

**Beta Alpha-McGill**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: February 21, 1931
* Closure date: April 30, 1973
* Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada
* Region: 1

**History:**

McGill University is a public research university in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was established in 1821 by royal charter, granted by King George IV. The university bears the name of James McGill, a Montreal merchant originally from Scotland whose bequest in 1813 formed the university's precursor, McGill College. Women’s education at McGill began in 1884 as a series of lectures given by McGill faculty exclusively to women. In 1899, the Royal Victoria College opened as a residential college for women at McGill. It wasn’t until the 1970s that women were considered an official part of McGill University as a whole, rather than being referred to as ‘Donaldas’, or members of the Royal Victoria College.

The C.D. Club at McGill formed in 1925. In 1929, a sister of Alpha Phi-British Columbia chapter was taking a medical course at McGill University. During her time at McGill, she joined the C.D. Club and told the members of her chapter in Vancouver. Inspired by the words of the Alpha Phi, the C.D. Club wrote the Fraternity in hopes of gaining a chapter. In response to this inquiry, Executive Offices staff asked Province VI to gather information about McGill. Women of Alpha Phi chapter responded favorably, expressing that McGill was an excellent choice for a chapter, and they would love another chapter from which they could draw support and with whom they could interact. In response to this approval, the Fraternity sent two representatives to McGill in November of 1929 to meet the women of the C.D. Club and gather information about McGill and Delta Gamma’s viability there. Their report concluded in stating that, “[…] if Delta Gamma is interested in entering McGill, that the C.D. Group should be the accepted group”.

In July of 1930, 22 women of the C.D. Club officially petitioned Delta Gamma for a charter. Council was hesitant about adding another chapter in Canada due to lack of support, but ultimately decided to grant the charter. The Installation events were held jointly with the Province I Convention on the weekend of February 20-22, 1931. The pledge service was held at the home of one of the initiates on Friday afternoon, followed by tea. Toronto alumnae entertained guests in their suite at the Mount Royal Hotel that evening.

Saturday afternoon saw the Installation of Beta Alpha chapter in a large ballroom of the Windsor Hotel. Forty-four women were initiated, including alumnae women of the C.D. Club. More than 100 people participated in the ceremony. A banquet followed the ceremony, during which the new initiates of Beta Alpha chapter received a silver salver from the women of the Toronto alumnae group.

The reception was held at the Ritz Carlton Sunday afternoon. In the evening, the chapter officers were installed at the first Beta Alpha meeting.

Although dedicated women, the Beta Alpha chapter had chronic recruitment issues beginning as early as the 1940s. By the 1970s, Beta Alpha faced serious problems. In October of 1970, the chapter had only 18 collegians, seven of whom would graduate in the following semester. During the formal recruitment period that semester, the chapter took no pledges, and their informal recruitment efforts did not look any more promising. Membership issues lead to financial issues, and Beta Alpha was feeling the strain. The president of the chapter wrote to Executive Offices seeking advice, for as she described in her letter, “[…] we find ourselves in a dilemma-to withdraw from E.O. because of the inability to meet financial obligations or to dissolve completely.”

In September of 1972, the Panhellenic community at McGill held an ‘emergency’ meeting to discuss the formal recruitment process. During the meeting, recruitment rules were established, as was a plan for attracting freshman interest through publicity. However, these efforts did not prove to be successful enough for Beta Alpha. By November 15, 1972, Council notified women of the chapter that the chapter would be losing its charter on the grounds of insufficient membership. Following the 60-day period during which collegians and alumnae submitted letters pertaining to Beta Alpha’s closure, Council officially voted to withdraw the Beta Alpha chapter, effective April 30, 1973.