



MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA PI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

WINTER 2018

MU CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION MAINTAINS EXCELLENCE

UNDERGRADUATE BROTHERS ACHIEVE HIGHEST GPA OF ALL SIGMA PI CHAPTERS DURING THE SPRING 2017 SEMESTER

As we look back on 2017 and celebrate the close of our 10th anniversary, I am pleased to report the progress and impact the Educational Foundation has had on leadership and educational programs within the Sigma Pi brotherhood and the Ithaca community. Our highlight was the celebration and acknowledgment of our founding patron, **Bert Harrop '61**, at a gala dinner that was attended by virtually the entire brotherhood, distinguished alumni from around the country, and Bert's close family and friends.

The Foundation has made significant progress toward achieving Bert's initial vision, as demonstrated by the depth and impact of our signature program, College Mentors for Kids. Sigma Pi brothers now gain additional exposure and life experience while giving something back to the Ithaca community.

The Mu Chapter Educational Foundation was more formally recognized at College Mentors for Kids' 2017 national "unGALA" event in Indianapolis, acknowledging our activities and support in the Ithaca community. Sigma Pi brothers hold leadership positions at Cornell, serving as president and executive vice president, with three others taking other vice president positions, and 16 brothers have "Little Buddies" at Ithaca schools.

This participation played a significant role in Mu Chapter winning Cornell's Outstanding Chapter and Outstanding Service Awards, which is the first time Sigma Pi has won these prestigious awards. Education remains a critically important theme as evidenced by the house GPA of 3.48, the seventh highest on campus. The Educational Foundation continues to support the *Dining and Learning for the 21st Century* campaign, showing significant support of the educational aspect of the project and the transformation of the unused bar area to the Learning Commons for collaborative study. This continues our support of learning infrastructure in the house, which we started a few



John Haggerty '78, Dennis McNamara '83, and Steve Pirozzi '80 at the gala dinner.

years ago with the construction of the **Dick Cahoon '77** Tech Center.

We thank the alumni who have supported other educational and career-oriented programs. With your support, we have created and recently kicked off the largest alumni/undergraduate mentor effort to date, including 70 undergraduate brothers and distinguished alumni. We also re-

cently started the Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series and look forward to the technology/entrepreneur conference that will occur at the chapter house in April 2018.

We also thank our loyal alumni who have contributed to the Educational Foundation, providing us support for brother attendance at leadership conferences, infrastructure and learning tools, as well as annually awarding scholarships for outstanding academic and leadership performance and participation. We are continuously exploring new areas and hope to expand our reach, while continuing to deliver against our mission of enhancing the learning infrastructure of the house, and supporting education-related programming that benefits the youth of the greater Ithaca community.

Fraternally,
Tom Silver '81
President

CAMPAIGN EFFORTS CONTINUE Alumni Board Calls for Continued Support

The *Dining and Learning for the 21st Century* campaign continues to progress well. The committee has selected a contractor for the construction phase of the project. The target date for work to begin is June 4, one week after Cornell commencement ceremonies, and we anticipate final completion of the project later this summer. We expect to continue our successful fundraising up to and through the beginning of construction. We are asking all Sigma Pi alumni to contribute, especially those from class years that have yet to participate in our efforts. With new contributors and the continued hard work of many alumni and friends of Sigma Pi, we look forward to being able to fully fund this project before the work begins.

Please visit www.sigmapicornell.org, and click on the Dining and Learning Campaign tab under Giving for more information and to donate.

Fraternally,
Steve Pirozzi '80



HONOR ROLL OF PATRONS

Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation

The Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation would like to thank and recognize the following generous donors who made contributions from July 1 to December 18, 2017.

Carol Patane and Family	Kent Sheng '78
Albert Beck '52	Steven Bergh '79
Winthrop Cody '55	Kay and David D'Orlando '79
Peter Romeo '55	Robert Novo '79
Angela and Douglas Parker '56	Gordon Pugh '79
Richard Boerner '60	Thomas Cherner '80
James Unckless '66	Neal Douglas '80
Kevin Fountain '68	John Altmeyer '81
Walter Knox '71	Joseph Ruocco '81
James Boland '73	Tom Silver '81
Michael Feiertag	Ford Fay '82
William Strusz '73	James Garr '82
Bert Hurlbut '74	John Roche '82
James Kraker '74	Joshua Weinrich '82
Jeffrey Craver '75	Michael Feiertag '83
Mark Cunningham '75	Dennis McNamara '83
Peter Cady '77	Steve Novak '83
John Christoforo '77	Scott Wilson '83
Robert Ruhlman '78	

SUPPORT FROM FOUNDATION, ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT LINKED TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The undergraduates have achieved a level of excellence unparalleled in the history of Mu Chapter. For years, Sigma Pi ranked in the middle of fraternity GPAs and, in 2011, fell to a low point of 3.18. Through a change in house culture, aided by Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation initiatives and investments, the chapter's GPA has steadily increased over the past four years. I spoke with four young Sigma Pi men to get a better sense of what has changed at 730 University Avenue to accomplish the improvement in GPA.

The Foundation, through your support, has invested in desks for each bedroom, furniture for the Memorial Library and West Lounge, and purchased subscriptions to the TakeNote and Chegg academic services to aid in the studies of the brotherhood. **Alex Wood-Thomas '18** said that he was "particularly impressed by the desks. Their combination with modern furniture in the common spaces and a dedicated study space in the Memorial Library makes the house very accommodating and comfortable for studying." He also stated that it helped his academics to live in a space where he could have a quiet, comfortable place to work or collaborate with others, while also having all the amenities of his own home. **David DellaPelle '17** also noted that the new furniture has "made our studies much more effective and enjoyable."

However, all this would be for naught without an immense commitment from the undergraduates to their academic achievement. All four undergraduates agreed that no overt strategic actions were taken by the fraternity to change the academic practices like instituting library/quiet hours. Rather, as summed up by **Zac Goldman '18**, "The brotherhood culture and, as a residual effect, the recruitment of new brothers has been centered on achieving success in the classroom and beyond."

The change in culture was best summed up by **Alec Charbonneau '16**, who said, "It seems that the younger brothers care much more about their grades and careers than my pledge class and I did when we were younger. We have more brothers open about where they are going with their careers and alumni shining light on their successful careers and how the house has helped." The overall increase in alumni involvement during recent years, which includes the career mentorship program and teleconferences via the Dick Cahoon Tech Center, has reinvigorated the ambitions of the undergraduate brothers and challenged them to strive for greatness. The passion for their future careers has boosted academic achievement and has set a precedent for new members, which we hope will continue for years to come.

Fraternally,
Sam Barnum '19 • David Golding '18

Sigma Pi Remembers Deceased Brothers with Memorial Plaques

Last fall, the Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation was proud to honor two deceased brothers. The life of **Robert Reber Carroll '75** was celebrated at a special Zoltan reunion at 730 University Avenue during Homecoming. The classmates of **Ed "Fred" Finnerty '82** also created a fundraising campaign in his honor. The memorial messages have been affixed to plaques that will be permanently located in the house's Memorial Library so that their friends, families, and future generations of Pi men can remember them and their contributions to our fraternity.

Memorial Plaques are a unique, special way to contribute to the future of Sigma Pi. All proceeds are donated to the Mu Chapter Sigma Pi Educational Foundation, a 501(c) (3) organization, and help contribute to our many causes, including scholarships for the undergraduates and support of the College Mentors for Kids program.



Last fall, the Educational Foundation also installed nine new donor plaques to the wall in the Memorial Library, which recognize individuals who have donated \$1,000 or more. We thank these individuals as well as all of the others who have supported our mission.



Brothers at the DealBook Conference in New York City in November 2017.



Andrew Sorkin '99 interviews entrepreneur Mark Cuban during the DealBook conference in November 2017.

Preparing for the Future *Mu Brothers Gain Valuable Business Knowledge at DealBook Conference*

The DealBook Conference, hosted by alumnus **Andrew Sorkin '99**, in conjunction with the New York Times, featured notable business titans, including Mark Cuban, entrepreneur and owner of the Dallas Mavericks; Jack Dorsey, founder and CEO of Twitter and Square; Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks; and many other notable professionals. Student admission was funded out of the generosity of the Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation.

Undergraduate members enjoyed an exceptional experience with the chance to ask these reputable leaders questions as well as network during breakout sessions. Alumni President **Jarett Wait '80** was also in attendance and introduced the undergraduates to numerous business leaders. It was a tremendous experience, and we thank Andrew and the Educational Foundation for helping to make this event such a positive experience for our members.

Fraternally,
Griffin Pi '18

The 13th annual Sigma Pi NYC event occurred November 9-10 with participation from 16 undergraduates and more than 24 alumni. We thank all alumni who attended and those who sponsored the undergraduates' meals. We had an excellent turnout with alumni in attendance spanning more than five decades. The after-dinner speaker was **Ali Hamed '14**, founder of CoVenture. The following day, students visited area alumni at their workplaces. Industries included careers in finance, venture capital, investment banking, consulting, real estate development, and entrepreneurship.

Alumni dinner attendees:

Andy Kantor '79—Memorial Sloan Kettering
Don Motschwiller '80—First NY Securities
Steve Pirozzi '80—Hotel Plaza Athenee
Jarett Wait '80—JF Wait Advisors
Ed Berlin '81—Attorney
Brian Finneran '81—Intermedia Production and Events Group
Tom Silver '81—Top Gun Ventures
Dennis McNamara '83—Oppenheimer
Mike Vernick '83—JW Player
Frank Sposato '84—Lazard Asset Management
Steven Decker '85—Decker Law
Eric Hamburg '85—Industrial Renaissance
David Hogan '86—Addo Capital Partners
Tim Donohue '87—Columbia Investment Management

ALUMNI AND UNDERGRADUATE MEMBERS ATTEND THE 13TH ANNUAL SIGMA PI NYC CAREER EVENT



Alumni and undergraduate members at Orsay during the 13th annual Sigma Pi NYC Career Event in November.

Mark Childs '88—Genpact
Gordon Adelsberg '90—Adelsberg Consulting
Nathan Bryce '06—Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP
Giorgio Piccoli '07—American Flat
James Alvarez '14—SaferVPN
Ali Hamed '14—CoVenture
Zach Gilbert '16—JP Morgan
Andrew Joseph '16—AECOM
Connor Riser '16—Paul Hastings LLP
Fernando Cevallos '17—Morgan Stanley

Alumni office hosts:

Giorgio Piccoli '07—American Flat
Donald Motschwiller '80—First NY Securities
Eric Hamburg '85—Entrepreneurship, Manufacturing, Engineering, Real Estate Development
Marc Rothenberg '87—Goldman Sachs
Mark Childs '88—Genpact
Alan Riffkin '88—Lazard
Jason Halio '93—Credit Suisse
Ali Hamed '14—CoVenture



Honoring the Late David Harrop Through Scholarship

David Harrop was born in Houston, Texas, on June 25, 1969, and passed away in Ft. Worth, Texas, on December 21, 2000. David was a swimmer, a runner, but most of all a musician and songwriter. David attended Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches, Texas, and then went to Ft. Worth, where he became a partner in a home repair business. He was the owner of that business when he passed away. David was a generous spirit, a devoted son, a brother, and a friend who is missed by everyone who knew him.

A scholarship of \$1,000 will be awarded by the Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation annually to the brother who best demonstrates academic excellence and service to Sigma Pi and the greater Cornell and Ithaca communities.

To apply for the scholarship, brothers must submit the following:

1. A description of their extracurricular activities, including positions held in Sigma Pi.
2. A 500-plus word essay on how living in the house has complemented their academic performance.

Applicants must then submit a copy of their academic transcript that includes the fall and spring of their junior year to the Educational Foundation by May 31 each year. The recipient of the scholarship will be determined by the Educational Foundation board, and the winner will be announced and receive the award by the start of the fall semester each academic year.

Undergraduate Brothers Gain LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES with College Mentors for Kids Program

During the fall semester, the Mu brotherhood continued our participation in the College Mentors for Kids program, and we are proud to continue our leadership within this philanthropic organization. With nearly a third of the entire brotherhood now involved with College Mentors for Kids, the organization continues to provide the brothers of Sigma Pi with an extremely rewarding and highly tangible way to give back to the community.

Numerous brothers of Sigma Pi have chosen to take leadership roles in the organization. In addition to **Alex Stotter '18** and **David Golding '18**, president and executive vice president respectively, **Shailen Doshi '19**, **Ari Perlmutter '19**, and **Jack D'Agostino '19** have each taken vice president roles with other brothers matching their call to service in other positions.

When asked about his involvement with College Mentors for Kids, **Abdo Dergham '18** said, "Joining the program was an easy decision. A lot of the brothers I looked up to in the fraternity were already members, and I was able to get a very candid glimpse into the work they were doing. I joined freshman year with many of my other fraternity brothers, and almost all of us have remained in the organization ever since." Abdo also said, "We kept signing up each semester because we knew the children we saw earlier would be back. Hanging out with these kids helped us to form bonds, and we knew we were creating positive change in both the kids and ourselves."

At the end of the semester, the brothers were involved in a trivia fundraiser, raising more than \$1,000 for the organization. The proceeds go toward funding the numerous activities that the students participate in each week. In the past, the students have gone to the Cornell Orchard and Lab of Ornithology, and the children were recently able to interact with Cornell's professional engineering fraternity. The activity included competitions building spaghetti towers and tinfoil boats to see whose construction could bear the most weight. Like all College Mentors for Kids activities, it encouraged fun and mentorship in a learning environment.

The brothers of Sigma Pi thank our loyal alumni for their continued support of College Mentors for Kids. One day, we will reminisce about our college days, and I know that our involvement with this organization will be one of our proudest accomplishments. If you are interested in learning more about this organization or would like to donate, we invite you to visit collegementors.kintera.org/cornell.

Fraternally,
Sam Barnum '19

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EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION CONTINUES ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM AND KICKS OFF SPEAKER SERIES

The Educational Foundation has completed the pairing of alumni mentors with undergraduate mentees. Last semester, we had the highest interest ever expressed in the program with an incredible 70 undergraduate brothers and alumni participating. Mentor/mentee matches were made based on similarities of undergraduate majors, career interests, and professional backgrounds. The program is designed to provide the undergraduate mentees with career advice, industry insight, and perhaps most importantly, an individual to reach out to for guidance. We are thankful for the alumni who kindly volunteered their time to participate in the program, and we are very excited to see what the future holds for this program.

We also began our Alumni Speaker Series in the fall semester, where undergraduate brothers were

fortunate to speak with **Gordon Adelsberg '90**. The video conference took place in the Memorial Library at the Sigma Pi chapter house with nearly 15 brothers in attendance. During the speaker series conference, Gordon detailed his experiences working in the food and beverage industry, attending business school, and starting his own consulting firm. He also provided insight on potential career paths for undergraduates and interviewing tips. We are hoping to host additional speakers this semester in a variety of industries to provide career advice and other useful information they have learned in their undergraduate and professional careers.

Fraternally,
Rob Novo '79



Mu Chapter members met with their mentors in the Dick Cahoon '77 Tech Center during the inaugural Alumni Speaker Series in the fall.

Mu Chapter Educational Foundation Honored Nationally by College Mentors for Kids

I was privileged to travel to Indianapolis in the fall to enjoy a special fundraising event for College Mentor for Kids, which honored both Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation and **Kurt Rasmussen '80**. The evening was called an “unGALA” and was well-attended. It was a special opportunity to represent Sigma Pi, but it was also a chance for me to thank Kurt for bringing the College Mentors for Kids program to Cornell.

When the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation was founded, I served as chairman for a number of years. I had dreams of finding activities that were noteworthy and character building that would appeal to our alumni as worthy of support through contributions to the new Foundation. Many fraternity foundations become simply tax havens designed to supplement the operating budgets of a fraternity, and I hoped that Mu Chapter could be different and find activities that would enhance the education of the undergraduate brothers and bring positive notice of Mu Chapter, which is when Kurt suggested College Mentor for Kids.

The Educational Foundation board moved forward with a significant cash grant and the Cor-

nell Chapter of College Mentor for Kids was chartered. It was the first chapter outside of states near Indiana and served as a seed for other chapters that have followed on the East Coast. The Foundation continues financial support of the organization with an amount based on participation in the program by the actives.

More than half of the brothers have “little buddies.” They work with great enthusiasm and joy to introduce young elementary school-age children to the notion that they can someday be students in college, which is a bold concept for most of the children who participate. Kurt is a leader in the program, having served on the board and as chairman, and his remarks during the unGALA were succinct and meaningful.

Kurt said, “For me, the underappreciated power of College Mentors for Kids is its self-propagating nature. By helping one child, importantly, you affect that child’s life, but just as importantly, you can also change the trajectory of the lives of that child’s entire family circle, including his or her children, grandchildren, and so on. Thus, by helping one child, College Mentors for Kids can have an impact on generations of people.



Kurt Rasmussen '80 and Jim Keene '57 at the College Mentors for Kids 2017 unGALA.

I strongly believe that College Mentors for Kids is nothing less than a way to improve our modern society. My College Mentors for Kids story began many years ago, but I hope it will continue until this program reaches every campus across America.”

We thank Kurt for his efforts and the lasting impact that this program will have on our members and the Ithaca community.

Fraternally,
Jim Keene '57



MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA PI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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*Undergraduate brothers attend the
Bert Harrop Dinner in April.*

*Students from the Ithaca community enjoy a College Mentors
for Kids activity with Mu Chapter brother Chris O'Dore '19.*



Attention: This newsletter is intended for alumni and parents. If your son is attending Cornell University, he will receive a copy at the chapter house. If he has graduated, please send us his permanent address to update our records. Thank you.