



Theta Chapter of the Chi Phi Fraternity

## **Candidate for Membership Education Program**

### **Week 5: Theta History**

#### **The History of Our Chapter's Name:**

When originally founded, our chapter was given the name of Eta chapter. As you may already know from your single letter chapter review, Eta is now the University of Georgia. This is because at the time of our original founding the Eta chapter was currently dormant. Hence, we were given the title of Eta chapter which lasted until the University of Georgia Chapter was revived. Until the following Congress we were known as Eta Deuteron. This name was obviously ridiculous and hence we were then given the name Theta which has lasted to this day.

#### **Two other Thetas have existed in Chi Phi's history:**

The first of which was at Gettysburg College. Later the title of Theta Chapter was given to the University of Edinburgh which later went dormant as well. The university at Edinburgh made us the first fraternity to go international.

#### **Our Founders:**

We were **refounded** by five gentlemen. They were known as:

**Tim Janas**  
**Alan Deditch**  
**Chris Burpee**  
**Michael Steffanini**  
**Derek Fok**

A good way to remember this is

First Names: **T**hat **A**sshole **C**ut **M**y **D**ick

Last Names: **J**im **D**oesn't **B**ring **S**tuffing **F**reely

#### **Important Dates:**

Some important dates to know in relevance specifically to our chapter:

Our Original Founding: 1877

Our Original Chartering: May 25th, 1878

The building of the Chi: 1912-1913 making us older than the quad.

Date we were kicked off campus: 1987

Date Refounded: 1992

Our Rechartering Ceremony: October 9th, 1999

100th Anniversary of the Chi Gala: October 22nd, 2011



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### Famous Alumni from our Chapter:

**George Ferris:** George was a famous civil engineer. He invented the Ferris wheel. Br. Ferris' name can be found on the original charter hanging on the wall. When Br Ferris started his first company, it is believed that Br Frank Osborn, also listed on the original charter, was among his first employees.

**Br Frank Osborn and Kenneth Osborn:** designed and built Fenway Park, Yankee Stadium, and Tiger Stadium.

**George Wallace:** Founded the Denver Technology Park.

### Old Theta Vs. New Theta

When brothers describe the house, they describe the era as "Old Theta" or "New Theta". By this reference they are referring to the fact that our chapter was kicked off this campus in the 80's. Old Theta refers to the chapter before we were kicked off and New Theta refers to after.

### Important Alumni from Our Chapter:

Many alumni have served our chapter from both old Theta and new Theta.

**Nathan Rosengrant:** President of the Theta Alumni Association

**Brian Sposato:** President of the Housing Corporation

**Steven "Rusty" Gordon:** Rusty was significantly involved with the refounding of our chapter. He was the one who contacted national and requested our refounding. He was involved heavily with our first class of new members. Also, Rusty arranged for our house to be rented to the Pi Phi sorority so that RPI could not acquire our land through some zoning and vacancy ordinances.

**Kent Worden:** Kent is an alumnus who has played a significant role since our refounding. Kent also has served as our chapter advisor for many years. Much of the work Kent did in the 70's still exists in this house today such as the steel counters in the kitchen or most of the doors in the main house. The doors and counters were retrieved from a hospital renovation project that Kent had been working on.

**Robert Mangels:** Aided in our refounding by provided use of his house as a place for members to meet and perform the work necessary to create the colony. Brother Mangels also assisted the new members in learning about brotherhood and the rich heritage of the Theta Chapter.

**John Johnson:** Key alumni in the refounding of our chapter. Chapter Advisor from refounding (1992) until (2000)

**Ellery Wong (yr):** Ellery was the first president of the new alumni association and is credited for the hard work of starting and running the organization.

**James J. Hanley Jr.:** A chapter advisor and President of the Alumni Association and Co-President of the Theta Housing Corp

### Grand Alpha's of Our Chapter:

There have been two grand alphas from our chapter in Chi Phi History.

The first was **John D. Adams**

The second was **Fred Keiser**, who was Grand Alpha when we were shut down in 1987.



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### History of Our Houses

#### Original Chapter House (Downtown Troy):

During Old Theta our house was located in downtown Troy. Although we were not the first fraternity of this campus we were the first RPI fraternity to have a house.

After the fires of downtown Troy and the push up the hill for the new RPI campus, the brother of Chi Phi purchased a land plot at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue B (later renamed Sage Avenue). The new house was completed in 1912/1913.

#### Current Chapter Houses:

**The main house** (also known as “The Chi”) has gone through many renovations over the years. Chi Phi has always been known as a gentleman’s fraternity and as such, the current pool room and main foyer were once carpeted and furnished with leather furniture and bookcases. As the times have changed and reconstruction is needed, actives and alumni have stepped in to help design and complete the necessary repairs. Br. Kent Worden an architect in New Hampshire, has been an instrumental part of these projects such as the design for the reconstruction of the main stairwell, the redesign of the lower floor/kitchen and the addition of structural support under the front porch in 2001.

**The annex** was donated to the chapter in 1952 by brother Stroud, an alumnus of our chapter. The "Annex" has held other nick names in our history such as the “Knotty Pine Annex” and its official name, "Stroud Hall". The Annex renovation project has been a long-standing project that has even been recorded in RPI’s Transit yearbook from the 1970s. As the house was originally designed as a 2-family house, the building was nearly gutted and redesigned for living quarters only.

Both houses and land plots are legally owned by the housing corporation of our alumni association. The active chapter leases the houses from the housing corp. The rent money is collected semesterly and saved for maintenance and large projects

#### Original Founding Fathers:

1. John Bausch (Died Feb 1878)
2. Francisco de Assis Cintra
3. Arthur Cobb
4. George Washington Gale Ferris Jr.
5. Rees Evan McDuffie
6. Frank Chittenden Osborn
7. William Barrett Ridgely
8. Charles Frederick Stowell
9. George Thackray