We Salute Our Founding

Founder’s Day is once again approaching, a time where we celebrate when our special organization came to be. The thought that marked the beginning of this beacon to Life, Learning and Friendship remains a stirring narrative, no matter how many times it is told. One man, a humble book salesman named Walter W. Ross, had one dream in his sights – to form an organization for women to fellowship and become enriched in a multitude of ways.

The real testament to this novel idea of Mr. Ross’s, and in equal measure, the path he took to take it, is that he built the structure so thoroughly, with such diligent and caring charter members, that there was no question it would flourish. In the spirit of our founder, this strong foundation became even more so with every added chapter, every added state, and every added country.

Our first charter member, Helen Klover Pepper, passed on this summer at the age of 96. Helen had been a special guest at many Beta Sigma Phi events. She spoke at various Founder’s Day events and conventions, and was always the star of the show with her keen memory and refined demeanor. She was the perfect ambassador for Beta Sigma Phi, and she embraced that role. She will forever be missed and it is our fortune that she aligned so seamlessly with our sorority.

In his 1948 Founder’s Day speech, Walter W. Ross, who always loved a story, told his favorite one – the story of Beta Sigma Phi. Although our organization was only 17 years old, it had already become a story of success.

The following are the last lines of this speech, spoken as only he could, “And here the story must stop, for there is no end. The rest of the tale can only be told as the yet unwritten chapters unfold. As page after glorious page is turned by the hand of time. And were it possible to foretell the conclusion, I am sure it would be one of happily ever after.”

If the resulting 63 years are any indication, Mr. Ross, as usual, was right.

Happy 80th Birthday, Beta Sigma Phi.
Our Chapters Celebrate Founder’s Day – the Beta Sigma Phi Way!

Members of Laureate Iota Omega and Preceptor Xi Eta of Lake Isabella, California celebrated Founder’s Day quite creatively. Laureate Iota Omega had secretly arranged to give the members a real taste of adventure by holding the event in an airport hanger. Invitees were instructed to wear travel clothing and admitted only with an official boarding pass. After going through security, they were graciously served their inflight dinner by an attendant. Chairmen Vickie Lipke and Charlotte Zagon of Laureate Iota Omega were dressed appropriately as airline captains, and the hanger was decorated with travel signs and posters.

“Everyone was given a passport at the beginning of the year and an identifying sticker to attach after each program,” writes Laureate Iota Omega member Janet Ridenour. A grand year was had by all celebrating the sorority year.”

Traveling to a lovely tea room that served as an excellent stand-in for Buckingham Palace, Alabama Xi Beta Chi, Wetumpka sisters had tea and scones in the fabulous flower garden. A delicious lunch of quiche, salad, finger sandwiches and an array of tasty desserts were fit for a queen. Table decorations of yellow roses and candles set the mood for these ladies, donned in their finery, including hats. Xi Beta Chi member Ran Wilson supplied each member with white gloves and a beautiful jewel ring to truly complete the feeling of royalty.

Following the meal, the Founder’s Day awards program got underway, complete with a proclamation from Alabama Governor Bob Riley.

South Carolina Preceptor Alpha Delta, Seneca chose to honor two members who received special recognition this year during their Founder’s Day’s festivities. Sally Boggs, RNC and Martha Huey RN, were both recently awarded top honors for their dedicated nursing service. The chapter was thrilled to laud these two members who have made such a positive difference in the lives of others. “Both Sally and Martha have been valuable members of our chapter and are great examples of Beta Sigma Phi members,” writes Preceptor Alpha Delta member Janice Grous.

Wichita, Kansas members proudly celebrate their 75th anniversary in Beta Sigma Phi. The first chapter, Kansas Alpha Phi, Wichita was established in April, 1939. Congratulations, sisters on this wonderful accomplishment.