

THE ILLINOIS SIG

Sigma Chi Fraternity at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | Winter 2020
Alumni Relations Office | P.O. Box 80828, Atlanta, Georgia 30366 | www.illinoisigs.org

a message from the HOUSING CORPORATION PRESIDENT

Teamwork + Dedication = Mission Possible



And the beat goes on.....

Your Board remains dedicated to our cause; to deliver leaders into society leaders of tomorrow. **Mark Anderson '77** is hard at work on new programming for EX! It is a tremendous task, but they have the right man for the job! What does amaze me is I was recently talking to

another leader of his fraternity down at Illinois and he shared the fact we (he named a half dozen fraternities) are so blessed by the dedication of our general fraternity and the resources provided by our fraternities. I take my hat off to those in the "home office," the Grand Praetor system, our chapter advisor, and all the resources we have at hand, LTW, Horizons, Mission 365, educational programming, magister training manual, EX University web-based learning, EX Foundation, and the list goes on! Helping young college men realize they can become who they aspire to be is no easy task in today's world. We are truly lucky and blessed by all the involved alumni.

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Speaking of involved alumni, I want to tell you a little story:

Max Hooper '54 reached out to me some time ago and re-engaged with his beloved 410 E. John. We have had many discussions and he has shared some very good insights. I remember Max Hooper as he worked for my father for over a decade back in the '60s. Max was one of the great Illini basketball players helping take the Illini to the Final Four! **Johnny "Red" Kerr** was lucky to play with such a dedicated player, Max Hooper! Your board invited Max to come from his current home in Birmingham, Alabama, to speak to our chapter on October 5, 2019. He was joined by

Corporation President (continued on page 6)

Alumni Spotlight | Taylor Mason

EDITOR'S NOTE: For this edition of the newsletter we're shining the Spotlight on renowned comedian **Taylor Mason**. From the hometown of Beach Haven, New Jersey, Taylor served as pledge class president while an active chapter member. After graduating with his BA in agriculture from Illinois, he earned his MSA at the Medill School of Advertising at Northwestern University Evanston. Today, Taylor has enjoyed a career in entertainment for the last 30 years. He and wife Marsia have been married for nearly just as long and share two grown children. Taylor is committed to supporting Urban Promise and Compassion International. In his latest news: comedy special "Hysterical Perspective" can be streamed for free on any device. Download "Dry Bar Comedy" at the App Store and get the special, and newest book, "IRREVERSIBLE: The Life and Times of A Traveling Ventriloquist" (Xlibris Publishing, 2019) is out and available everywhere (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Google Play, etc.). Be sure to check it out!



What did you enjoy most as an active chapter member?

What I enjoyed most? There was such a sense of camaraderie—which I am grateful for since we live in such a divided nation today—because that kind of brotherhood and friendship has such a strong hold on me, still. During my stay at 410 E. John, there were three important facets to daily life that made a lifelong impression on me: 1.) get good grades; 2.) laugh a lot; 3.) help one another, not necessarily in that order. I had been thrown out of a fraternity (my father's fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho) after my freshman year at the U. of Illinois). My college—and my life experience—would have been far less interesting and productive had Sigma Chi not taken me in. I laughed a lot.

How do you stay in touch with your brothers today?

I'm embarrassed to say that the way I keep in touch is mostly via the internet and meeting my brethren when I perform in their area. Sigma Chi brothers often come see my live appearances when possible, and I'm always thrilled to reconnect and get updates on their lives.

When did you develop an interest in comedy?

I had a severe knee injury as a football player

for the Fighting Illini varsity in the autumn of my junior year at Illinois. Fortunately, the Sigma Chi House had major "after hours parties" just about every weekend, and on one such Friday night I was asked to deejay (since I couldn't dance—I was in a hip-to-ankle cast). A brother (let's call him "Curly") handed me a microphone. I began making fun of my friends, the college, our football team, etc. As the night went on—and as I became more and more bold in my sarcasm—a student from another fraternity (Alpha Delta Phi) came up to me and asked if I would deejay their party the next week—for money. And my life changed.

What was your first performance like?

My first performance was an eye-opener at ADPhi the following week because I was getting paid (\$50) and I had to earn my check. It became very obvious, very quickly, I had a lot of work to do. I would need to have at least some kind of routine/content that would either make people laugh or entertain them. I don't think I was very good. But I had a lot of energy (another lesson learned: in live performance, if you're not very good at anything, have a lot of energy—that covers up for lack of skills) so I muddled through and began my career in earnest.



Alumni Spotlight (continued on page 6)



From the House Corporation Board

Dear Brothers,

Unfortunately, this 2019-2020 school year is a challenging one for our chapter. During the fall semester, Kappa Kappa was cited for several incidents of misconduct, ranging from alleged hazing, violations of the university's and Interfraternity Council's policy on social event

this semester and PP current pledges. The Kappa Kappa charter was not suspended, nor have there been penalties implemented by the university.

However, Kappa Kappa is definitely under the microscope and must come together to right the ship and revitalize our chapter utilizing Sigma Chi value-based decision-making through the

Executive Board. Chapter Advisory Board members serve independently from the Kappa Kappa House Corporation Board and the Sigma Chi International Fraternity, enabling Advisory Board members to provide direct and constructive mentorship. To join, a brother just must be able to:

- Volunteer for at least two years
- Attend regularly scheduled meetings
- Attend Chapter meetings as available
- Assist with Chapter events as needed

We are confident that a strong Advisory Board will have a major impact on the success of Kappa Kappa moving forward. With your participation, we can take a major step in the restoration of Kappa Kappa. Please email Tom Munger '13 at tmunger121@gmail.com to learn about how to get involved.

IHSV,

Tom Munger '13
Member of the House Corporation Board

"Navigating these rough times will be a major test for our new chapter leaders. To provide support and mentorship, the House Corporation Board is seeking alumni to join a Chapter Advisory Board."

management, and violation of Sigma Chi's programming implementation requirements. Action plans to eliminate potential hazing opportunities and to ensure policy compliance were unsuccessful.

As a result, Sigma Chi International Fraternity conducted a membership review utilizing a group of non-Kappa Kappa alumni volunteers. The outcome from the review was the placing of 40 members on Suspended-Active-Status (SAS). Today, the chapter has 33 in-house active members and seven out-of-house members enrolled

implementation of positive productive programming. Kappa Kappa's failure here will invite significantly more severe consequences (including potential charter suspension).

Navigating these rough times will be a major test for our new chapter leaders. To provide support and mentorship, the House Corporation Board is seeking alumni to join a Chapter Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board will be chaired by the Grand Praeter or Chapter Advisor and will help provide guidance to the Undergraduate

Chapter Spotlight | Zach Abrams



EDITOR'S NOTE: Representing the chapter as Spotlight is Zach Abrams. Zach is emerging as a leader and is inspiring to others. From the hometown of Buffalo Grove, IL, Zach is working toward a degree in industrial engineering. He has served the chapter as Derby Days chairman, assistant scholarship chair, and as a member of the Judicial Board.

What led you to join the chapter?

The thing that led me to the chapter was the reputation they had on campus, as well as the opportunities

they gave to the new freshman to meet brothers in the house and get a taste of what the fraternity is really like. Sigma Chi's values and the way the active members carried themselves was a large part of why I chose Sigma Chi as the house I wanted to be a part of.

How was your experience this year as Derby Days Chairman?

This year as a Derby Days Chairman, I had an absolute blast helping welcome the freshmen on campus and raising a large sum for The Huntsman Cancer Institute. I think Derby Days is very special in the fact that we have a week

dedicated to philanthropy rather than just one event. This allows us much flexibility when it comes to deciding how we schedule/run the week. This year, we surpassed our goal of \$20,000 in raised donations, which I'm proud to say as a chairman.

Who inspires you and how?

The people who inspire me are my immediate family members. They have always been the ones to push and motivate me to do great things. Especially my parents and sister—they have been the ones who have been there for me whenever I needed it. I do not think without them I'd be in the position I am right now and having the same amount of success as well.

How would you like to apply your degree after graduation?

Post-graduation, I plan to use my industrial engineering in more of a business aspect. I'm



Zach with brother Reed Christensen at Derby Days, where they both reffed the competition.

looking to go into either supply chain or consulting. With my degree I have the opportunity to either go into an engineering career or a business career, since my degree comes with dual flexibility.

Outside of school, what do you do for fun?

I love to be outside and athletic. I played both hockey and baseball growing up and throughout high school. I love to be able to burn some energy and stay healthy as much as I can while still focusing on school. I also love to be around my friends and pledge brothers to blow off some stress from school, just hang out, and relax. Greek life has given me many new friends that I can be myself and have some quality fun.



Special Announcement!



Brother Steve Thayer being honored as Significant Sig. He is the 38th KK EX. Steve is pictured with son, Ryan Thayer, and his wife, Barb.

On June 29, 2019, Steven J. Thayer '88 accepted a Significant Sig award at the Sigma Chi Grand Chapter in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Significant Sig award is one of the fraternity's highest honors and recognizes "those alumni members whose achievements in their fields of endeavor have brought honor and prestige to the name of Sigma Chi." The Sigma Chi Fraternity has recognized more than 1,400 brothers since the award's inception at the 1935 Grand Chapter.

In 2013, Steve was named to the Order of Constantine, the fraternity's highest honor for outstanding fraternity service. Approximately 720 brothers have been inducted to the Order of Constantine. Less than 150 brothers have received both a Significant Sig and Order of Constantine Award from the Sigma Chi Fraternity.

Steve dedicated his award to friendship and recognized his lifelong friend and pledge brother, **Jim Skelton '88**. Steve and Jim's sons,

Matt Skelton and **Ryan Thayer**, are also pledge brothers and are members of the class of 2021.



Steve Thayer after delivering the commencement speech at the University of Illinois Liberal Arts & Sciences, Department of Economics, May 2019 graduation. Pictured (left to right) are his daughter, Sydney, Steve's wife, Barbara, Steve, and his son, Ben.

notes and news FROM OUR ALUMNI



From left to right: Joe Huyler '61 (Jackie), Don Tjarksen (Jane), Ned Cleveland (Judy), Dick Whittaker (Becky), Dave Powell, Dick Fletemeyer (Deb), Sam Gore '58, Derald Brackmann (Char), Dick McWard '60 (Debbie), Lon Rademacher (Mary Ann), and Mike Walters (Peggy).

Dr. Lorin Dick Whittaker Jr. '59 – Our 1959 pledge class of '59 held a very successful reunion in Champaign on 30th and 31st of August 2019. Nineteen brothers and 17 significant others attended, we had a reception Friday evening, went to the Illinois football season opener Saturday afternoon, and a banquet Saturday evening. Our Sigma Chi spirit certainly lives on through the 60 years since our pledge class members graduated. We had a couple other brothers who were late cancellations. A good time was had by all!

Dick Amundsen '64 – I've been retired since 2008 and I am thoroughly enjoying it. Both Marilyn and I are in reasonably good health. I started working out at the gym back in 2010 and both of us normally workout four times a week. I play tennis as often as I can and do a fair amount of gardening and reading. I still play the piano and that IS my favorite pastime; between 2008 and 2018 I did over 500 performances at local nursing homes and assisted living centers. We are currently dogless, but



Chapter Eternal

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following Kappa Kappa brothers:

James M. Brown '43
Harold W. Lashmett '49

Loren L. Sanders '59
David D. Rademacher '61

Michael J. Riley '63
L. Milton McClure '63



L. Milton McClure

We recently lost a distinguished KK Sig from the class of 1963, **Milt McClure**. Milt was my big brother. He served as consul prior to my own service in that capacity. About eight years ago, Milt was honored as a Significant Sig. On his passing, I communicated with many of the brothers of our era and then collected their responses. The most recent issue of the Illinois Sig included mention of Milt's son, **L. Matt McClure '00**, entering the Chapter Eternal last year. Milt's dad, **Lloyd M. McClure '38**, who was also a KK Sig, only passed away himself about eight years ago at the advanced age of 92

or so. Milt was a beloved friend, colleague, husband, father, attorney, leader, Significant Sig, and my Big Brother.

Peter Benda '64

"In the mornings, Milt was always just so full of energy!"

I have extremely fond memories of Milt. When 410 East John was renovated back then, there was a "suite" built for the Consul (Jim Brady and, later, Len Pierce), Pro Consul (Milt), and Quaestor (me). We still slept in the dorms, but this was sort of a meeting place for the three officers to gather and discuss items of the day. In the mornings, Milt was always just so full of energy! Stretching out his body, praising the Lord for such a great day, and generally putting a happy face on his attitude for facing whatever was to come that day. (Some of us, myself included, were not necessarily that "sparky" in the morning...) Eventually, his highly optimistic attitude did rub off on the rest of us. It seems so awful that something like COPD did him in.

Bob Osterman '63

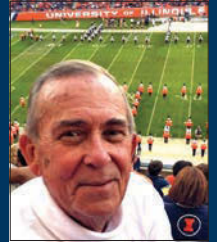
"He was a hero to many, and all of my remembrances of Milt were of the highest in respect and admiration of a leader by example. Proud to have known him and call him brother."

He was a hero to many, and all of my remembrances of Milt were of the highest in respect and admiration of a leader by example. Proud to have known him and call him brother. As he joins the Chapter Eternal, may he forever rest in peace. Godspeed, Milt. He will not be forgotten! *In Hoc*.

Ross "Cozy" Kohlman '64

Milt's passing is a terrible loss. He was a great guy and a great Sig. Here's a photo of him [at right] at the KK/Illinois game at Soldier's Field in 2013. (Doesn't seem that long ago.)

Roger Dusberger '64



"Milt certainly honored himself and all of his brothers as a Significant Sig and his leadership throughout his life, especially at our Kappa Kappa Chapter."

Milt certainly honored himself and all of his brothers as a Significant Sig and his leadership throughout his life, especially at our Kappa Kappa Chapter. I always looked up to Milt and remember wonderful conversations with him at our reunion in Chicago a few years back. He will be missed.

Dennis Kleidon '64

"Milt was the kind of person who made me proud to be a Sigma Chi."

Milt was the kind of person who made me proud to be a Sigma Chi. Reading of his extensive accomplishments, I was to some extent not overly surprised because the Milt I had known while at Illinois was focused and disciplined. I'm sure he will be missed by friends and family.

Dick Amundsen '64

"To many, he was known as Uncle Miltie. He will be missed by the hundreds of lives he touched."

Milt: What can I say? I had the joy of growing up with Milt in Beardstown. As teenagers we were lucky, we did not get caught doing some of the things we did (If we had, we probably would not have been able to get a law license). I had the privilege and pleasure of practicing law with Milt for more than 40 years. The stories are endless. Milt mastered everything he got engaged in—almost. He was a great father, an outstanding attorney, four great children, two sons in Sigma Chi, a devoted Methodist, served in Vietnam, promoted to captain, served as potentate in the Ansar Shrine, and the list goes on. However, there were a few things he never mastered: Keeping a long story short or having anything less than "three things" to say about anything. To many, he was known as Uncle Miltie. He will be missed by the hundreds of lives he touched.

Tom Brannan '65



hope to rectify that situation in the near future. Reasonable finances have allowed Marilyn and I to do a bit of traveling—we try to do one big trip a year. We just returned from Ireland and have been to Europe eight times plus Alaska, the Bay Area, and the Canadian Rockies. So, life is not too shabby.

Don Schramm '65 – I retired from the university in 2009, staying on as emeritus faculty and teaching online from wherever I was until June 2017. Carol and I sold our Madison home in 2014 to be near children and grandchildren for a few years. We now have a small condo in St. Paul for the warmer months. We spend the winter months in Mexico, both on the Caribbean in a small fishing village and then in the mountains in a slightly larger colonial town. It's been a full life and I have enjoyed almost every minute.

"Garen Bohlin '69 and Les Detterbeck '69 organized a 50th graduation year reunion of the class of '69 on September 20-21 in Chicago."

Garen Bohlin '69 and **Les Detterbeck '69** organized a 50th graduation year reunion of the class of '69 on September 20-21 in Chicago. In addition to Bohlin and Detterbeck, brothers **Bill Abraham, Chuck Bernardini, Mark Bischoff, Ron Dell, George Hardin, Ken Hartwig, Larry Irwin, Mickey Kaminski, Les Lavine, Jim Matarelli, Kevin O'Keefe, Bill Pearce, Jeff Phillips, Dick Shirley, and Jon Vance**, as well as pledge class Magister **John Tocks '66**, attended the reunion weekend events. Attendees also included spouses and significant others, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed ample opportunities to catch up and reminisce over dinners on both Friday and Saturday evenings, an architectural walk on Saturday, and many other small informal gatherings. The group constituted 17 of 24 members of the class and traveled to Chicago from as far away as Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, and California, joining brothers from the Chicago area and other close Midwestern locations.

"In September, four class of 1970 Kappa Kappa Sig alumni and spouses met in Flagstaff, Arizona, for our fifth biennial reunion."



Jacquie, Don, Gary, Fred, Debbie, Deb, Ed, and Candy.

Gary A. Juhl '70 – In September, four class of 1970 Kappa Kappa Sig alumni and spouses met in Flagstaff, Arizona, for our fifth biennial reunion. A wonderful time was had by all as we toured the beauty of the Grand Canyon, gazed at the stars at the Lowell Observatory, went on a walking food tour of historic downtown Flagstaff, drove down breathtaking Oak Creek Canyon to Sedona, and generally relaxed and reminisced. Brothers **Don Leary** (Jacquie), **Ed Schoeneberger** (Candy), **Fred Mateer** (Deb), and **Gary Juhl** (Debbie), enjoyed five nights at a lovely home overlooking a golf course with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. Everyone gives their best to all fellow KK Sigs and especially our '70 pledge class brothers!



Ed Schoeneberger, Gary Juhl, Don Leary, and Fred Mateer.

Jay A. Pickett '80 – Left my family practice of 28 years and started working at Total Access Urgent Care in St. Louis, Missouri.

Jason A. Lipoff '99 – Pediatric dental practice in Prospect, Kentucky. Two sons: Theo (age 3) and Winston (age 1), spouse, Brooke, married September of 2015.

Brock J. Pluth '19 – Third year student at Palmers College of Chiropractic.

Have Alumni News?

We want to hear from you! Send your personal updates, accomplishments, adventures, and photos to our account manager, Kasey Breedlove, at kbreedlove@elevateims.com, or simply fill out the back of the enclosed gift form and return it in the mail.

We want to share it in the next issue of *The Illinois Sig!*

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Alumni Spotlight *(continued from page 1)*

When did you begin to feel successful?

I've always felt somewhat successful. As long as the requests for my services, the audience is laughing, and the rooms are full? I feel successful. The real issue is satisfaction—and I have yet to learn when to be satisfied. Which is a major character flaw, by the way.

How do you select the topics for your material?

Writing music, comedy, jokes, routines, dialogues, and coming up with creative output is the bane of my existence. Topics for content are unlimited. Making them funny, entertaining and/or informative is the problem. It's a lifelong homework assignment. I hate it.

Which achievements are you most proud of?

I'm proud of both my kids (one graduated summa cum laude from Rutgers and earned a Fulbright, the other is now in grad school at Columbia University) and I'm proud of my marriage of 33 years—to my first wife (so far my only wife).

Professionally, I'm always giving myself a pat on the back when I write a joke that is somewhat contemporary and works. "I live in New

Jersey, so we don't have what you call 'neighbors.' We have 'witnesses.'" And of course, I'm proud of the accomplishments of my fellow Sigs who have flourished in their personal lives and in the private and public sector during the 40 years since we all graduated from Illinois.

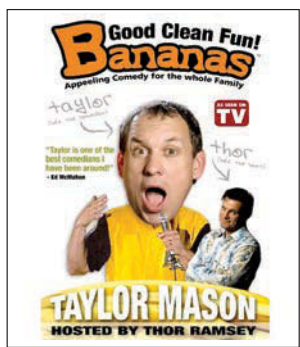
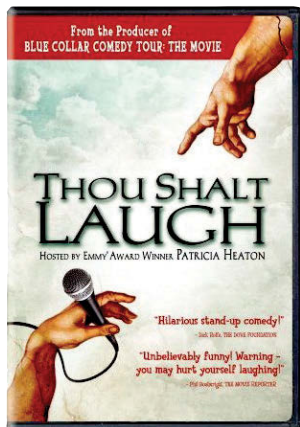
Outside of work, what do you do for fun?

I learned this at Illinois, and at the Sig House there: do what you love for a living. So, my job is a lot of fun. The writing and creating is awful, and the road is hell. But the audiences, the venues, the projects and videos and comedy specials are so much fun it's impossible to put into words.

What advice can you give your fellow Sigma Chi brothers about keeping a sense of humor in life?

There was a trick I learned while working at the Second City Theater in Chicago. They teach this to the actors who are improvising comedy scenes (i.e. making comedy without a script—literally "finding the joke in the moment"). That little secret is always making the positive choice. "Yes" always leads to an opportunity for more jokes.

Going along with whatever the premise is—no matter how inane—at least gives you a chance to elicit some laughter. I think that pertains in a lot



of ways to everyday life. Make the positive choice. There is a fine line between being horrifically perky and realistically critical, of course, but it is obvious to me that lots of inspiration—not just personally but for a lot of artists and creative types I work with—inspiration comes from an expectation that something good is going to happen.

Which lends itself to having a sense of humor—there is always a punchline waiting to be discovered.

Corporation President

(continued from page 1)

Ed King '54, EX from Bradley. Ed King '54 and Max played on the same high school team out of Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Ed King led his Bradley team to the Final Four!

Ed also was at one time the Grand Tribune of EX, certainly a dedicated alumnus. **Steve Smith '54** also joined Max and Ed. Steve was a pledge brother of Max. Max and Steve brought their Kappa Kappa wives along, which was very special. Now, Steve had a stroke many years ago and his speech and ability to walk is quite compromised, but he was a champion! We had a nice conversation about my father, and even their Kappa Kappa wives remembered my father back in the day!

Max and Ed made a wonderful heartfelt presentation about what it means to be an EX. The chapter was amazed and grateful for the interest and dedication to EX. That's what it is all about and why involvement in our fraternity

is so important—to have an impact on young men and their lives!

Your board spent more money helping revive 410. We replaced all the flooring in the basement, second floor and third floor. It was needed and makes 410 feel more like a home! Our scholarship remains strong as we are ranked No. 14.

We dropped slightly in our ranking from No. 10, but our Fisher Scholar and scholarship chairs are hard at work. The challenge is there is such a small difference in the rankings that if we can improve just a little, we can move up to the top 10 again!

As always, I want to thank the board members for all their help and support.

In hoc,

Peter Steger '79
President of your House Corporation

Leave a Legacy!

Consider a lasting gift that will support the brothers of Kappa Kappa Chapter long after you are gone. By including Kappa Kappa in your estate plans, you ensure the long-term health and success of our fraternity. Here's what you and/or your adviser might need to know.

The most common ways to include Kappa Kappa Chapter are through your will or by naming Kappa Kappa of Sigma Chi Foundation as a beneficiary under a life insurance policy.

Sample language for your will or estate plan:

"I leave the sum of (\$XXXXXX.xx or XX% of my estate) to Kappa Kappa of Sigma Chi Foundation, tax ID# 20-3901938 for their general purposes."

** This information is not presented as legal or tax advice. Always consult with you advisers for questions or clarifications.**

Your brothers and those following in their footsteps thank you!