# omega psi phi official history

omega psi phi official history traces the origins, development, and enduring legacy of one of the most prestigious historically African American fraternities in the United States. Founded in the early 20th century, Omega Psi Phi has played a significant role in fostering brotherhood, academic excellence, cultural uplift, and community service. This article provides a comprehensive exploration of the fraternity's inception at Howard University, its founding principles, notable milestones, and its impact on society. Understanding the omega psi phi official history is essential for appreciating its contributions to education, civil rights, and leadership among African American men. The following sections will detail the fraternity's foundation, its core values, expansion over the decades, and its continued relevance today.

- Foundation of Omega Psi Phi
- Founding Fathers and Their Vision
- Core Principles and Symbolism
- Historical Milestones and Growth
- Contributions to Society and Culture
- Contemporary Impact and Legacy

# Foundation of Omega Psi Phi

The omega psi phi official history begins at Howard University, Washington, D.C., where the fraternity was established on November 17, 1911. It was the first international fraternal organization founded on the campus of a historically black college or university (HBCU). The founding took place during a period marked by racial segregation and social challenges for African Americans, emphasizing the need for a strong brotherhood dedicated to academic achievement and community uplift. Omega Psi Phi was created to support the intellectual and social development of African American men, fostering a sense of pride and responsibility.

## Historical Context of the Early 1900s

During the early 20th century, African American students faced significant obstacles in higher education and society at large. The era's racial discrimination and limited opportunities made the establishment of

organizations like Omega Psi Phi critical for providing support and advocacy. The fraternity was conceived as a response to these challenges, aiming to cultivate leadership skills and promote educational excellence among its members.

## Official Founding Date and Location

Omega Psi Phi was officially founded on November 17, 1911, at Howard University. Its foundation marked a pivotal moment in African American collegiate history, as it was the first fraternity to be established at an HBCU campus. This distinction underscores the fraternity's commitment to serving African American students and communities.

## Founding Fathers and Their Vision

The omega psi phi official history is inseparable from the lives and contributions of its four founding fathers: Dr. Ernest Everett Just, Dr. Oscar James Cooper, Professor Frank Coleman, and Bishop Edgar Amos Love. These men shared a vision of creating an organization based on principles of scholarship, manhood, perseverance, and uplift. Their leadership and dedication laid the foundation for what would become a prominent fraternity with a lasting global influence.

#### Dr. Ernest Everett Just

Dr. Just was a distinguished biologist and educator whose commitment to science and education influenced the fraternity's emphasis on academic excellence. His contributions to cell biology earned him international recognition, and his role in omega psi phi helped establish the fraternity's intellectual stature.

### Dr. Oscar James Cooper

Dr. Cooper was a prominent physician whose dedication to health and community service reflected the fraternity's commitment to societal betterment. His involvement strengthened the fraternity's focus on service and leadership in addressing community needs.

### **Professor Frank Coleman**

As an educator, Professor Coleman emphasized the importance of scholarship and perseverance. His vision helped shape the fraternity's commitment to academic achievement and moral integrity among its members.

## **Bishop Edgar Amos Love**

Bishop Love's spiritual leadership and advocacy for social justice were instrumental in defining the fraternity's values of manhood and uplift. His work in the church and civil rights movements underscored the fraternity's role in promoting ethical leadership.

## Core Principles and Symbolism

The omega psi phi official history is deeply rooted in four cardinal principles: Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift. These principles guide the fraternity's mission and activities, reflecting a holistic approach to personal and communal development. The fraternity's symbolism further reinforces these ideals, creating a strong identity for its members.

## Cardinal Principles Explained

- Manhood: Emphasizes integrity, courage, and responsibility in personal conduct.
- **Scholarship:** Highlights the importance of academic excellence and lifelong learning.
- **Perseverance:** Encourages persistence and resilience in overcoming challenges.
- Uplift: Focuses on community service and the betterment of society.

## Fraternity Colors and Symbols

The official colors of Omega Psi Phi are royal purple and old gold, representing royalty, wisdom, and wealth. The fraternity's emblem is the lamp, symbolizing knowledge and enlightenment. Additionally, the fraternity uses the Greek letters  $\Omega\Psi\Phi$ , which stand for Omega Psi Phi, reflecting its Hellenic heritage and scholarly aspirations.

### Historical Milestones and Growth

Since its founding, Omega Psi Phi has achieved numerous milestones that have contributed to its growth and influence. The fraternity expanded beyond Howard University, establishing chapters across the United States and internationally. These developments highlight the fraternity's adaptability and commitment to fostering leadership among African American men worldwide.

## Early Expansion and Chapter Development

Following its inception, Omega Psi Phi rapidly expanded to other colleges and universities. The first graduate chapter was established in Baltimore in 1919, marking the beginning of the fraternity's reach beyond collegiate campuses. Over the decades, hundreds of undergraduate and graduate chapters have been chartered, creating a vast network of members.

## Involvement in Civil Rights and Social Movements

Members of Omega Psi Phi have played pivotal roles in civil rights activism and social justice initiatives. The fraternity's emphasis on manhood and uplift inspired participation in landmark movements and advocacy for equal rights, education, and economic empowerment.

## Significant Celebrations and Anniversaries

The fraternity has commemorated key anniversaries with national conventions, leadership conferences, and community service initiatives. These events celebrate the fraternity's history while promoting its ongoing mission to develop leaders and serve communities.

## Contributions to Society and Culture

The omega psi phi official history is characterized by its members' significant contributions to various fields, including education, politics, sports, arts, and public service. The fraternity encourages its members to excel professionally and socially, thereby influencing African American culture and society at large.

### **Educational and Scholarship Programs**

Omega Psi Phi supports numerous scholarship programs aimed at assisting African American students in achieving higher education. These initiatives align with the fraternity's principle of scholarship and promote academic success across communities.

## **Community Service and Outreach**

- Youth mentoring and development programs
- Health awareness campaigns
- Voter registration drives

• Support for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)

These programs demonstrate the fraternity's commitment to uplift and service, fostering positive change in communities nationwide.

#### Notable Members and Their Achievements

Omega Psi Phi boasts a distinguished roster of members who have excelled in diverse arenas. Notables include civil rights leaders, entertainers, athletes, and public officials who have used their platforms to advance the fraternity's ideals and contribute meaningfully to society.

# **Contemporary Impact and Legacy**

Today, the omega psi phi official history continues to evolve as the fraternity adapts to contemporary challenges and opportunities. Its legacy endures through ongoing programs, leadership initiatives, and a commitment to the foundational principles established by its founders. Omega Psi Phi remains a vital institution fostering brotherhood, academic excellence, and social responsibility in the 21st century.

## Modern Programs and Initiatives

The fraternity has developed contemporary initiatives addressing education, health disparities, economic empowerment, and social justice. These programs reflect a dynamic approach to community engagement and leadership development.

#### Global Presence and Influence

While rooted in American history, Omega Psi Phi has expanded its reach internationally, chartering chapters in the Caribbean, Africa, and beyond. This global presence amplifies the fraternity's mission and values on a broader scale.

## Ongoing Commitment to Brotherhood and Service

Omega Psi Phi continues to nurture strong bonds of brotherhood among its members, emphasizing ethical leadership and service. The fraternity's sustained commitment ensures that its historic principles remain relevant and impactful for future generations.

# Frequently Asked Questions

# When and where was Omega Psi Phi Fraternity officially founded?

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was officially founded on November 17, 1911, at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

## Who were the founders of Omega Psi Phi?

The fraternity was founded by three undergraduate students—Edgar Amos Love, Oscar James Cooper, and Frank Coleman—along with their faculty adviser, Dr. Ernest Everett Just.

# What was the primary purpose behind establishing Omega Psi Phi?

Omega Psi Phi was established to promote academic excellence, community service, and the upliftment of African American men during a time of racial discrimination and limited opportunities.

# What is the significance of the fraternity's name, Omega Psi Phi?

The name Omega Psi Phi was chosen to represent the Greek letters that symbolize the fraternity's principles: Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift.

# How has Omega Psi Phi contributed to African American culture and history?

Omega Psi Phi has played a pivotal role through its programs in education, social action, and community service, fostering leadership and empowerment within the African American community.

## When was Omega Psi Phi officially incorporated?

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was officially incorporated on October 28, 1914.

# What are some key historical milestones in Omega Psi Phi's development?

Key milestones include its founding in 1911, incorporation in 1914, establishment of numerous chapters across the U.S. and internationally, and its involvement in civil rights and community development initiatives throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

## **Additional Resources**

- 1. Omega Psi Phi: A Centennial History
  This comprehensive volume chronicles the first 100 years of Omega Psi Phi
  Fraternity, Inc., detailing its founding principles, notable members, and
  significant milestones. It offers a rich narrative that highlights the
  fraternity's impact on African American culture and education. The book
  includes rare photographs and archival documents that bring the fraternity's
  legacy to life.
- Sororities
  While covering all nine historically Black Greek letter organizations, this book provides a detailed section on Omega Psi Phi. It explores the fraternity's origins, its role in civil rights activism, and its contributions to community service. Readers gain insight into how Omega Psi Phi fits within the broader context of African American Greek life.

2. The Divine Nine: The History of African American Fraternities and

- 3. Omega Psi Phi: Brotherhood and Service Through the Decades
  Focusing on the fraternity's commitment to brotherhood and community service,
  this book highlights key programs and initiatives launched over the decades.
  It showcases personal stories from members who have made significant
  contributions to society through the fraternity. The narrative emphasizes the
  enduring values that continue to guide Omega Psi Phi.
- 4. Founders of Omega Psi Phi: The Visionaries Behind the Fraternity
  This biography-driven book profiles the four founders of Omega Psi Phi,
  exploring their backgrounds, motivations, and the challenges they faced in
  establishing the fraternity. It provides a detailed look at their vision for
  leadership, scholarship, and uplift within African American communities. The
  book also discusses how their legacy shapes the fraternity today.
- 5. Omega Psi Phi and the Civil Rights Movement
  Examining the fraternity's involvement in the civil rights era, this book
  documents how Omega men participated in activism, voter registration drives,
  and social justice initiatives. It highlights influential members who used
  their fraternity platform to advance equality and justice. The text provides
  context for the fraternity's role in shaping political and social change.
- 6. The Rituals and Traditions of Omega Psi Phi
  Delving into the unique rituals and ceremonies that define Omega Psi Phi,
  this book explains their symbolic meanings and historical origins. It
  explores how these traditions foster a sense of unity and identity among
  members. The author also discusses how the fraternity balances secrecy with
  public service and outreach.
- 7. Leadership Lessons from Omega Psi Phi
  This work focuses on the leadership development programs within the
  fraternity, illustrating how Omega Psi Phi cultivates leaders in various
  fields. Through interviews and case studies, it showcases members who have
  excelled in business, education, and public service. The book serves as a

guide for aspiring leaders inspired by the fraternity's principles.

- 8. Omega Psi Phi: Profiles of Prominent Members
  Highlighting distinguished members, this book presents biographies of Omega
  Psi Phi brothers who have made significant impacts in politics, sports,
  entertainment, and academia. Each profile connects the individual's
  achievements to the fraternity's influence on their personal and professional
  growth. The collection celebrates the diverse contributions of Omega men.
- 9. African American Fraternities and the Legacy of Omega Psi Phi This scholarly text places Omega Psi Phi within the larger history of African American fraternities, analyzing its cultural, social, and educational significance. It discusses how the fraternity has evolved to meet contemporary challenges while honoring its founding ideals. The book provides critical analysis alongside historical narrative, appealing to researchers and members alike.

## Omega Psi Phi Official History

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**omega psi phi official history:** The Omega Psi Fraternity and the Men who Made Its History Robert Lewis Gill, 1963

omega psi phi official history: The History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. (an Update for the Period 1960-2008) Vernon Steve Weakley, 2009-05-01 This literary work is an update of the History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. for the period 1960 to 2008. This book humbly takes up where Omega men Herman Dreer, Robert L. Gill and their outstanding committees stopped. This new update was officially sanctioned and commissioned by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. via the 38th Grand Basileus, the honorable Warren G. Lee, and the elected Supreme Council for the 74th Grand Conclave. This Omega History Book project will provide a clear and accurate history of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and its impact on America and African Americans in particular for the period 1960 to 2008. This new History update will serve to clearly demonstrate how Omega Psi Phi fraternity Inc. has, not only made a significant positive difference in the lives of Black people, but the entire world. It is this committee's fervent hope that this update will not only enlighten, be a beacon and shed light on our illustrious history but will also be an inspiration to young people, the general public at large and all Omega Men, past, present and future. This new update involved the comprehensive gathering of historical data on Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. from all across America and internationally for the period 1960 to the 2008. It endeavored to encompass all significant contributions, all noteworthy efforts and the resulting factual recordation of Omega Psi Phi fraternity and all Omega men who have had pertinent impact on America and Omega Dear during this period. This project was massive and took over two years to complete. The resulting final product will be a self perpetuating income generating source for Omega Psi Phi fraternity for many years to come. Please be clearly advised readers that this is an update of the previous history books written by the honorable Herman Dreer, Robert L. Gill and their committees. This book, with the

exception of containing some basic historical information to enlighten a person who has no knowledge of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, will not routinely cover past historical information shown in the great works of Dreer and Gill occurring prior to this update period. The history rich period for this update has provided many interesting challenges for Omega and its members. The Founders of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity did not shrink from the task, nor did they pity themselves for being given the tremendous burden to uplift the African American race. W.E.B. DuBois' talented tenth assertion must be our rallying cry in that it crystallizes the fact that Omega men must be in the forefront in lifting the Black community to higher heights. Omega men are indeed the cream of the crop endowed with the divine gift of greatness. And, our great history and our individual and unified deeds bare witness to this fact and with that our readiness to step to the fore. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. is filled with many great Omega men who have had significant positive impact on America during this update period. There are undeniable facts, inspiring legends, and exceptional Omega men who have accomplished great things in their districts and at the international level, as well as in their personal lives and in their gallant exploits across the nation. It is time that the world knows of our extraordinary contributions to the greatest country on earth and our proud race. We pray that this HISTORY OF OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY INC. for the period 1960 to 2008 accomplishes this goal and be a guiding light to live by and be a positive uplifting force for all that reads it.

omega psi phi official history: Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 1995\* omega psi phi official history: Who's who in Colored America, 1927 omega psi phi official history: A Summary History of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., 1911-1991 John S. Epps, 1991

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political identity among African American males in the post-civil rights era. □ □ Peniel E. Joseph, author of Waiting ∏Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America ∏Black Haze is a riveting coup de grâce against ritualized violence in black fraternities. The second edition of Black Haze is the most penetrating, illuminating, and articulate sociopolitical and cultural analysis of the chilling legacy of violence in black Greek-letter fraternities. As one of the world□s leading authorities on black masculinity and organizations, Ricky Jones intelligently confronts traditional verities, social norms, and myths that seek to justify and continue ritualized violence in black fraternities through the courageous prism of a reformed insider dedicated to the preservation of black dignity and life. [ ] Jeremy I. Levitt, author of Black Women and International Law: Deliberate Interactions, Movements and Actions Praise for the First Edition ☐ provides valuable insights into the reasoning behind hazing, a practice that extends into the realms of sports and even high school, and is relevant for not only fraternity members and officials, but the general public as well.  $\square$  The Griot 

☐ an important contribution because of the skillful manner in which Jones incorporates and critically analyzes relevant literature and other related scholarly writings Jones, himself a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, offers personal observations as well as first-hand views and perceptions of hazing. ☐ Journal of College Student Development

omega psi phi official history: African American Fraternities and Sororities Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, Clarenda M. Phillips, 2012-02-29 The rich history and social significance of the "Divine Nine" African American Greek-letter organizations is explored in this comprehensive anthology. In the long tradition of African American benevolent and secret societies, intercollegiate African American fraternities and sororities have strong traditions of fostering brotherhood and sisterhood among their members, exerting considerable influence in the African American community and being in the forefront of civic action, community service, and philanthropy. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Toni Morrison, Arthur Ashe, and Sarah Vaughn are just a few of the trailblazing members of these organizations. African American Fraternities and Sororities places the history of these organizations in context, linking them to other movements and organizations that predated them and tying their history to the Civil Rights movement. It explores various cultural aspects of the organizations, such as auxiliary groups, branding, calls, and stepping, and highlights the unique role of African American sororities.

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omega psi phi official history: Black Greek-Letter Organizations 2.0 Matthew W. Hughey, Gregory S. Parks, 2011-02-18 At the turn of the twentieth century, black fraternities and sororities, also known as Black Greek-Letter Organizations (BGLOs), were an integral part of what W.E.B. Du Bois called the "talented tenth." This was the top ten percent of the black community that would serve as a cadre of educated, upper-class, motivated individuals who acquired the professional credentials, skills, and capital to assist the race to attain socioeconomic parity. Today, however, BGLOs struggle to find their place and direction in a world drastically different from the one that witnessed their genesis. In recent years, there has been a growing body of scholarship on BGLOs. This collection of essays seeks to push those who think about BGLOs to engage in more critically and empirically based analysis. This book also seeks to move BGLO members and those who work with them beyond conclusions based on hunches, conventional wisdom, intuition, and personal experience. In addition to a rich range of scholars, this volume includes a kind of call and response feature between scholars and prominent members of the BGLO community.

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Externally, BGLOs face the challenge of rededicating themselves to their communities and leading an aggressive campaign against modern forms of racism, sexism, and other types of fear-driven behavior. By embracing the history of these organizations and exploring their continuing viability and relevance, Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century demonstrates that BGLOs can create a positive and enduring future and that their most important work lies ahead.

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Hughey, 2024-02-06 Reveals the historical and political significance of "The Divine Nine"—the Black Greek Letter Organizations In 1905, Henry Arthur Callis began his studies at Cornell University. Despite their academic pedigrees, Callis and his fellow African American students were ostracized by the majority-white student body, and so in 1906, Callis and some of his peers started the first, intercollegiate Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO), Alpha Phi Alpha. Since their founding, BGLOs have not only served to solidify bonds among many African American college students, they have also imbued them with a sense of purpose and a commitment to racial uplift—the endeavor to help Black Americans reach socio-economic equality. A Pledge with Purpose explores the arc of these unique, important, and relevant social institutions. Gregory S. Parks and Matthew W. Hughey uncover how BGLOs were shaped by, and labored to transform, the changing social, political, and cultural landscape of Black America from the era of the Harlem Renaissance to the civil rights movement. Alpha Phi Alpha boasts such members as Thurgood Marshall, civil rights lawyer and US Supreme Court Justice, and Dr. Charles Wesley, noted historian and college president. Delta Sigma Theta members include Bethune-Cookman College founder Mary McLeod Bethune and women's rights activist Dorothy Height. Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, who left an indelible mark on the civil rights movement, was a member of Phi Beta Sigma, while Dr. Mae Jemison, a celebrated engineer and astronaut, belonged to Alpha Kappa Alpha. Through such individuals, Parks and Hughey demonstrate the ways that BGLO members have long been at the forefront of innovation, activism, and scholarship. In its examination of the history of these important organizations, A Pledge with Purpose serves as a critical reflection of both the collective African American racial struggle and the various strategies of Black Americans in their great—and unfinished—march toward freedom and equality.

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