

OFFICERS

President / Treasurer / Secretary:

Edward D. Gorkes (1979)
(215) 694-4828 (Cell)
1361 Worthington Courte
Ambler, PA 19002-1562
gorkes@gmail.com

Vice President:

Mike Hooks (1993)
(412) 613-0352 (Cell)
327 Locust Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
hoox81@gmail.com

Board of Directors:

Vincent A. Gaeta (1986)
(201) 213-0028 (Cell)
P.O. Box 37
3 Decatur Street
Columbia, NJ 07832-0037
gaetav@ptd.net

Mark H. Breedlove (1978)
(724) 713-7382 (Cell)
230 Silver Creek Drive
Mars, PA 16046
mhbreedlove@hotmail.com

James Merinar (1987)
(814) 574-5672 (Cell)
386 Wildwood Drive
Newberry, SC 29108

Jamesmerinar@comcast.net

Steve Uzupis (1977)
(570) 660-9018 (Cell)
280 Ridge Road
Unityville, PA 17774-9211
stevezip722@gmail.com

John Murphy (1989)
(717) 839-1230 (Cell)
209 Berkstone Circle
Harrisburg, PA 17112
John.Murphy27@verizon.net

Connor Kincheloe (2014)
(570) 592-1112 (Cell)
2820 Andiron Lane
Vienna, VA 22180
connor.kincheloe@gmail.com

Michael R Vough (2011)
(570) 814-5110 (Cell)
918 8th Street NE
Washington DC, 20002
mike.vough@gmail.com



Alpha-Delta News

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Brothers,

The highlight of this newsletter is an outstanding and very eye opening alumni profile from **Brother Doug Bell**. Brother Bell was very kind in sharing some very personal health, family and personal major issues he endured and overcame. He also reflected how his early involvement with Alpha-Delta was a driving force in his ability to conquer personal challenges later in life, that very few of us will ever encounter in the magnitude that Brother Bell did. Thank You Brother Bell for sharing your story!



We also want to "Shout Out" to **Brother Dick Hayes** for making a very significant donation to Penn State. Contributions like Brother Hayes made is what makes our university a leading institution throughout the country.

I also saw on Facebook that **Brother Kevin Hacker** finally tied the knot. See some pictures in the newsletter and Brother Hacker paying what appears to be a sizeable bar tab! I experienced many good times with Kevin and **Tom Tatum** at Penn State home football games at our unofficial tailgate area at Hastings Parking lot. Hastings Tailgates was the place to be for many years, especially with our beloved **Brother Wes Link** who always had his famous concoction flowing!

We also have some pictures and a recap from **Brother Mike Hooks** on the (Mini-Reunion) he and several other alumni put together. I heard it was a great event with a large gathering. Nice Work Brother Hooks!

We also had an alumnus join our Chapter Celestial, **Gary Agostini**. If you know of any others, please let me know. We do not always get notified on a timely basis. Additional information on brother Agostini is included in this newsletter. Your fraternity undergraduate friendships are precious, reach out to your fellow brothers to keep connected.

Consider taking the time to send in a little update (pictures too) about what's new in your life. Your fellow Alpha-Delta brothers like to see what others are up to in their lives. Make sure we also have your current email address and contact information.

I hope everyone has a very nice Holiday Season!

AEKDB,

Ed Gorkes
President

The Long Journey Back

The year 1978 changed my life. Although unaware at that time of the true value of the lessons learned at Alpha Delta, when tragedy struck in the future those lessons saved my life. It now has been 45 years since I first walked through the door of the old chapter house on Beaver Avenue, but it still seems like only a few minutes ago. As I crossed that threshold, it was tough not to think about the situation I found myself in only two weeks after arriving at PSU. That was being completely unprepared academically or socially with little ability to communicate to others. Then, my off-campus housing situation fell through. Two new friends pointed me towards the fraternities for assistance but I knew absolutely nothing about fraternities. They walked me down to sign up for the fall 1978 rush and now I was overwhelmed beyond imagination. After visiting many other fraternities, there was only one that seemed to be right. That was Kappa Sigma Alpha Delta. To me, Alpha Delta appeared to be the most unique house of all the fraternities that possessed a down-to-earth atmosphere that was truly remarkable. It was fortunate that I received a bid, and wise that I accepted it that fall. However, going from not knowing what a fraternity was in September of that year, to becoming a pledge in November, was a surreal experience that opened the door for me to demand that I search for answers and solutions across the board of life. Pledging demonstrated how not to give up, and how to be part of a diverse team. While only beginning to learn these valuable skills, it was the brothers, pledges, and alumni of Alpha Delta that all provided the necessary suggestions and guidance to make it through this ordeal. To this day, I cannot think of a more patient and dedicated group of people. As a brother, school continued to overwhelm me but the brotherhood continued to support those efforts. PSU was so much more expensive than my previous school that after the first year, I was broke. In response, the brotherhood offered me kitchen duty for our 45 brothers and in return, they would cover my house bill. That allowed me to remain adjacent to campus and focus completely on school. By the fall of 1980, the impossible was being achieved but it was Kappa Sigma and the brotherhood of Alpha Delta that made the difference.



1978



2022

After graduating in March of 1981, I went on to a career in the oil industry, federal government, state government, and consulting. Graduate school was also a focus and in 1987, I graduated from the University of Maryland with an MS degree in Geology. Things were going well in Washington, D.C. until the morning of January 7, 1998, the day I suffered catastrophic spine injuries. World class experts were challenged by the extent and complexity of the injuries and 18 months later felt it was too late for a successful surgical fix. As things worsened during this time, I watched the career and

life I built start to crumble. What I learned at Alpha Delta 20 years prior was now being put to the ultimate test. There were endless cycles of doing better and doing worse but overall, the experts said I was headed towards being in a wheelchair. My spouse of a decade whom I put through medical school and supported through residency, did not wish to be with a paraplegic so the marriage ended just before the most extensive operation of May 15, 2002. For many months after that 9-hour operation, I could not even roll over in bed. There were so many surgical sites, I could not fathom what to focus on first. The diligence first forged at Alpha Delta helped me get through each minute for what seemed to be an eternity. Immobilized in bed for endless stretches of time while watching the wall clock's second hand did not seem real. Sixty-seconds at that time seemed longer than a month today. When I closed my eyes, the thoughts about PSU, Alpha Delta, and all those great people would appear. What incredible freedoms and liberties we had. Many attempts were made to leave what seemed to be a permanent recovery bed, but those attempts were all met by major setbacks and more surgeries.

In all, I spent 7 years on and off in bed; had treatment, surgeries, and procedures for 20 years; and continue physical therapy to this day (almost 25 years). Six years after the massive injuries it was necessary to step down from my three-decade career to focus only on medical needs. Ten years after those injuries and only half way through all the surgeries, I wanted to see if it was possible to go back to school to take just one course. Showing up at Penn State Harrisburg in 2008 after refusing to continue pain medication, and in a soft body cast did raise a few eyebrows but it was time to begin to start the long road back to a life. It was nearly impossible to commute to school, endure the 3-hour course, and get home. Doing anything at all took an enormous amount of energy but it was important to keep trying. During these years, my primary focus was on learning to walk again, being there for my family, and surviving a course would serve to raise my spirits for the long journey ahead. That positive mentality I received directly from my years at Alpha Delta. The first course did go surprisingly

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A Sad Goodbye to Brother Gary Agostini '68

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Brother Gary A. Agostini '68**. Read on to view his obituary.

Source Courtesy of *Klotzbach Funeral Homes*

Gary A. Agostini, age 75, loving husband of Bernadine I. (Sucheki) Agostini, of Phoenixville, PA, passed away on Sunday, August 28, 2022. Born on January 21, 1947 in Erie, PA, he was a son of the late Rocco Sr. and Frances (Voltz) Agostini.

Mr. Agostini was a graduate of Academy High School in Erie, PA. He received his Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education from Penn State University, where he was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. He was awarded a National Science Foundation grant to earn a Master's degree in Biology from Purdue University.

To finish Gary's obituary, head to the website via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2fsv6cde>



He was living in Pittsburgh at the time.

The loss now of both Agostini brothers is a big loss to the chapter.

Ike and Harvey: I know this is very tough news for you guys since you spent so much time together. He was a great guy and will be missed.

RIP GARY

Rich Mascaro

AEKDB

Harvey Thompson:

I am saddened to share the news of Gary Agostini's passing on 8/28/22, following a brief illness, and celebrate his life.

Gary was my and George Strachan's (Ike's) great roommate at Kappa Sigma, Penn State, and was Ike's big brother. Gary and his wife Bernadine (known to all as "Bernie") met at Penn State and had 2 wonderful sons, one of whom predeceased him, and two grandchildren.

Gary taught high school biology at Great Valley High School for decades and many of his former students commented on how Gary influenced their lives on the funeral home website below. The website also contains obituary/info/place to offer condolences, etc.

Gary was a gentle man, and always a gentleman. When asked how she met Gary, Bernie said, "During Gary's first term at main (PSU) campus, Ned Krosglund's pinmate, Zoey, was my next door neighbor in the dorm. Gary didn't really know anyone yet and needed a date for a formal. So she set us up on a blind date and the rest is history." GARY AND BERNIE WERE MARRIED FOR OVER 53 YEARS! The first time I saw them together, holding hands in the party room, I knew it was long-term love affair.

Comments from Fraternity Brothers:

Richard Mascaro:

This is another sad day in our chapter annals.

I had the good fortune to know Gary as well as his older brother Rocco. Affectionately know as Big Bede who graduated around '65.

The two guys had a wonderful mom who would send a care package of homemade cookies each individually wrapped in wax paper. That package was like gold.

Gary was very quiet guy as opposed to his older brother who roared when he laughed. Rocco died an untimely death at a pretty young age.

DOUGLAS ALAN BELL '81

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well so I continued. Over the next 7 years and in between operations and attempted recoveries, I had completed enough courses to concurrently achieve a Master of Public Administration and an MA in Community Psychology.

Without Alpha Delta and those lessons learned, there would have been no journey back. It would not have been possible for me to be there for my parents at the end of their lives, or be there for my children. There would have been no coveted PSU undergraduate degree, no three advanced degrees, no fulfilling career, and no ability to walk. It is truly a miracle that I am not in a wheelchair. Fraternities are under siege these days as we live in a much different world than 1978. However, fraternities seem even

more important today to assist young men that need support and direction to navigate life, and in my case, to also reacquire a life. The Kappa Sigma Fraternity as a whole, and the Alpha Delta chapter literally made the difference in the entire life that was ahead of me. That said, it truly is an honor to thank Kappa Sigma Fraternity and Alpha Delta for being there. It is my hope that this story sheds some light on the critical importance of these organizations and the need for them to survive.

Respectfully,

Douglas Alan Bell, '81

February 10, 1979 Initiate (Alpha Delta)

PHILANTHROPY

Richard Hayes '68 and wife Young Mi "Bebe" Hayes donate big to Penn State

Photo Credit: Katy Heltman

Source Courtesy of Penn State

<https://www.psu.edu/news/liberal-arts/story/dick-and-bebe-hayes-bequest-benefit-child-study-center-scholarships/>



Penn State pre-law alumnus Richard "Dick" Hayes and his wife, Young Mi "Bebe" Hayes, have committed \$2.5 million

through their future estate to support the Child Study Center at Penn State and to create a scholarship fund in the College of the Liberal Arts.

REUNION RECAP

Mini Reunion



The weekend of September 23-25 witnessed the rebirth of a fall tradition, an organized gathering of Friends, Brothers and Sisters in State College.

The grassroots effort for the event began with a smaller group of 12-15 alumni, planning to meet in State College, host a tailgate and then attend the football game between the Nittany Lions and the Central Michigan Chippewas. A virtual planning meeting was held to confirm attendees and generate ideas for involving more of our alumni group. Of these ideas, the one most favorable for success was to host a happy hour event on Friday night.

Plans were accelerated to secure a location for Friday and an old friend of Kappa Sigma, Raymond Rockey of The Brewery, stepped up to offer his venue for the private event. Canyon Pizza, who many may remember started in one of the retail spaces below the 255 Highland Ave house, was contacted to provide delicious pizza and breadsticks.

On Friday, September 23, approximately 60 brothers, sisters and

guests attended the event at The Brewery. The event was scheduled to run from 6-8pm but the congenial atmosphere coaxed many to stay late into the night.

Saturday morning began with a tailgate featuring a great spread of all sorts of food and beverage goodies. Over the course of the day, more than 80 brothers, sisters and guests made an appearance to say hello, make new contacts and renew old friendships.

Of course, the tailgate was put on hold for the football game where the Nittany Lions brought home a victory by a score of 33-14.

Many returned to the tailgate following the game, where more enjoyment was had by all. A highlight of the day was an impromptu performance of the Kappa Sigma Sweetheart song, dedicated to a Starduster who had to miss the weekend's events due to illness.

Overall, the weekend was a great success and enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who attended and most of all, thank you to all that played a part in reviving this great tradition.

MY GREAT BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING TAB

“My fraternity little brother, **Kevin Hacker**, 30 or so years later, being forced to pick up the bar tab of his fraternity brothers the night before his wedding in Minnesota — after five hours at the bar. Hacker was not happy about his involuntary graciousness.

—**Matthew Weisberg**

