

**Delta Zeta- Memphis**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: March 6, 1965
* Location: Memphis, TN
* Region: 2

**History:**

In 1909, the Tennessee Legislature enacted the General Education Bill, which stated that three colleges be established, one within each grand division of the state and one additional school for African-American students. After much bidding and campaigning, the state had to choose between two sites to build the new college for West Tennessee: Jackson and Memphis. Memphis was chosen, one of the main reasons being the proximity of the rail line to the site proposed to build the new college for West Tennessee.

On September 10, 1912, West Tennessee Normal School opened in Memphis. The name changed in 1925 to West Tennessee State Teachers College. In 1941, the name was changed to Memphis State College, when the college expanded its liberal arts curriculum. In 1957 the school received full University status and changed its name accordingly to Memphis State University. On July 1, 1994, Memphis State University changed its name again, to the University of Memphis.

The Memphis alumnae had been organized first as an association in 1949, then an alumnae chapter in 1961, and were anxious to establish a new collegiate chapter in their city.

Two of Delta Gammas earliest chapters with strong ties to Psi chapter had been located in Tennessee, Fairmont College (1878-1880) and Bolivar College (1878-1881). Fran Stevenson, Fraternity Historian, wrote in 1965, "If Oxford is our home, possibly West Tennessee is our second home and it is only right and proper that we should be returning by establishing a chapter in Memphis."

As early as September 1960 Roberta Abernethy, Executive Secretary of the Fraternity, received a letter from Dean of Women Flora Rawls inquiring if Delta Gamma was interested in expansion to Memphis. Not until May 1963 did an expansion trip take place. There were already ten sororities on campus: Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Phi, Alpha Xi Delta, Delta Zeta, Gamma Phi Beta, Phi Mu, Pi Beta Phi, Sigma Delta Tau and Sigma Kappa. Delta Gamma would be the eleventh. The chapters were housed in the Panhellenic Building on campus and two new suites were planned to be added and ready to be occupied in September 1963. Chapter sizes were limited to 60 women, with the average quota being 20 to 25. The previous year 113 women were not matched. With the enthusiastic alumnae, Dean Rawls was told we would accept the invitation.

However, several decisions had to be made before the chapter was colonized. Delta Gamma needed to sign a contract with the university for the construction of an addition on the existing Panhellenic building for their suite of rooms. A house corporation needed to incorporate and in order to do so they needed a chapter name. This proved the most difficult. The next Greek letters on the chapter list were Delta Gamma and Delta Delta. On the advice of our Greek translator it was decided to skip them both and move on to Delta Zeta. The reasons given were the sounds of the names together with Delta Gamma (Delta Gamma chapter of Delta Gamma) and the mottos.

The new suite in the Panhellenic building addition was decorated by the Memphis alumnae in time for colonization April 5-8, 1964. The decor had a Spanish influence with colors of fuchsia, purple, green, and black. On April 12, thirteen women traveled to the University of Mississippi to be pledged by members of Alpha Psi.

Fall brought the first rush for the colony members and they "pulled through like veterans" because of their own initiative and good job of rushing. Twenty-four new women were pledged. Clyda Stokes (Rent) was the field secretary who assisted the women with rush.

Installation, originally scheduled for the weekend of October 17, was moved to the spring when more women in the colony would have made grades and Delta Gamma would be able to present a larger chapter to the university.

Five collegians and one patroness were initiated with Alpha Psi pledges on October 10 in Oxford, MS. Two roll books and two mottos, one for each of the chapters, were used in the ceremony.

Installation festivities began Friday, March 5, 1965 with an informal dessert smorgasbord at the Officers Club Army Depot. Saturday was the initiation of 18 collegians and 8 patronesses by members of Gamma Alpha chapter, University of Tennessee, in St. Luke's Methodist Church.

A formal banquet was held at 7:00 PM at the University Club with Eleanor Slaughter, Fraternity Vice-President, as the banquet speaker. Fraternity Secretary Margery Hammill presented the charter to Colony chapter president Lynda Wilkinson, and Fraternity Treasurer, Carolyn Moorman, presented the membership certificates to each new member. University President Cecil Humphrys welcomed Delta Gamma to campus saying he admired that Delta Gamma was “returning now to the vicinity of its birth…and it serves to enhance the significance of this occasion.” He praised our sight conservation and aid to the blind projects and felt they fit well within Memphis State’s ideals of service to the community. Since Founders Day was so close to installation it was celebrated with the candlelighting ceremony which closed the event.

On Sunday a formal campus reception was held at the Panhellenic Ballroom on from 3-5 for the student body, university officials and relatives of the initiates. That evening the new chapter officers were installed at the model chapter meeting; the new president was Becky Ozier.