

**Upsilon-Stanford**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: March 3, 1897
* Closure date: 1944
* Reinstallation date: February 24, 1979
* Closure date: January 25, 1999
* Location: Palo Alto, California
* Region: 8

**History:**

Leland Stanford Junior University was founded in 1855 by Leland and Jane Lathrop Stanford as a memorial to their son, Leland Lathrop Stanford. A railroad magnate, Leland Stanford deeded a large fortune to the university, which included the 8,180-acre plot of land upon which the campus was built. Known today as Stanford University, classes began on October 1, 1891. The Stanfords and founding President David Starr Jordan aimed for their new university to be nonsectarian, co-educational and affordable, to produce cultured and useful graduates, and to teach both the traditional liberal arts and the technology and engineering that were already changing America.

In the fall of 1893, Parnie Storey and Lillian Ray were assigned as roommates at Stanford and quickly became friends. Florence Whittier, a Delta Gamma from University of South California, also entered Stanford that fall. She had been a roommate of Parnie Storey in the preparatory department at the University of the Pacific, so their friendship was renewed. Before the end of the year Alexandra Fay and Rose Smith became a part of this small group. On an impulse, Florence Whittier nicknamed Lillian Ray, “Lily Ann Jane.” Early in the next college year, Lillian attached “Ann Jane” to the given name of each of the other girls. Soon this small group was known on campus as the “Ann Jane Family” or “Ann Janes.”

Early in 1895 rumors started that members of the “Family” were going to join a national fraternity. In reality, the girls had never thought of starting a fraternity, and Florence (who left school at Christmas) had never mentioned the subject to any of them. In late spring, the gossip persisting, Parnie Storey, Rose Smith and Lillian Ray held an indignation meeting. After a couple hours of discussion one of the girls sprang to her feet and said, “Why not?” The three women grabbed hands and formed a circle with the pledge of friendship and energy to work for a Delta Gamma chapter. Their petition and a petition submitted earlier from another group of Stanford women were reviewed at the 1895 Delta Gamma Convention. The first petition was refused. The “Family” received a letter saying that although their petition was looked upon with favor, it was denied due to the unstable financial situation of the university.

In the spring of 1896 an announcement was made that Stanford University would receive thirty-three million dollars. Realizing that the reason preventing them from becoming Delta Gammas had been eliminated, the women petitioned Delta Gamma for the second time. Before the term ended, two Delta Gamma representatives visited Stanford, and made a recommendation to Council that the petition be approved. This took a vote from every Delta Gamma chapter. By the end of the term all but Omega-Wisconsin had responded in favor of the expansion.

Summer passed and still no word from Omega. Disappointed and discouraged, the women sent a letter to the Grand Council withdrawing their petition. Elva Price, Chi-Cornell, one of the original representatives who had inspected Stanford revisited the chapter. She assured them of an affirmative vote by Omega and encouraged them to reconsider the withdrawal of the petition. For the first time this group realized their real strength and enviable position in the university. The charter was granted in February 1897.

Nine women were initiated by Miss Price and Florence Whittaker in a private home in Palo Alto on March 6, 1897. The vote to have a banquet following initiation was carried out by the witticism of one of the women who exclaimed, “Initiate – In it I ate.”

Of the nine charter members, two went on to become Fraternity Presidents, Rose Smith (1905-1909) and Jessie McGilvray Treat (1915-1919). Charter member Lillian Titcomb founded the Blind Children’s Center and received a Rose Award in 1952. The former Delta Gamma house on the Stanford campus was named in honor of charter member and devoted alumna Parnie Hamilton Storey Snoke who was known for her philanthropic work.

In 1944, sororities were banned at Stanford. The Stanford administration had been hostile to fraternities for some time and laid down a number of restrictions to housing and membership which had meant that as Stanford’s women’s enrollment increased, its sorority membership remained static.” This had caused anti-fraternity feelings to sift from administration down to the growing number of non-affiliated women.

The obvious solution – to allow more Greek groups to enter the campus (there were only 9 sororities at the time) was denied. The dean of women regarded the sororities simply as units for housing and when the university adopted absolute control over the housing of women, the end of their existence was in sight.

Finally, the board of trustees acted to deprive women’s fraternities on the campus of active status, and the nine National Panhellenic Conference groups, which could no longer pledge, turned in their charters.

In December of 1977 the ban on sororities was lifted at Stanford.

Delta Gamma recolonized October 15-20, 1978. Pledging was held at the home of Lucille Salter Packard, Upsilon-Stanford. Five Delta Gamma transfer students affiliated with the new colony. The return of Upsilon chapter was official on February 24, 1979 with the initiation of 13 colony members and three alumnae. The installation ceremonies were combined with the Palo Alto Founders Day at the Stanford Faculty Club.

The following decade showed the chapter participating in many fund-raising activities – DG Dance-a-thon and starting Anchor Splash® (1986) among the most successful. In October 1989 members helped Stanford students displaced by the earthquake move out of damaged residences and distributed food and clothing to needy families. They worked with the Lighthouse for the Blind and recorded tapes for visually impaired students. In fall of 1994 Upsilon chapter was rated third in the Top Ten Service Groups of Delta Gamma Foundation based on the number of volunteer service hours of the chapter.

In May 1998, Delta Gamma Fraternity initiated a routine evaluation process of the chapter to determine what kinds of contributions Delta Gamma was making to the Stanford community. Membership had declined to 28 members. The university requires that a sorority maintains six members in order to remain a student group on campus, however Delta Gamma Council’s concern was whether our programming was viewed as an adjunct to the educational opportunities of the university.

In January 1999, Upsilon chapter closed its doors. The members had voted the previous fall to relinquish their charter at the beginning of the New Year. “Our numbers were getting lower to the point where next year, after everyone graduated, there would have been very few people left,” Kalee Magnani, chapter president said. Dean of Students Marc Wais said that “the DGs decision is a loss to the campus. Delta Gamma has been a good positive contributing member to both the Greek and Stanford communities.” Wais went on to say, “There’s nothing to preclude Delta Gamma from resurfacing years from now, if enough students express an interest of bringing it back to life on the Stanford campus.” (*Courtesy The Stanford Daily, March 2, 1999*)