

SIGMA ZETA

*A National
Honorary Science Society*



Devoted to
the Advancement of Science

Founded 1925

THE GAVEL

The center of the gavel head is a piece of oak, donated by Alpha chapter. It is from a beam of a house built in 1821 by the Rev. John M. Peck, founder of Shurtleff College.

The wood into which the handle of the gavel is inserted is a piece of mahogany, representing Epsilon chapter. It is from a case for a battery of Leyden jars, and dates well back toward the founding of Otterbein College in 1847.

The light piece of wood next to the mahogany was contributed by Zeta chapter. It was part of the railing of the stairway leading to the assembly hall in the original building at Central State, which was built in 1894.

Next to this is a piece of spruce, representing Eta chapter. It is from the original flooring of Science hall, the oldest building on the campus at the State Teachers College at Cape Girardeau.

The next piece of wood represents Beta chapter. It is walnut and came from an old piece of equipment in the Physics laboratory, dating from approximately 1835.

Adjoining this is a piece of yellow pine, contributed by Gamma chapter, and taken from the flooring of the Egyptian Building, which was built in 1845 and is the oldest building on the campus.

The seventh piece of wood is a piece of walnut which represents Delta chapter.

Silver bands have been added to the head of the gavel. Greek letters identifying all the chapters have been inscribed on these bands.

HISTORY

Sigma Zeta was founded as an Honorary Science Society at Shurtleff College, Alton, Illinois, in the autumn of 1925. In the following year, it was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of Illinois; its objectives are the encouragement and recognition of high standards of scholarship among undergraduate college students in science and mathematics.

This objective is unique among the honorary fraternities in two respects. First, it includes the entire field of the sciences and mathematics; second, the field is limited entirely to undergraduate study. At least in the opinion of the founders, such an organization should fill a distinct place in the smaller colleges offering undergraduate work only and where small departmental enrollments make it difficult to maintain an organization in each special subject in the field.

In the same year that the organization was incorporated, a number of science instructors in neighboring institutions became interested in the work of the young society at Shurtleff. As a result it was decided to extend the organization to groups at other colleges, and the Society took on the character of a national honorary fraternity. The creation of a governing board was undertaken and the beginnings of a national organization took shape. The Shurtleff group became the first chapter, and charters for additional chapters were granted. The second charter was granted to a similar science organization at McKendree College, Lebanon, Illinois, which became the Beta chapter.

Since these early days, the Society has had a steady development and has granted eighteen charters since its founding in 1925:

Alpha—1925—Shurtleff College, Alton, Illinois
Beta—1926—McKendree College, Lebanon, Illinois

Gamma—1927—Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia

Delta—1927—State Teachers College, Kirksville, Missouri

Epsilon—1929—Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio

Zeta—1929—Central State Teachers College, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Eta—1929—State Teachers College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Theta—1932—Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Kappa—1935—Western Illinois State Teachers College, Macomb, Illinois

Lambda—1936—State Teachers College, Mansfield, Pennsylvania

Mu—1937—State Teachers College, Mankato, Minnesota

Nu—1937—Northern Illinois State Teachers College, DeKalb, Illinois

Xi—1938—Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana

Omicron—1939—Wilson Teachers College, Washington, D. C.

Pi—1943—James Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois

Rho—1943—Indiana Central College, Indianapolis, Indiana

Sigma—1943—Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Texas

Tau—1947—State Teachers College, East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

MEMBERSHIP

Active membership is limited to undergraduate students of science and mathematics in the junior and senior college years. While the statement of the standard of scholarship must necessarily vary with the rating system employed at the different institutions, in general it can be said that a grade of B in general scholarship and in the sciences and mathematics must be maintained; consistently good work throughout the entire college program is demanded and the customary standards of character and personality are given consideration. Members of the teaching staff at institutions where chapters are established may also be admitted to active membership.

Students in the first two years of college, whose work in the sciences indicates promise of development, may be elected to associate membership. Associate membership is temporary, implies no claims on the Society nor involves such a member with any obligations to the chapter. It is optional with the individual chapter whether associate membership is maintained or not; some apparently find it an excellent device while a few chapters have never elected any associate members. Women are admitted on the same basis as men. Honorary membership is, in general, quite restricted; it is conferred only in unusual or exceptional cases.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

At the business meetings during the annual conclave, major affairs of the Society are cared for by the national chapter consisting of the six national officers and the delegates of the various chapters. In the intervals between conclaves, the national officers constitute the national council and conduct the affairs of the organization. The Recorder-Treasurer rather than the President normally handles communications to the Society.

For 1947-48, the officers are:

National President — Donald E. Miller, XI Chapter.

National Vice-President — Chester W. Bennett, Kappa Chapter.

National Recorder-Treasurer — Gilbert W. Faust, Zeta Chapter.

National Editor — Sister Mary Clarence, Sigma Chapter.

National Historian — S. M. McClure, Beta Chapter.

Past National President — Walter H. Eller, Kappa Chapter.

The insignia of the Society is a key representing an opened book and inscribed with symbols of the various sciences. New members are invested with the key and presented with the membership diploma at the time of initiation into the chapter. The traditional colors of the Society are blue and white.

The Sigma Zetan, published twice a year, is the official publication of the organization.

THE CHAPTERS

Activities of the chapters center around the objectives of the Society: stimulation of undergraduate scholarship in the sciences and recognition of creditable achievement in this field. The second objective is realized, at least in part, with the election to membership when tangible evidence is given in the form of the key and the diploma.

The first-mentioned objective involves a wide variety of activities in stimulating scientific thought and study in the many different local situations at the various colleges. Some chapters, especially those in schools having no departmental clubs, sponsor programs featuring student papers and visiting speakers; others, where departmental clubs meet this function, provide one or more, or even a series of science lectures during the school year. Several chapters sponsor laboratory open house, science shows, field trips, and similar activities. One chapter has a continuing year-to-year project involving some of the above features plus the building up of a geological collection.

Charters for new chapters are granted only after the various chapters have had the opportunity to evaluate the petition of the new group. In general, preference is given to well-established science groups in colleges maintaining strong science and mathematics departments; full faculty co-operation must be assured by the petitioning group. Ten persons, including at least two faculty members, constitute the minimum organization necessary for a chapter.