

A Walk Through History: A Timeline

[NOTE: The following history was presented as a candle ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of Section 61 during the Spring 1999 (Feb 26-28) conference at the request of the host chapter, Mu Tau. Eight past and current Section 61 Chairs (Wilson, McCorkle, Knicely, Hahn, Skaggs, Williams, Keely, and Schartiger) and Region V Director Barb Anderson participated. It was found several years later that Section 61, and all the other sections, had been established in August 1968 not in 1969 following the 1968 convention as had been thought at the time of the ceremony. The text was written (and updated for this website) by Jim Hahn.]

The history of our great section is intertwined with the many people and events that similarly shaped the world around us. While we, the members of Section 61, know well that West Virginia is and will always be “Almost Heaven,” it is fitting to reflect upon and celebrate our past as we strive in the present to create an even richer future.

Just as the state flower, the Rhododendron, blossoms one petal at a time, so too did Alpha Phi Omega bloom in West Virginia.

It is 1949. President Truman dedicates the new headquarters of the United Nations in New York City. Arthur Miller’s “Death of a Salesman” wins the Tony Award as the Best Play. Frank Lloyd Wright receives a lifetime achievement award from the American Institute of Architects. And...

On May 15, 1949 Eta Upsilon Chapter is chartered on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington with 45 Brothers.

The state’s colors, Blue and Gold, are shared by both its namesake university and our great Fraternity. It is then appropriate the two entities are united.

It is 1955. Rock and roll music is born with the release of Bill Haley’s “Rock Around the Clock.” Oral contraceptives, McDonald’s, and Disneyland all debut. Television audiences learn that “Father Knows Best.” And...

On May 15, 1955 Lambda Omicron Chapter is chartered at West Virginia University in Morgantown with 40 Brothers.

The beautiful Sugar Maple, our state tree, gathering strength at its roots, holds fast to the soil while stretching wide its branches. So too did we grow.

It is 1956. American actress Grace Kelly weds Monaco’s Prince Rainier III in Monte Carlo. Maria Callas debuts at the Metropolitan Opera. “Ike” Eisenhower is re-elected president after a campaign addressing the “Red Scare” and school desegregation. And...

On March 13, 1956 Lambda Tau Chapter is chartered at Salem College in Salem with 42 Brothers. Today, Salem International University holds this charter.

While the Black Bear roams the mountains as our official state animal, it is the Golden Bear that represents the next chapter in our story.

It is 1959. Alaska and Hawaii are admitted to the union. "Ben Hur" wins a record eleven Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba. And...

On May 16, 1959 Mu Tau Chapter is chartered at West Virginia Institute of Technology in Montgomery with 52 Brothers.

While few residents know the words to the state song, "The West Virginia Hills," few who travel through them forget their unmatched beauty. Amid the hills our history continued.

It is 1964. Arnold Palmer won his fourth and final Masters at Augusta. Composer Jerry Herman collected a Grammy and a Tony Award for his "Hello, Dolly!" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize. And...

In 1964 Omicron Gamma Chapter is chartered at West Virginia State College. Sadly, this chapter is not active today.

We honor three cardinal principles in the Fraternity as the state honors the Cardinal, its official bird. The spirit of Service soared high once more.

It is 1967. Mickey Mantle hits his 500th home run. Boxer Cassius Clay is sentenced to five years in prison for draft evasion of the Vietnam War. President Johnson appoints the first black justice to the US Supreme Court – Thurgood Marshall. And...

On June 4, 1967 Tau Alpha Chapter is chartered at Davis and Elkins College in Elkins with 36 Brothers.

"Mountaineers are always free" proclaims our state motto. The spirit of the people of our state burns brightest when we offer unselfish service to others. A new community is served by our next extension.

It is 1982. Jimmy Connors wins the Wimbledon tennis title. "E.T.:The Extraterrestrial" becomes the all-time box office champ. The Equal Rights Amendment falls three states short of ratification. And...

On May 1, 1982 Alpha Alpha Chi Chapter is chartered at Fairmont State College in Fairmont with 26 Brothers.

Granted statehood June 20, 1863 (West Virginia Day) we became the newest voice in the union's debate on the rights of all citizens to live freely. Our next chapter similarly added a new voice to the section's growing message of the need to serve all West Virginians.

It is 1996. A bomb explodes in Olympic Park during the Atlanta Summer Games. "Frazier" and "E.R." win the Best Comedy and Best Drama Emmy Awards. Brother Bill Clinton is re-elected US President. And...

On May 18, 1996 Alpha Delta Omicron Chapter is chartered at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buchannon with 29 Brothers.

The wild, wonderful Tygart River is home to our state fish, the Brook Trout. The Tygart can be viewed from the campus of our next chapter.

It is 1998. "Titanic" is a box-office and Oscar phenomenon. William Jefferson Clinton becomes the first elected President impeached by Congress. The 40th Annual Grammy Awards seem to honor more legendary performers like Tony Bennett and Bob Dylan. And...

On May 3, 1998 Alpha Epsilon Alpha Chapter is chartered at Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi with 26 Brothers.

Our state fruit, the Golden Delicious Apple, was updated from the plain apple in the 1990's, recognizing the variety's discovery by a native West Virginian. The campus hosting our next chartering similarly has undergone updates to its name.

It is 1999. The U.S. Mint issues the first five state quarters in its ten-year program for the collection. Louis Sachar's Holes wins the Newbery Medal for children's literature. The U.S. returns full control of the Panama Canal to Panama. And...

On December 4, 1999 Alpha Epsilon Eta Chapter is chartered at Concord College in Athens with 26 Brothers.

Our state insect, the Honeybee, is industrious in its activities – spreading pollens to many of the surrounding fruits and flowers. Similarly, the efforts of our members to reach beyond our surroundings have been fruitful.

Efforts that began in Section 61 to establish new chapters at West Liberty State College and Bethany College in the northern panhandle were spearheaded by the staff during the period of reassigning this geographic area to another section. While these two chapters no longer are administered by Section 61, we acknowledge the role of our students and staff in guiding them toward their chartering.

Alpha Epsilon Rho
West Liberty State College
Chartered October 12, 2003

Alpha Epsilon Chi
Bethany College
Chartered April 16, 2005

Our history continues to be written. Originally Section 35 and including a portion of southwestern Pennsylvania, the 35th state became its own section (changing numbers to 61) in the August 1968. On October 25, 2003 at the Region 5 conference, the voting delegates of Section 61 and Section 62 voted in favor of the northern panhandle of West Virginia becoming part of Section 62, then when that section split, Section 65. This change was the first to section boundaries since the section's inception in 1968. In the spirit of acknowledging the great growth in our section and our world as our history has unfolded, we hope to add to this history again with the chartering of a new chapter soon.

Updated May 2005

Section 61 (Section 35 before 1969) Conference History

1967 (Section 35) N/A section formed over summer
1968 Spring (Section 35) – WVU
1968 Fall – Bee Run Picnic Area, Sutton Reservoir, Sutton, WV
1969 – no record of conference being held
1970 – Camp Caesar, Webster Springs, WV
1971– Camp Caesar, Webster Springs, WV (Tau Alpha did planning)
1972 –
1973
1974 - Sutton, WV
1975
1976
1977
1978
1979
1980
1981
1982
1983
1984 - Tech
1985 – Davis & Elkins
1986 - Marshall
1987 - Salem
1988
1989
1990
1991 – Tech
1992 – Salem
1993 –
1994 –
1995 – Davis & Elkins
1996 – Fairmont
1997 - Tech
1998 - Wesleyan
1999 – Tech
2000 – Alderson-Broadus
2001 – Concord
2002 – WVU
2003 – Davis & Elkins
2004 – Tech
2005 – Wesleyan
2006 - WVU

Region V Conferences hosted in Section 61

1976 – WVU
1999 - WVU
2005 - Marshall

Section 61 (Section 35 before 1969) Section Chairs

1967-68 (Section 35) Roderick W. Wilson (Mu Tau)
1968-69 (Section 35 through fall) Rod Wilson
1969-70 Rod Wilson
1970-71 Rod Wilson
1971-72 Rod Wilson
1972-73 Rod Wilson
1973-74 Rod Wilson
1974-75 Rod Wilson
1975-76 Rod Wilson
1976-77 George W. Musser*
1977-78 George Musser
1978-79 George Musser
1979-80 Kevin S. Mallison (Lambda Omicron)
1980-81 Kevin Mallison (Fall)/Dana H. McCorkle (Lambda Omicron) (spring)
1981-82 Dana McCorkle
1982-83 Mark Williams (Lambda Omicron) and Roland Kniceley (Lambda Tau)
1983-84 Roland Kniceley
1984-85 Roland Kniceley
1985-86 Jim D. Hahn (Lambda Omicron)
1986-87 Kevin B. Skaggs (Mu Tau)
1987-88 Kevin Skaggs
1988-89 Kevin Skaggs
1989-90 Kevin Skaggs
1990-91 Kevin Skaggs
1991-92 Kevin Skaggs
1992-93 Kevin Skaggs
1993-94 Benjamin Hoff (Mu Tau)
1994-95 Mark Williams
1995-96 Mark Williams
1996-97 Mark Williams
1997-98 David R. Keely (Lambda Omicron)
1998-99 Heather D. Schartiger (Mu Tau)
1999-00 Heather Schartiger
2000-01 Melissa Stricker (Zeta Beta)
2001-02 Melissa Stricker
2002-03 Heather Schartiger
2003-04 Heather Schartiger
2004 Robert Keller (Mu Tau)**
2005-06 Christina M. Rock (Alpha Alpha Epsilon, Alpha Epsilon Eta)

*George Musser served as an unofficial advisor to the Lambda Omicron. Rod Wilson recruited him to be Section Chair. There is no record of him ever being initiated as a Brother despite his years of service as Section Chair.

**Bob Keller resigned in August of 2004 for personal reasons. No one could be found to replace him by appointment.

Section 61 Distinguished Service Key History and Recipients

The section 61 Distinguished Service Key Policy was approved unanimously by the chapters attending the Spring 1985 Sectional Conference hosted by Tau Alpha. Chapters attending were Eta Upsilon, Lambda Omicron, Mu Tau, and Tau Alpha. Newly elected chair Jim Hahn presided and served as the principle author. The first ballots under the policy were prepared, distributed, and collected by Bill Rugh, Region V Director. Brother Ruch the presented the first and second keys on November 2, 1985 at the Region V Conference hosted by Lambda Omicron. Updates to the policy occurred at future conferences in 1991 under Chair Kevin Skaggs (based on an undergraduate committee chaired by the-active Dave Keely), in 1996 under Chair Mark Williams (based on an undergraduate committee chaired by Eric Hawkins) and in 2005 at the Region V Conference section business meeting on Chair Chris Rock (based on the changes made to the Region V DSK policy in October 2003).

The recipients are:

1. Kevin S. Mallison – 11/2/1985
2. Mark D. Williams – 11/2/1985
3. Arthur Pierce – 5/31/1986
4. Kevin B. Skaggs – 4/20/1996
5. Heather D. Schartiger – 4/7/2001

The Story Behind the Section 61 West Virginia State Flag

As part of the Opening Ceremony for the 1980 National Convention in Los Angeles, CA convention coordinator Earle Herbert requested each Section Chair bring an official state flag. Section 61 Chair Kevin Mallison secured the flag from the state capitol in Charleston where it had been flown atop the capitol dome. After disappearing shortly after the convention, the flag resurfaced in 1984 and was displayed at the 1984 National Convention in Washington, D.C. The flag was also “run” through a crowd by Brothers from the section at the Closing banquet of the next two conventions in honor of our chapters winning the Dean Arno “Short” Nowotny National Service Excellence Award for the best overall service program – won by Lambda Omicron in Houston (1986) and Mu Tau in Denver (1988). At each subsequent convention the flag was flown in the Regional Suite, and it is displayed each time the state hosts a regional conference (1985, 1991). As we celebrate our history this weekend, the flag makes a rare appearance here today. It will be flown this Fall (1999) as we again host Region V’s conference at WVU.

Following this writing, the flag then disappeared again reappearing in Fall 2005 thanks to the efforts of Brother Jim Hahn. It unfortunately did not fly at the 2005 Region Conference held at Marshall University. It will fly again at the 2006 Section Conference.