

THE EVOLUTION OF GREEKS:

HOW IT USED TO BE AND HOW IT IS TODAY

By Cheritta Pridgen

For hundreds of years, African Americans everywhere have seen and felt more discrimination and racism than any man could handle. After slavery and the end of Reconstruction, black people all over America were looking for and needed some kind of way to unity and build up the race. In the early 1900s, black fraternities and sororities began to spring up on college campuses in the United States to help accomplish this goal. Black fraternities and sororities were all founded (generally speaking) on principles of unity, brotherhood, sisterhood, scholarship and service to benefit the members of the organizations as well as the black race as a whole.

Since it has been nearly a century since these organizations were formed, many may wonder, especially as the millenium approaches, how these organizations and their aspects evolved?

Carlos Pualing, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and a 1995 alumni, said: "I think that every process evolves. Things are different now than what they were before in 1993 when I pledged and people from 1973 will say the same thing I'm saying in regards to 1993."

Angie White, a senior and president of the Kappa Omicron chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., said: "Some aspects of collegiate chapters differ from years ago, but (the) most important factors remain the same. The principles and bylaws by which our organizations were founded are still upheld. Sisterhood and Brotherhood are the components that have always served as the glue and will always be incorporated in sororities and fraternities."

Cassandra Caldwell, a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and a 1993 alumni said, "I feel that black Greek organizations are fantastic entities because of scholarship and the service we provide."

Unity has always been important for blacks and is a very important aspect of black fraternities and sororities. In the early 1900s, fraternities and sorori-

ties were a way for blacks to unite with one another in a close way. As far as this goes, some alumni feel that unity is not as it was before.

Nathaniel Dobson, a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and a 1986 alumni, said, "The unity is not nearly to the same degree (as it was) because of negative publicity for hazing incidents and a lack of bonding during intake which is supposed to make all of the members of a fraternity close to each other."

Pualing added, "The yard is different and I think it is a negative byproduct of society and as a function of aggregate Greek life."

As organizations evolve, members try to keep a well-defined focus. Many fraternities and sororities have tried to make sure their focus has not changed from service to status.

Dr. William Lawrence, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and a 1989 alumni, said: "I don't think the focus has changed at all. We were very service oriented and we still do things."

Angie White added: "As a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., especially as part of Kappa Omicron, I can truly say that our focus is still and will always be service. We put great pride in our programmatic thrust and work very diligently to make sure we use each focus to serve the community. If status is a question, then if the organization is doing its part through service then the status will follow."

James Joyner, a member of Phi Beta Sigma and a 1987 alumni, said: "We learned brotherhood to stick together and help your brother. When things went down, I had to help. The reason I pledged Phi Beta Sigma was because its focus was on being yourself and academics."

No matter which Greek organization in question, they have all been important to the crucial elements in the uplift of the black race, especially on college campuses.