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A Fraternity for Life

Get The Goods...

Do you remember the first time you saw the TKE Coat-of-Arms? The first time you heard the tale of how the Knights of Classic Lore became Tau Kappa Epsilon? The moment you became a Frater in our Bond? But how many times have you stopped to think about how the Fraternity impacts your daily life? We find ourselves caught up in the hurried moments of life, and we are not always mindful of what has shaped our character.

Tau Kappa Epsilon is called "The Fraternity for Life," and that means many things to many people. For some Fraters it is a commitment to the principles and beliefs of the Fraternity for life. And for others it means a lifelong involvement with TKE, and a constant dedication to helping the Fraternity as an active alumnus. Still, many take this phrase to symbolize the Bond we share as Fraters, and the promises we make to one another.

While each of these interpretations is accurate in their own way, there is yet another perspective to consider. For all the great lessons the Fraternity instills in its members it is the TKE experience which shapes our lives the most. TKE is a fraternity for life. It is a tutor in a young man's life, and it is a companion in the lives of all who are Fraters in the Bond. Tau Kappa Epsilon offers its members an unofficial course in men's studies during a time when the "mind and heart are in their most receptive condition, for it is the formative period of life."

The rigors of our Candidate education period teach us respect and understanding for the principles of Tau Kappa Epsilon. Those first few days as a "shiny badge" build our desire to contribute our abilities to a common cause. As big brothers we share our own TKE experiences, and learn to become mentors for those around us. When we assume leadership roles we make a promise to ourselves, and to the chapter, to promote the best interests of the Fraternity. Piece by piece we become Men of Apollo who strive to make our way in this world.

This is not to say that all lessons in the Fraternity occur during these great steps of membership. Indeed, it's the small steps that make the biggest imprints. Think about that philanthropy meeting you rushed all across campus in the driving rain to attend. The flat tire you helped a Frater fix when you could have been watching television. The rush event you helped plan when you were two chapters behind in your American Lit. class. The countless football games you missed to sit outside and listen to the tall tales alumni love to tell. These are the times we cherish when our undergraduate days are over.

And remember those chapter meetings that never seemed to end. The chairman who never made it to a meeting on time. The rushee who took three weeks to sign. The Frater who could find the money for pizza, but not for his dues. The time you painted the sidewalk in front of the house, but someone accidentally bought water soluble paint. Remember the day you understood why the seniors were always so critical of the chapter. These are rites of passage for those entering the real world.

In each instance you were learning what it took to survive, excel, and succeed in the Fraternity. But what you didn't know was that you were learning how to persevere, grow, and triumph in life. Everything in TKE is about putting our college years into action. It was Founder Settles who noted that we were established as "an organization for the development of men to fit them to cope with the world when their school days were over." Nearly a century later we continue to build a lasting legacy from this statement. We live the Fraternity, in deed and word, with each passing day.

Tau Kappa Epsilon is the unseen hand when our college years are over. When that co-worker is late for the big presentation. When you work through the weekend to bring in that big account. When you sacrifice time and time again for the ones you love. When you teach your children to respect others and to study hard in school. TKE is behind the scenes in ways we might not always acknowledge. It is a guide for life and a reminder of the principles we hold dear as Fraters. It is an experience that lasts a lifetime and beyond. It is our Fraternity: Tau Kappa Epsilon. And it is truly a Fraternity for Life.

Note: This essay is part of a series entitled "Within The Bond," written by Steven R. MacLaughlin (Gamma-Kappa, Indiana University).



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