS SCOTT**, Pennsylvania Beta, was a distinguished member of Pi Beta Phi whose transformative leadership is still prevalent today. Jean's leadership, foresight and passion for teamwork created a strong foundation for all 26 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) organizations.

Jean joined Pi Beta Phi at Bucknell University in 1953 and would go on

to serve as Chapter President, the first of many leadership roles she

would hold within and beyond Pi Phi. Jean first served Pi Phi at the international level as Grand Vice President Philanthropies after beginning her Fraternity service as a club president and later serving as Alumnae Province President. During her term as Grand President, Jean found the Fraternity faced with unprecedented issues: coed fraternities, injury and alcohol



liability, drug abuse and hazing. She oversaw the development of alcohol and drug awareness programs and took a firm stand against hazing practices.

Jean's accomplishments can be credited to her open lines of communication and her support for success across the Panhellenic community. From 1995 to 1997, as NPC Chairman, Jean led the 26 member groups with enthusiasm and a vision for the future. Under her leadership, the relationship between NPC and North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)

was immeasurably strengthened through frequent meetings of the executive boards of the two conferences.

Jean continued her mission to abolish hazing, forged industry relationships to lead the development of values-based anti-drug programming and supported the implementation of substance-free housing at colleges and universities through participation in an NPC/NIC Joint Commission.

In an extension of her loyalty and service to the Fraternity, Jean

served Pi Beta Phi Foundation in many roles, including the Board of Trustees President from 2005-2007. Jean's focus on ensuring the future of our sisterhood was evident in her leadership of the first endowment building campaign the Foundation conducted for Pi Phi. Because of Jean's visionary leadership, the Fraternity began awarding the Jean Wirths Scott Leadership Award for Outstanding Change Leadership in 1987, recognizing a member who has implemented changes and improvements in the chapter or the local Collegiate Panhellenic Council.



MARIANNE REID WILD

Kansas Alpha



Kansas Alpha **MARIANNE REID WILD** was a dedicated Pi Phi leader. She paved a new path forward by becoming the first alumna to make a significant bequest to Pi Beta Phi Foundation.

Marianne joined Kansas Alpha in 1924. Her Pi Phi service began in 1931 with the role of Province Vice President. She then served as Assistant Grand Vice President for 12 years and then as Grand Vice President. In 1952, she became Grand President. During her six years in that role, she installed seven chapters. She also served as Pi Beta Phi's NPC Delegate and was named Grand President Emerita in 1966.

Marianne died just as the Fraternity gathered for the 1991 St. Louis Convention. A Pi Phi for 67 years,

tradition played a large part in her life. She always carefully considered what had been done in the past before suggesting changes for the future.

Marianne extended her love for Pi Phi by leaving a large portion of her estate to Pi Beta Phi Foundation. She was the first Pi Phi to give a gift of its size, and it enabled Marianne to establish a permanent legacy that impacts many generations of Pi Phis beyond those she lived to see.

Today, many Pi Beta Phi members and friends also choose to make planned gifts that transcend their lifetime and allow the Foundation to ensure the future of the sisterhood. These forward-thinking donors are collectively known as members of the Marianne Reid Wild Society.



MARILYN SIMPSON FORD

Nebraska Beta

For more than 20 years, Nebraska Beta **MARILYN SIMPSON FORD** presented the heart and soul of Pi Beta Phi in *The Arrow*. As Editor, Marilyn oversaw several milestones of the magazine, including introducing color in 1974 and celebrating *The Arrow's* centennial in 1985.

During Marilyn's 21 years as *Arrow* Editor, she chaired several committees and then served as Chairman of the National Panhellenic Editors Conference (now National Panhellenic Communicators Conference) from 1981 to 1983. Throughout the years, she also chaired numerous committees and served on the Board of Directors for the College Fraternity Editors Association (CFEA), now the Fraternity Communications Association (FCA).

At the 1989 NPC Annual Meeting, Pi Beta Phi established an award in

Marilyn's name through CFEA/FCA to honor outstanding service to the organization. The Marilyn Simpson Ford Distinguished Service Award is presented at the FCA Annual Conference to members who have worked diligently to advance the Association's vision and purpose. Marilyn was the award's first recipient, honored by Pi Beta Phi Grand President **CAROLYN HELMAN LICHTENBERG**, Ohio Alpha, and CFEA/FCA President **KRIS BRAND RISKE**, Gamma Phi Beta.

Marilyn was also instrumental in the Atlanta Alumnae Club and the Georgia Alpha Chapter House Corporation (CHC), including serving as CHC President when the chapter house was built. Even in her retirement, Marilyn devoted her time and love to Pi Beta Phi, serving as Fraternity Historian from 1993 to 2003. She passed away in 2012.



May Lansfield Keller

Maryland Alpha

Maryland Alpha **MAY LANSFIELD KELLER** was a pioneer, scholar, teacher, college administrator, linguist, writer and traveler.

In 1897, May became the very first initiate of the Maryland Alpha Chapter. She was also the first

Chapter President as well as her class President. For two terms after her graduation, May did graduate

work at The University of Chicago. Her dream was to study in Europe; she finally persuaded her father to let her go to Heidelberg, Germany.





May was one of the first women to enroll at Heidelberg University. Her knowledge of English literature, German, philosophy, Anglo-Saxon and the classics impressed her professors. She also studied at the

University of Berlin. In 1904, May received her doctorate magna cum laude.

In 1908, May was elected Grand President. During her 10 years in office, she installed 21 chapters—among them was Ontario Alpha, the Fraternity’s first Canadian chapter. The Pi Phi Symphony, recognition pin and official Pi Phi Grace were also inaugurated during her presidency. The Settlement School was her greatest achievement, and it was her proudest moment when the new school building was dedicated in 1913.

In 1914, May became Dean of Westhampton College, a new women’s school that was to be part of the University of Richmond. She was resolute that Westhampton College should be a true college and not another finishing school. Eighty-eight young women were in the first class. May ran the school for 32 years and became known affectionately as the “Iron Dean.”

Many honors were bestowed upon May both before and after her retirement. She was named Professor Emerita and lived out her life at the “Deanery,” the campus residence she loved. Her last public appearance was in 1964 at Westhampton College’s golden anniversary, a few weeks before her death. She sat in cap and gown to watch a pageant showing the 50-year history of the college in which she had been a vital and guiding force.

In May’s memory, Pi Beta Phi Foundation established the May Lansfield Keller Award for Philanthropic Leadership in 2011. This award is presented biennially to a Pi Beta Phi member who has displayed outstanding philanthropic leadership in her community and who has significantly advanced the Foundation’s mission of ensuring the future of the sisterhood.



Olivia Smith Moore

Missouri Alpha

Tempered with a delightful sense of humor, Missouri Alpha **OLIVIA SMITH MOORE** was a wonderful friend, a tower of strength and devotion and an outstanding Pi Phi.

In college, Olivia was very active in her chapter. While serving as Chapter President, she had the great joy of pledging and initiating her younger sister. She continued her involvement as an alumna, serving as a Province Vice President from 1936 to 1946. From 1946 until 1951, she served as Treasurer of the

Settlement School Committee, and in 1952, she was elected Grand Treasurer and served in that office until 1967. At the 1967 Centennial Convention, she was named Grand Treasurer Emerita.

Olivia kept a very careful eye on the Fraternity’s money. She closely watched the Fraternity’s investments and was proud there was enough in 1961 to manage both a national Chapter Presidents workshop in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and



an extra convention to celebrate the Fraternity's Centennial.

Olivia's love of shoes became legendary in the Fraternity. At conventions, Pi Phi collegians considered it a great treat to be invited to Olivia's room to see the shoes she brought for the week—usually about 40 pairs—lined up on the top of a chest of drawers. A salesman in the Neiman Marcus shoe department encouraged “Miss Olivia's” love of shoes—he never failed to send her one or two pairs of shoes each month.

Later, the Silver Slipper Award, given to an outstanding chapter Vice President of Finance, was presented in Olivia's honor. The sterling silver award was a replica

of one of her shoes. Sadly, the award became too fragile for the constant necessary shipping and was retired. It now lives in the archives at Pi Beta

Phi Headquarters. Today's Silver Slipper Award winners receive a silver, shoe-shaped charm. Olivia passed away in 1985. ✨

