

**Epsilon Xi-Lafayette**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: December 4, 1982
* Location: Easton, PA
* Region: 1

**History:**

A group of Easton citizens led by James Madison Porter met on December 27, 1824 at White's Tavern to explore the possibility of opening a college. The recent visit of General Lafayette to New York during his grand tour of the US in 1824 and 1825 prompted the founders to name the school after the French military officer. The charter gained approval and on March 9, 1826, Pennsylvania Governor John Andrew Shulze's signature made the college official. In 1854, Lafayette College became affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. In the time from 1855 to 1856, Lafayette experienced a new peak enrollment of 112 students, leading to the "famous class" of 1857. This close-knit class of 27 men worked in secrecy to establish charters in national fraternities, thus instating the first Greek Fraternities at Lafayette College. These Fraternities remained secret and discouraged by the authorities until 1915. In September 1970 Lafayette College welcomed its first official coeducational class with 146 women. In 1980, the school recognized its first two sororities.

Kappa Delta Tau was a local sorority that wanted to receive a charter from Delta Gamma Fraternity. The group occupied a college-owned, operated and maintained house off campus called Hamilton House. It had the capacity to house 24 women.

In September 1982, members of Epsilon Lambda-Lehigh performed a pledging ceremony for 57 collegians. Epsilon Lambda was not that old itself, having been installed in February of that year. According to Cynthia Davis, an officer in the Lehigh chapter, “the age-old rivalry between the two schools was set aside for a day as 37 Epsilon Lambda’s brought the Fraternity to Lafayette.”

Attending the colonization in Hogg Hall were Delta Gamma representative Daylene Wood, Epsilon-Ohio State, VP: Programming; Nancy Stephens Rumble, Beta Iota-Purdue, Director of Colonies; and Lou Ann Sommers Racher, Gamma Epsilon-Kent State, Expansion Coordinator. To celebrate the third anniversary of the local on September 10, two days prior to their pledging Delta Gamma, the local group held a “Farewell KTO, Welcome DG” party. A reception for the collegians and alumnae was held following the pledging on September 12. College president, Dr. David W. Ellis, welcomed Delta Gamma to campus, along with the Dean and Assistant Dean of Students, the president of alumni.

On December 4, 1982, 54 collegians and nine alumnae of KTO were initiated as collegiate members and Patronesses. Installation Chairman was Claire McFall Bried, Alpha Chi-Pennsylvania State. Activities started on Friday evening with an Inspiration program conducted by members of Epsilon Lambda. Held in Marquis Hall, the program was opened by Daylene Wood, followed by thoughts on Delta Gamma membership from Epsilon Lambda rituals chairman, Paula Thoden, and chapter president Michelle Tomsho. The evening concluded with an informal gathering for punch and cookies at the chapter house. Initiation was flawlessly performed by the Lehigh collegians and was held Saturday morning in the Interfaith Chapel of Hogg Hall. A festive banquet took place Saturday evening at The Bethlehem Hotel, in nearby Bethlehem, PA. College guests included Dr. Herman Kissiah, Dean of Students and Alice Sivulich, Assistant Dean. Following greetings from Dr. Kissiah, greetings and gifts from Delta Gamma collegiate and alumnae chapters were presented along with membership certificates. Fraternity President Judy Van Scoyk (Waymire) Barnhart, Gamma Iota-DePauw, presented the charter to chapter president Deb Vulcoff.

Delta Gamma joined Alpha Gamma Delta, Kappa Kappa Gamma, Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Kappa on the campus. There were 17 national men’s fraternities also at Lafayette.

Greek life played a fundamental role on campus in the 1980s. Over 70% of the women and 50% of the men belonged to a sorority or fraternity on campus. In an interview, Dean Krivoski, the Dean of Student Residence, noted that DGs “continually strong house management, its virtually non-existent disciplinary record, and its annual submission of exemplary STEPS manuals”- a scrap book that described all of the activities and achievements of each group over the last year. He also mentioned how Delta Gamma had consistently maintained a very strong and positive chapter image on campus.

Epsilon Xi held its first Anchor Splash® in the spring of 1990.

The Epsilon Xi house is located at Hamilton House, also affectionately called Ham House. Built in 1919, it was originally the home to Alpha Chi Rho Fraternity. Due to low membership, the men’s fraternity left Lafayette in the 1980s, and the house was left vacant. When DG became affiliated with Lafayette in 1982, they were able to move into the house. The house has received many remodels since its opening.

The Epsilon Xi house is located two and a half long blocks north of Alumni Gym, and was the farthest college-owned housing from campus in the 90’s. Because of this, the women found spots on campus to hang out and relax between classes. In the new center, there was an area near the fire place called “the pit,” and the women would be known to congregate there. As a result, the area was renamed the “DG Pit.”