



# THE ILLINOIS SIG

Sigma Chi Fraternity at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | Summer 2023 | Alumni Relations Office | P.O. Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851-0876 | [www.illinoisigs.org](http://www.illinoisigs.org)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER SUMMER 2023

### “Those Who Commit Will Be Champions in Life”



The title speaks to what is required for organizations to survive and thrive. I am paraphrasing something Bo Schembechler told his team in 1969 when he took over as Michigan's head football coach. The team had lost its rudder. They were soft and not as committed as they

should be to rise as champions. The Vietnam War was raging and protests were happening on every college campus. In those days, athletes went home for the summer, and upon their return, Coach Schembechler expected much from his team. One of the requirements was that upon returning from the summer the lineman had to run a mile in under six mins and everyone else had to run a mile under 5:30. If not, pack your bags.

His message was simple. He told them, “I cannot guarantee success if we commit and work hard, but I can guarantee that if we do not commit and work hard, we will not have success. Those who stay will be champions.”

My message: those who commit to our Sigma Chi values and principles—spelled out in all that we do, from learning about our founding fathers and their guiding principles during pledgship to our initiation ritual—will be champions in life.

I believe we are making tremendous progress with the chapter. Our chapter leadership is responding. We brought in a new chapter advisor, Wes Hanner. He is an '05, lives in town, and was in Mike Church's pledge class (our fraternity's current executive director). Wes is working closely with the chapter alongside Blake

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## Alumni Spotlight

## Tim Schneider '77

Timothy O. Schneider is the former chairman of the Illinois Republican Party and a former member of the Cook County Board of Commissioners representing the 15th district. Tim graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1977. Schneider serves as general partner and owner of The Golf Club of Illinois in Algonquin and Waterwerks Car Wash in Elgin, Illinois.

### Could you please share your story? How did you go from a U of I graduate to the chairman of the Republican Party of Illinois?

When I first graduated, I went back to work at my family business, a nine-hole golf course. I expanded the course to 18 holes and added banquet facilities. During that time, I found out that the Cook County inspectors were asking for bribes to approve inspections. That prompted my interest in politics. Bill Runzel's mother said that there was an opening in the township board. She said, “I'm tired of hearing you speak about politics all the time. Why don't you do something about it?” I interviewed for the board, and they ended up selecting me. I was on that board for about 12 years and then ran for highway commissioner. We found that the previous commissioner was putting fuel in his own gas tank and those of his family members. I vowed to run against him, and I won. Subsequently, I ran for the Cook County Commissioner, and I won a seat at the county board and served there for 12 years. In my personal life, we grew the golf course, bought another one, and bought a car wash. In 2009, we were looking to develop the family golf course. They decided to take it through eminent domain and shut it down. That certainly created a little bit of drama.

In 2014 I met Bruce Rouner, the candidate for governor of the state of Illinois. He knew about me and tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to run for state chairman of the Republican Party. I was selected for the position and served as chairman from 2014 to January 2021. My role as chairman was primarily to deliver the message of the party and get the support of the people in the state. I tried to help the governor as best as I could. I remained a Cook County commissioner at the same time because the chairman position is unpaid.

### You've had a long and successful political career. How did you discover your passion for politics?

I really had not thought of getting into the arena until that conversation with Bill's mom. That conversation certainly chartered me on my course to get involved and try to do things to make things better for all people. I was tired of politicians who focused on self-enrichment rather than taking care of the people who they represent.



I always wanted to make my constituents' lives better. Mary Ellen Runzel really chartered my course, and every time I moved up, it was because I felt a need to replace the person because they were not effective.

### Cook County has a six-and-a-half billion-dollar budget and 23,000 employees. The county government is bigger than a third of the state governments in the country and dwarves any other county in Illinois. What's the biggest challenge that you've had to overcome in leading Cook County?

What I find and what I've learned is that it's not always the best people who get elected to office. I see so many that can't make the race because of money, influence, and power on the other side. It's frustrating to see that happen in real-time: that many of the best people never get the opportunity to serve because of those reasons. It has taught me how important it is for everyone to understand how much government affects their daily lives. Everything from taxation to the laws that govern our lives is generally controlled by bureaucrats. It's so concerning that good people don't get involved or can't affect change.

### What is your proudest accomplishment?

Off the top of my head, I never supported tax increases. I supported cutting the budget because the government was a bloated, employee-rich environment where there are plenty of places to reduce spending instead of raising taxes. A lot of people think that if you want more money, just raise taxes, but that can hurt the local constituents. I fought against that consistently throughout my career.

On a minor scale, I fought red light cameras. I fought for an ordinance. We have over five million people in the county, there are 128 municipalities, and the county wanted to install cameras on each county road. I got an opt-out for any red-light camera for any mayor that didn't want them to go up. It was difficult to push initiatives through when a significant number of people on

**Alumni Spotlight** (continued on page 4)

## SAVE THE DATE!

HOME COMING | October 21, 2023

Join your brothers for the homecoming football game against Wisconsin!

Please visit our website, [illinoisigs.org](http://illinoisigs.org) for the SX Game Day “menu” of events.





## FROM THE CONSUL



*Brothers,*

This past semester and school year have been nothing short of outstanding in every aspect. After all the bumps along the roads and ups and downs over these last few years, we are excelling in every aspect imaginable. This past year we raised over \$15,000 for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation, along with over \$3,000 for our own community's Champaign County Food Bank. This could not have been done without the efforts of every single one of the brothers here at the Kappa Kappa Chapter. The house has seen great improvements while keeping the same sentiment that 410 has had for decades.

This past year we've had a great fall and spring rush and welcomed 35 men into our brotherhood, and we're hoping for even more this upcoming school year. Despite the world's ever-changing times and cultures, we still strive to stay true to our core values every day and set the standard for turning young men into the next generation of leaders.

In Hoc,  
**Jacob Chignoli '25**

## KAPPA KAPPA RECEIVES J. DWIGHT PETERSON AWARD

The highest honor an individual chapter may receive is the J. Dwight Peterson Significant Chapter Award. It was presented recently for the 2022–2023 school year to only 54 chapters at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

Established in 1964, the Peterson Award recognizes chapters that achieve excellence in all operations, including academics, philanthropy, recruitment, and ritual performance.

Congratulations on the Kappa Kappa Chapter being selected as a Peterson Award winning chapter! In the last 60 years, our Kappa Kappa Chapter has won the award 16 times. It is very difficult to achieve this award, because it requires top marks in GPA, philanthropy, recruitment, ritual performance, and chapter operations. All these activities must come together at once to achieve this award. What is impressive is that this is the third time we have been chosen a winner in the last 20 years! It is the first back-to-back winning of the award since 1980–1981 for our chapter, Kappa Kappa.

## Chapter Spotlight

## Matthew Alman '26



### What led you to join Sigma Chi?

When I got to school at the start of freshman year, I wasn't sure if I was going to join a fraternity. I decided to rush just to give it a shot and was introduced to the rush chairs. We instantly connected and I could tell that they actually cared to get to know me, unlike some of the other places I rushed.

### What have you enjoyed the most as a member?

The most enjoyable aspect for me so far has been the deep connections I've made with everyone in the house. The brotherhood we have formed is something truly powerful. I know I can rely on not only my pledge class but the whole chapter for anything.

### Which position at Kappa Kappa fulfilled you the most?

While I am just about to be a sophomore and have not held any positions, I really enjoyed being an assistant risk manager. I love to see my brothers having fun and wouldn't want anything unfortunate

to happen. As an assistant risk manager, I can make sure everyone remains safe while still having a good time. It is a crucial role and can be challenging but that is what makes it worth it.

### What do you want to do after graduation?

I am getting all my aviation licenses now because after graduation I plan to move to South America to fly different bush trips. I will be delivering food and supplies from town to town that geographically wouldn't be possible to serve without flight.

### Outside of school, what do you do for fun?

I really enjoy hanging out with my brothers. Whether it's going out, playing golf, or just chilling in someone's room, that's how I spend all my free time. I also work at Joe's which has been a very rewarding experience. It comes with a whole different set of challenges that you wouldn't get at any other job and allows me to meet a lot of people.



*Matthew on a night out with a fellow Sigma Chi brother*

## KAPPA KAPPA LEADING THE PACK

Kappa Kappa's commitment to academic success was on full display in the spring 2023 semester. With a cumulative GPA of 3.45, Kappa Kappa finished ninth of 34 IFC Fraternities—higher than both the average of IFC chapters (3.38) and the overall undergraduate student body (3.37). This accomplishment clearly shows Sigma Chi's effort to live up to the Jordan Standard and brings acclaim to our organization. Keep up the great work!



*The brothers of the Sigma Chi Kappa Kappa Chapter*



## SIGMA CHI IS THE FIRST AND ONLY FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION TO OFFER A LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE FOR ITS MEMBERS FROM AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION

The Sigma Chi International Fraternity is proud to announce that the Sigma Chi Leadership Institute (SCLI) has become the first and only fraternal-affiliated organization to earn accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education. SCLI achieved accreditation through the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CES). As a result, Sigma Chi has become the first fraternity to offer members critical leadership skills through its revolutionary Transformational Leader program, developed and delivered by its own accredited institution, SCLI.

Sigma Chi and SCLI, along with well-respected experts in the fields of higher education, business, leadership development, and fraternities, worked together to develop the Transformational Leader program. Throughout the training, members receive high-quality experiences delivered through an accredited institution that supplements their academic pursuits by providing them with cutting-edge, relevant skills and competencies including how to identify and focus on their core values, persist through adversity, lead and motivate peers through change, and recognize character in others, among other skills.

Sigma Chi invested more than five years of work and significant financial resources to invest in SCLI so the

institution could develop the Transformational Leader program. The program's designers used their experience and industry data to ensure the curriculum addresses areas of critical need in today's students and tomorrow's workforce.

Sigma Chi Leadership Institute's board members who helped in leading the development of the Transformational Leader program range in expertise from CEOs to higher education thought leaders, while the professional staff includes doctoral-level analysts, researchers, and instructors with decades of experience. For more information about the Sigma Chi Leadership Institute and the Transformational Leader program, visit [leaders.sigmachicago.org](http://leaders.sigmachicago.org).

## ALUMNI SHARE THEIR NEWS & NOTES

### Wesley Lindberg '57:

All is well; never missed a day at work at Reno & Zahm Law Firm in Rockford (over 62 years). Kappa Kappa was a great event in my life. Best wishes to all at ΣΧ Headquarters.

### Scott Muller '67:

My wife of 50 years passed in December 2021 after a long illness. In 2022, I started on my "bucket list". I just returned from an amazing trip to Egypt and Israel. A return to the Bahamas is on the books for January! I was also able to buy a 1959 Corvette last year—just like I had in college!

### George Hardin '69:

The rugby team we began in 1973, the Chicago Griffins, made it to the national championships, finishing fourth for the 2022–2021 season, has made it to the midwest championships in 2022, and is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

### Charles Groebe '83:

Currently work in Chicagoland area in commercial and industrial real-estate sales and marketing. Number one top producer for 2021, Presidents Club and Platinum Club for top sales agent in Midwest. Lucy and I live in Museum Park Tower I, overlooking beautiful Lake Michigan. Enjoy golfing, running, travel, and watching the Illinois football and basketball teams. My son Ted, a U of I grad, is a lieutenant, flying P-8 jets (submarine hunters) in the Navy. Other son, Tom, works and lives in Gold Coast Chicago, at Pendry Hotel. We love jogging along the Lakefront! My black lab, Chase, swims at the 12 Street beach, near the Adler Planetarium when he and I aren't walking around Grant Park, picking up trash left by party goers enjoying our magnificent city. I miss the days at C-U campus with the guys at Kappa Kappa. Life is good. As my grams used to say, "Love is all around."

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*(continued from page 1)*

Pierce, our grand praetor. Your board is working to launch a new chapter advisory board that will work closely with them and the undergrads. The message is clear... more commitment = better outcomes.

Steve Sarovich has worked diligently to resurrect the scholarship awards program that we put on hold during our membership review. Our GPA continues to rank us in the top ten. We have brought on Todd Salen as our new property manager. Todd has been very involved in his fraternity, Phi Psi, and works in the Champaign real estate business. He has been a godsend as our "boots on the ground." He goes way beyond the call of duty. He manages all the move-in and move-out processes; he meets with the undergraduates, oversees "walk-throughs," and handles all the issues with our physical plant. The undergrads have responded well and respect Todd.

We continue to be financially challenged as our membership was impacted by the membership review, but the chapter is responding by building towards our maximum capacity of 65 live-in members. We have shared more about how the "financials work" and how 60 live-in members will allow us to keep our physical plant in great shape.

We remain committed to you, our KK ΣΧ brotherhood, in helping our chapter to be all that it can be within our ΣΧ, campus, and greater Champaign communities.

Hail to the Orange and Blue and our Sigma Chi brotherhood. "Those who commit will be champions for life."

In Hoc Signo Vinces,

**Peter F. Steger, KK'79**  
President, Kappa Kappa of  
Sigma Chi House Corporation

## Have Alumni News?

We want to hear from you! Send your personal updates, accomplishments, adventures, and photos to our account manager, **Karie Allison** at [kallison@elevateims.com](mailto:kallison@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!*

## CONNECT WITH US

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"Sigma Chi Kappa Kappa Network"  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/12032790](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/12032790)



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## Alumni Spotlight

(continued from page 1)

the board were Democrats. My district was a funding source, so my job was to show fiscal restraint. It was very difficult to get the opposition on board.

I stopped the soda tax; it was going to add a lot to a 12-pack of soda. I got the media involved and got the outcry of people. The tax was implemented, and we saw instances where people would be at the grocery counter and people would leave their carts there. The net effect was that we were losing money because they just went to the next county over. If this continued, then the grocery stores would be at risk.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say to just raise taxes and they won't care, but they do. People do care and they vote with their feet. They will move and go to other places to live.

### What impact has Sigma Chi had on your life?

I have two brothers who are Sigma Chis. My twin was initiated about six months before I was, and my other brother was a founding father at Eastern Illinois University. I wasn't interested in joining a fraternity at the beginning; I almost pledged another group. My oldest brother sent a bunch of Sigma Chis over to my dorm and they invited me to come hang out. Thankfully, I hadn't signed another pledge card. I never realized what being a fraternity brother was. I ended up pledging Sig. My two brothers showed up at my initiation, and it was a complete surprise to me.

I drifted away from the fraternity for many years while building my career, raising my kids, and tending to my family; for about 20 years I wasn't that involved. I came to one of the Christmas events (third Thursday in December '76-'79) at which we would go Christmas shopping with our wives in Chicago. We would never actually go shopping but would meet up and grab dinner or go to a bar, and I seldom have missed that event since so that I can listen to the old stories and gather new stories. It's so cool when someone you haven't seen in many years shows up and we go down memory lane. The friendship is still there, just like it was when we were 19 or 20 years old.

We just have so much fun together. I decided to do a golf outing in the fall, so now we get together each September for an annual golf outing. Anyone who wants to come out can; we always get around a dozen to fifteen guys. We pick teams and play scrambles. Glenn Holmquist will send some pictures. One of the nice things about Sigma Chi is that we have guys from all walks of life, all arenas, and it doesn't matter who you are or what you are, you are accepted, and we want to hear your story and want your friendship. We want to share that common history from when we were brothers but also learn

about what's going on today.

A group of us fly down to Naples every year for a golf trip, [golf is] a lot of what we do. It's become a really important part of life. For those that want to do these additional things, I always recommend going. It's really great that somehow, the bond that we had in college is still there for so many of us. We share memories and stories from those times (which were frankly crazy) and we make new memories together. We talk about now, the stories that we have made together recently, and it builds on itself as we continue. It's open to anyone that wants to come. If this article does anything, I hope it inspires you to join.



Naples golf trip with Sigs

### Do you have any advice for Kappa Kappa brothers who might be interested in a career in politics?

I would say: frankly, don't be reluctant to get involved. It's important that you do. Don't be reluctant to stay close to your fraternity brothers because they are a resource for the rest of your lives. As I said earlier, government and politics affect every aspect of our lives, so don't hesitate to get involved with the local school board, etc. It's so critical. It's important to chase your life's dream. I always wanted to be a business owner and wanted to help my father realize his dream with the golf course and move on to other enterprises. I'm at the bottom rung of success compared to some of my brothers, but we all share that drive and hunger to work hard to be the best that we can be in whatever we aspire to. Stay close: even if you drift apart for some time like I did, don't ever be reluctant to step back in. Sometimes the timing isn't right at certain times of your life, but when I found time, I got back into the fraternity and it's been an important part of my life.

### Do you have any other stories to share?

We had a really close friend of ours, Dan Macky. He was sending out the e-mails for the shopping event, but he wasn't a Sigma Chi. He was just close to us, and he decided five years ago to go through the pledgship, the ritual, and the quest. He always wanted to be a Sigma Chi, so he did it. He was already a Sigma Chi in our eyes, but it was so important to him that he wanted to do the entire process. He felt like something was missing in his life, which he felt was the initiation. There were over a dozen of us from the group to watch him get initiated.



Christmas Gathering 2022



## Chapter Eternal

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

**Donald Bostrom '56**  
January 17, 2022

**Michael Piet '18**  
September 9, 2021

**Milton Hoefle Jr. '43**  
November 23, 2020

**James Pinney '59**  
July 16, 2017

**David Horner '43**  
August 12, 2022

**William Wham '43**  
January 10, 2022

**Frederick Metzger '63**  
September 24, 2022

**Lorin Dick Whittaker Jr. '59**  
November 25, 2021

**George Burrows '54**  
November 26, 2022



## 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 your advisers for questions or clarifications.\*\*

**Your brothers and those following in their footsteps thank you!**