The Alpha Sigma Alpha Foundation

By Leslie Maxwell Ziringer, ΓH, ΑΣΑ Foundation chairman

Throughout the 1980s several sorority leaders — including Rosemary Carucci Goss, BΠ, and Diane Yenic James, HH — had a vision, much like the founders had in 1901. Recognizing a need for a vehicle to raise funds for Alpha Sigma Alpha, the vision became a foundation that would enhance the sorority's educational efforts. After years of planning, the ΑΣΑ Foundation was incorporated Oct. 23, 1986, in the state of Missouri. The first Foundation board members were Bonnie Payne Koenemann, ZZ, chairman; Dr. S. June Smith, KK, vice chairman; Lois V. Beers, BΓ, treasurer; and Judy DeMasters Winter, ZZ, secretary.



Rosemary Carucci Goss, BΠ, left, passes the gavel to Leslie Maxwell Ziringer, ΓH, her successor in 1999 as Foundation chairman.

Developing women of poise and purpose

Though the Foundation and the sorority are separate entities, the Foundation is essential to the success and future of Alpha Sigma Alpha. Together they work hand in hand to develop women of poise and purpose.

Since its inception, the ΑΣΑ Foundation has touched countless lives. It supports the sorority's educational and leadership programs, offers academic scholarships, assists children with developmental delays at the S. June Smith Center in Lancaster, Pa., and supports Special Olympics. The Foundation is able to continue its programs through voluntary contributions from Alpha Sigma Alpha members and chapters, friends of Alpha Sigma Alpha and matching gifts from donors' employers.

The Foundation's first educational project was purchasing videotapes on the subject of anti-hazing and arranging for David Westol, a renowned speaker on the topic of hazing, to be featured at the 1988 national convention. The concept of sorority leadership schools was revisited in 1988, and Diane Yencic James, HH, president, and national council worked to create a Leadership Development Institute, which made its debut in the summer of 1989 at Pennsylvania State University, University Park. This program was funded in part by the Foundation. By 1989 the LDI was renamed the Emma Coleman Frost Leadership Development Institute because of Mrs. Frost's support of the sorority and the Foundation.

In 1994 the Foundation awarded its first Founders' Memorial scholarship, one of five established by the Foundation to commemorate the sorority's centennial in 2001. June 18, 1995, a letter of agreement was ratified to transfer the Alpha Sigma Alpha Philanthropic Fund to the Foundation as directed by a resolution passed at the 1994 national convention. These unrestricted assets created the National Scholarship Fund. With this move, all sorority scholarships came under the realm of the

Foundation. For a description of scholarships and lists of recipients, see p. 507.

Other Foundation initiatives have included providing education resources to collegiate chapters on alcohol awareness and date-rape drugs. In the summer of 1996 the Foundation funded "Taking It Personally," an interactive program that featured scenarios that many members could encounter, such as rape and alcohol or drug abuse. Workshops were conducted nationwide to facilitate this program. The Alpha Sigma Alpha Officer Academy made its debut in 1999. Partly funded by the Foundation, this annual program provides leadership development for a specific chapter office.

In recognition of the sorority's centennial in 2001, the Foundation urged donors to provide funds for undergraduate members from each chapter to attend the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute. UIFI, a program of the North American Interfraternity Conference, gives participants the opportunity to explore, define and enhance their leadership skills, explore personal awareness and fraternity/sorority commitment.

Also in 2001 the Foundation introduced two alumnae programs that will provide funding for career enhancement and award monies for teaching excellence. Initial funding for the career enhancement program was provided by Deborah Fields Dietrich, BN, and Emma Coleman Frost, ΠΠ. In addition, the Foundation funded centennial journals to allow collegiate members to reflect on the four aims of Alpha Sigma Alpha as the sorority celebrated its 100-year anniversary.

The Alpha Sigma Alpha Foundation celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2001 and continues to grow with the addition of Bente Fein, the first full-time director of development. Lisa Tait Longo, ΓH, served as part-time director of development from 1991 to 2001.

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