

# THE BETA ETA NEWS

The newsletter for alumni and friends of the Beta Eta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha at the University of Illinois - Summer 2009

## Beta Eta Alumni form a new Alumni Advisory Board

Several Beta Eta alumni recently convened to form a new alumni advisory board (AAB) to help oversee and guide chapter operations. The initial meeting was held in Chicago, Illinois. Chaired by brother **Michael Parks '80**, the agenda included discussions on how to best advise the chapter, a SWOT analysis of Beta Eta today, and goal setting for the upcoming school year. Each alumnus volunteer agreed to attend a minimum of one chapter meeting per semester, giving them a chance to stay up to speed on chapter happenings and provide feedback on a specific area of operations.

Each advisor on the AAB will work with his assigned undergraduate officer - allowing the alumnus to share his expertise and support in a specific programming area, such as recruitment. Regular contact outside of the attended chapter meetings will take place via phone calls and e-mails.

The new advisory board is welcomed by the chapter, especially now that long-time chapter advisor and mentor **Rich Western '65** has passed away and is no longer able to share his tenured knowledge of Beta Eta operations.

### Beta Eta AAB

#### Chapter Advisor / Chairman

Michael Parks '80

#### Financial Advisor

Kevin McDonnell '76

#### Housing Advisor

Christopher Moore '78

#### Risk Management

Kevin Cody '79

#### Education / Membership

Kenneth Difrancesca '78

#### Alumni Development

Stephen Calk '83

#### Recruiting / Membership

Michael Cashman '05

## The Passing of a Proud Pike: Richard G. Western '65

**R**ichard G. Western '65, of Champaign, Illinois, died Thursday, July 9, 2009, at Barton W. Stone Home in Jacksonville, Illinois.

"Rich will be remembered as a brother who wore his Pike badge proudly," said House Corporation President **Mike Nelsen '80**. "He served Beta Eta as an undergraduate and never stopped."

Brother Western was a 1964 graduate of Jacksonville High School and received his degree from the University of Illinois-Champaign in 1968. He served in the United States Army-National Guard and was later employed in the insurance business before becoming a computer consultant. He served as the Chapter Advisor for the Beta Eta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity at the University of Illinois-Champaign for more than 40 years.

"Rich's support and advising can be directly attributed to many chapter successes and awards - including the many recent coveted Robert Adger Smythe awards for chapter excellence," commented new Chapter Advisor **Michael Parks '80**. "On a more personal side, Rich served as a mentor for many young men who passed through the doors of the Pike house."

"Rich was loved by many Beta Etas and will not be forgotten," said chapter president **James Ouska '07**. "His legacy will live forever. Mr. Western truly embodied the phrase 'Once a Pike, Always a Pike.'"



**Richard G. Western '65**  
January 2, 1946 - July 9, 2009

Alumni and friends can make a gift in memory of Rich Western at [www.illinipikes.com](http://www.illinipikes.com) (click on photo of chapter house). Donations will be used to serve the chapter's educational scholarship and upcoming house renovations in honor of Western. The Fraternity's house corporation plans to properly memorialize Western's years of service to the chapter by naming a room in the new house after him.

## Save the Date: 2009 Alumni Reunion

Make plans to join fellow Beta Eta alumni and undergraduates for the 2009 University of Illinois Homecoming. The Fighting Illini will take on Michigan State at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 10, 2009. Traditional pre and post-game activities will take place at the temporary Pike House, located at 1008 South Fourth Street, Champaign, Illinois.

## Chapter Officers

### President

James Ouska '07  
jouska@uiuc.edu

### Secretary

Jack Blandin '08  
blandin1@illinois.edu

### Vice President

Matthew Saccomanno '07  
msaccom2@uiuc.edu

### Rush Chairman

Patrick Guth '07  
pguth2@illinois.edu

### Vice President

John Munz '07  
jmunz2@illinois.edu

### Pledge Educator

Anthony LoCascio '08  
locasi1@illinois.edu

### Treasurer

Timothy Mueller '08  
muelle14@illinois.edu

### House Manager

Samuel Perkins '08  
perkins5@illinois.edu

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www.OmegaAlumniServices.com



## Pike Presents Raises \$4,500, Supports 415 Students



### Pike Presents Philanthropy Event

This past December, Pi Kappa Alpha received great praise and recognition for a program called *Pike Presents*. This charity event established by Beta Eta is aimed at providing holiday presents and school supplies to underprivileged children. This past year the Fraternity was able to provide 415 young students with gifts, and they raised \$4,500 from local sponsors and individual donations. Brother **Dan Klein '06** is credited with organizing and spearheading the activities. He appeared on the local WCIA 6:00 p.m. news show and was given an opportunity to speak on the philanthropy.

## Brothers Attend Pike Leadership Summit



Brothers accept the Robert Adger Smythe award at the 2008 Convention in Memphis, Tennessee.

Last February, fourteen Beta Eta active members attended the Pi Kappa Alpha Leadership Summit in Skokie, IL. Chapters from all over the Midwest also participated in the two-day program. Many of them actively sought out Beta Eta members to discuss ways in which they could emulate the success the Pikes at Illinois have enjoyed over the past few years.

During the Summit, brothers enjoyed lectures and workshops regarding rush, Fraternity history and ritual, pledge education, and other topics related to

chapter programming and personal development.

The highlight of the weekend came when Jerome V. Reel, author of *The Oak*, and one of the most recognized names in Pi Kappa Alpha, addressed the crowd.

The International Fraternity specially recognized former Beta Eta chapter president, **Adam Muszynski '06**, at the final banquet for completing his Pike University Certification. This recognition is given to undergraduates who attend a minimum of five International Fraternity programming events.

## Reschke Elected Student Trustee

Thanks to incredible performances in candidate debates, as well as help from some of his Pike brothers who chalked on the quad and passed out flyers around campus, students at the University of Illinois elected **Matt Reschke '06** to serve as Student Trustee to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees exercises final authority over the University and is responsible to the people of Illinois for the proper administration and government of the University.

Reschke is majoring in Premed/ Integrative Biology and is from Wilmette, Illinois. In addition to his governance role as a Student Trustee, he is the



Executive Vice President of the Inter-Fraternity Council and serves as a Student Senator.

"It is a huge honor to have Matt as the Student Trustee and involved in the active chapter," commented chapter president **James Ouska '07**.

## Pikes Elected to Two of Eight IFC Officer Positions

Beta Eta enjoyed unprecedented success in the recent Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC) elections when Brother **Matt Reschke '06** was elected Executive Vice President and Brother **Mark Cynova '06** was elected Vice President of Risk Management. Pi Kappa Alpha now controls a quarter of the IFC Executive Board positions. The chapter intends to also add a few members to the Judicial Board when those elections take place.

## 102 East Chalmers Closed

After 86 years, the doors to the Pi Kappa Alpha mansion at 102 East Chalmers are permanently closed. Demolition of the building will take place this Fall. The undergraduate brothers are moving to temporary housing down the street and will live in the Delta Phi fraternity house for the 2009-10 school year.

The House on Chalmers, built in 1923, is at the end of its useful life. The 86 year-old house has provided a home base for thousands of undergraduate men, but it is no longer safe. It no longer complies with city and university code, and it does not meet the needs of today's college student. Renovating the existing structure is cost-prohibitive.

In preparation for this day, the Beta Eta Corporation embarked upon a challenging journey to raise funds to rebuild the Pike house. This effort has been in the works, in some form or another, for more than five years. The goal is to raise enough money to build a house that properly represents Pi Kappa Alpha's long-standing success at Illinois, is competitive with other student-living options, and is a solid enough structure to last the Fraternity for another five to ten decades.

The housing project began with a core group of committed and concerned alumni with a vision to rebuild the fraternity house on campus. Thanks to volunteered time and money from industry experts like brother **Larry Debb '74**, who led the process to design the new house, the leadership has been able to develop a preliminary plan to build a state-of-the-art facility. The cost of the proposed building is just over \$5 million.

In an attempt to keep the burden of large debt and high rents off of the chapter, the Corporation projected the need to raise a minimum of \$2.75 million from fellow-alumni, friends and family to help finance the new house. The initial fundraising efforts were met with remarkable success. Those brothers who made early gifts to the effort did so significantly. However, the campaign has not yet reached its potential or secured maximum participation from the alumni base.

At press-time, Beta Eta has had a relatively small group of brothers step forward to make a financial pledge in support of rebuilding our chapter house at Illinois. A positive sign is the amount of money these 150 alumni have given to the campaign - a total of \$1,439,775!



Inside the boarded up Pike house.

"There is no question that we will build a new house," stated house corporation president **Mike Nelsen '80**. "The Beta Eta Corporation is exploring several options to expedite the re-building process. It will be important to ensure that a quality structure is erected - and that it properly represents Pi Kappa Alpha at the University of Illinois."

Details and options for the future Pike House are still being discussed and are far from being finalized. Mike Nelsen stated, "I hope to be clear that we are still very much focused on raising enough capital so that we can build a proper house that remains Beta Eta's now and in the future. We want to make the proper moves to ensure that we meet the Fraternity's housing needs today and well into the future."

The Fraternity has created a website that has up-to-date information on the housing plans and capital campaign. This site, located at [www.illinipikes.com](http://www.illinipikes.com) (click on house photo), profiles a list of current donors, the educational campaign brochure and methods to make and pay a financial donation.

Communication and updates on the demolition and re-construction plans will be posted on the Fraternity's website. Additionally, the Corporation hopes to be able to formally announce the official re-building timeline and details at Homecoming this coming October.

### Visit [www.illinipikes.com](http://www.illinipikes.com)

Visit [www.illinipikes.com](http://www.illinipikes.com), the official Beta Eta alumni website, to:

- Learn more about the chapter
- Search for alumni
- Update your address, phone number and email address
- Find out about upcoming events
- Post noteworthy accomplishments (a new baby, a recent marriage, a recent promotion, etc.)
- Support the fraternity's capital campaign

## Beta Eta Corporation

### President

Mike Nelsen '80

### Vice President

Chris Moore '78

### Treasurer

Troy Pawelko '86

### Secretary

Steve Lohman '87

### Director

Al Palma '74

## Brother to Brother

### Jay Anthony

### Severance '55

and his wife, Kathryn, recently celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The couple met at the University of Illinois while on a blind date. They were set up by the Alpha Xi Delta social chairwoman. Jay and Kathryn have four boys and five grandchildren.



The oldest son of **David W. Artz '71** recently graduated from Oklahoma University and is gainfully employed in Dallas, Texas. His youngest son is getting ready to start his junior year at the University of Arkansas. Dave and his wife look forward to the end of college tuition and fraternity dues payments!

**William Pat Berkbigler '78** currently lives with his nine year-old son in Gilbert, Arizona. After graduating, Berkbigler was commissioned as an officer in the US Air Force. He attended pilot training at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas and was brought back as a T-38 instructor pilot. After seven and a half years with the Air Force, Berkbigler went to work for the UPS as a DC-8 Flight Engineer. In 1992 he was hired by Southwest Airlines and has been with them ever since.

**Douglas Dale VanVooren '78** recently visited his daughter, Emily, in Barcelona, Spain. She was abroad studying for a semester.

**Alex C. Peterson '80** is a member of "The Professors", a San Diego-based band made up of five musicians from diverse backgrounds. They play a range

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**Pi Kappa Alpha**  
**University of Illinois #674**  
**PO Box 2187**  
**Columbus, GA 31902-2187**

Help us keep our alumni records up-to-date! Edit your member profile online at [www.illinipikes.com](http://www.illinipikes.com), or clip this form, place it in a stamped envelope and send to: Pi Kappa Alpha, University of Illinois #674, PO Box 2187, Columbus, GA 31902.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Initiation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

## Alumni Reunion



**A group of Beta Eta alumni, mostly from the initiation classes in the 1960s, gather for a reunion. They have another informal reunion tentatively planned for the Fall of 2010 at brother Jim Kelly's house in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Everyone from this era is welcome.**

### ***Brother to Brother***

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of music including be-bop, jazz, classic rock, punk and ska. The band formed in 2003 as garage band project and a way to blow-off steam. They evolved into a tight-knit unit that includes the traditional guitar, bass and drum elements along with sax, keyboards and additional percussion. Check out [www.theprofessorslounge.com](http://www.theprofessorslounge.com) for more information on the band.

**Troy Robert Pawelko '86** was recently married to Teresa Petry, a top-producing real estate agent in DuPage County. The couple has five children: Emily (13), Sean (12), Maura (9), Will (7) and Caroline (6). They live in Lombard, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. Teresa and Troy honeymooned in the Dominican Republic.

**Kirk D. Langefeld '98** and his wife, Marissa, welcomed their first child, Anderson Edward Langefeld, into the world on February 9, 2009. Kirk recently left the law field and purchased a corporate catering company called Fancy Food Catering. His customers are sales people who provide lunches for sales and training meetings, but they also cater to all types of corporate events in the Chicagoland area. For more information on Fancy Food, please visit: [www.feedmefancy.com](http://www.feedmefancy.com).

**Rory D. Langefeld '04** was recently married to a University of Illinois Theta. Roughly 30 Pikes attended the celebration - including four of his "blood" brothers who all stood up for him at the wedding.