

Black Greeks' Series: SIGMA GAMMA RHO

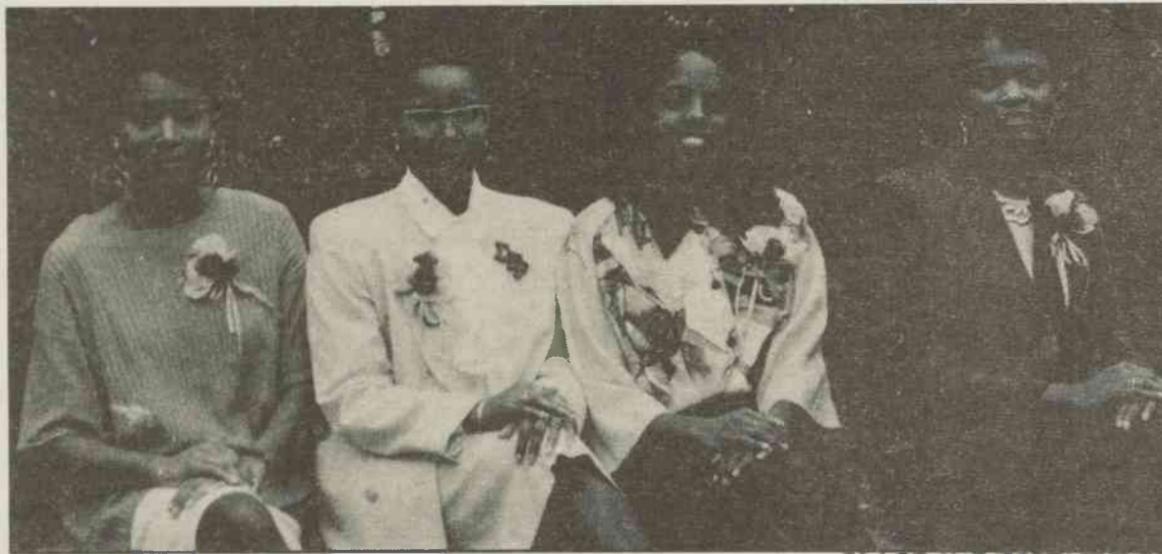
By Tia Webster
Ink Staff Writer

On November 12, 1922, Vivian Marbury, Bessie Martin, Cubena McClure, Nan Johnson, Mary Lou Little, Hattie Redford, and Dorothy Whiteside, seven black teachers on a predominantly white campus, established an organization that would provide 'greater service and greater progress.' As a result of their endeavors, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated was founded.

Sixty-eight years later on November 16, the Lambda Psi Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho appeared on UNC's campus for the first time.

LaSonya Goode (Basileus), Zanetta Vaughn (Anti-Basileus), Beverly McFadden (Anti-Grammateus) and Sonya Reddick (Tamiochus) are this year's officers.

Shelley Romero, LaShonda Brown, Patrena Benton and LaTricia Henry are the newest inducted chapter members of the youngest black Greek letter soror-



The officers of Sigma Gamma Rho recently inducted four new members, not shown.

ity in the nation.

Goode believes that a smaller organization can create a tighter bond and greater demand of sisterhood.

"A small number has proven to do just as much as an organization with fifteen or more people," Goode said. "Quality, not quantity, makes a bigger difference to an extent."

Despite their small size, this sorority has continued to become one of the most active organizations on campus. It was recognized as the chapter of the year at the regional and national level, and hopes to gain this honor once again.

This year already, Sigma Gamma Rho has sponsored several activities. A hair care show with

Arnold's Beauty College, a book raffle to cover \$200 of book expenses for the spring semester, and an African fashion show during Kwanzaa are just a few of the many activities in which they have been involved. In celebration of their 70th anniversary during Founder's week, Sigma Gamma Rho sponsored two workshops concerning "The voice

of the black woman in leadership and service." These two workshops, "Women in Leadership" and "The Evolution of the Black Woman" were moderated by Judi Barter and Margo Crawford, respectively.

Not only does Sigma Gamma Rho work with the campus community, but they also devote their time to helping the elderly. Every second Friday of each month, they visit the elderly at Hill Haven Convalescent Home.

Along with winning chapter of the year, the women of Sigma Gamma Rho has set goals because as Goode said, "...there's always room for improvement." This year they are striving to win chapter of the year once again, provide more hardworking campus-oriented service and focus on the community-at-large, especially with the youth.

When they search for new members, they are looking for young ladies who want to educate themselves, and to give service back to the community, especially the African American community.

The History Behind Old Chapel Hill Cemetery

By Latricia Henry
Ink Contributor

What do you think of when you see a cemetery? Death, funerals, sorrow, and all that sad stuff, I'm sure. While walking through the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery on my way to Carmichael Gym, I noticed several broken headstones along the path. I didn't pay much attention to the cemetery then, because I figured, "It's only white people buried there."

As interest began to grow concerning who was actually buried there, I found out that there were slaves buried there as well. This didn't surprise me either, seeing as though black people, i.e. slaves, built this University brick by brick.

I proceeded to contact Rebecca Clark, a Chapel Hill native and resident authority on the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery, to find out more information. Clark told me that there is actually a black sec-

tion of the cemetery and it is probably the sections you think are white. "There is a black section and a white section," she said. "The rock wall divides us."

The cemetery, which dates back to the 1700s, is composed of six sections, the first two being black. The black sections are located next to Connor and Winston dorms and extends to a stone wall aligned by a path. The cemetery itself faces South Road and Carmichael gym and it extends to Country Club Road.

Clark's involvement with the cemetery began in the early 1980s and climaxed on Nov. 5, 1985 during a UNC-Clemson football game. Before the game faithful UNC fans were allowed by Chapel Hill Police to park in the black section of the cemetery. This caused several broken headstones and footstones, sunken graves, and vandalism in general.

Clark and several other concerned citizens formed the Old

Chapel Hill Cemetery Task Force in order to get the town to repair and renovate the cemetery, especially the black sections. The Chapel Hill Town Council decided that there was nothing they could do about it, because they didn't formally own the cemetery land.

Under an agreement between the city and the University, it was agreed that the University would retain ownership of the cemetery but the town would maintain it. The town only maintained it as far as general upkeep is concerned because they felt that it was the responsibility of the families to care for the graves of their family members.

The problem with that is that the families of most of the blacks buried in the cemetery have passed as well. In 1986, Clark went to the Town Council and asked them to ask the University to deed the property to them and the deed formally went through in October of the same year. The town agreed to have a

study done concerning what needed to be done to improve the condition of the cemetery.

This study, performed by Hunter, Reynolds, Jewell, P.A. Landscape Architects of Raleigh, highlighted the need for the repair of broken headstones and footstones, sunken graves, poor irrigation, and the uprooting of trees.

The town agreed to spend \$250,000 over the course of five years on renovating the cemetery. The renovations were to be completed by this year and according to Clark, it hasn't changed much since 1985.

The town has recently informed Clark that it will take four more years to complete what should have been finished this year. "Since the study was done in 1987, all I've seen is sand-like gravel out there on South Road and a sprinkler system installed. I'm not even sure if they turn that thing on," Clark said. "They have only repaired one headstone

that I can see. My point is let's just pick them up and fix (the cemetery) up." Clark does not think that it is too much to ask for the town to respect our ancestors.

The Collegiate Black Caucus, a political organization dedicated to community service and the preservation of African-American culture, is heading a movement to demand that the town live up to its agreement. The Collegiate Black Caucus is looking for dedicated organizations and persons willing to organize together in yet another struggle for equality as "Students for the Improvement of our Ancestry" (SIA).

If you or your organization is interested in working with the Collegiate Black Caucus and SIA please feel free to attend any Collegiate Black Caucus meeting on Mondays at 5:30 in the Sonja Haynes Stone BCC or contact Latricia Henry at 914-5007.