



# MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA PI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

WINTER 2019

## A Year in Review

### Educational Foundation Sees New Success in 2018

#### President's Message

As we look back on 2018 and celebrate the end of our 11th year, I am pleased to report the progress and impact the Educational Foundation has had on leadership and educational programs within the Sigma Pi community and the greater Ithaca area. This letter will review some of the highlights of the past year; however, we end the year deeply saddened by the death of one of our great leaders and visionaries, **Jim Keene '57**, and concerned about the health of our founding patron, Bert Harrop, as he recovers from a serious health issue near his home in Texas. We all wish Bert the best as he continues to improve.

The board remained committed to fulfilling the vision that both Bert and Jim believed when they established the Foundation in 2007. This past year continued to show progress with programs and educationally oriented infrastructure becoming an important and integrated part of undergraduate life at the chapter house. The building blocks are in place, and brothers recognize the benefits. Events in the Learning Commons occur on a frequent basis, and Mu Chapter brothers' commitment to participation in College Mentors for Kids remains strong. Brothers continue to participate in leadership conferences and programs sponsored by the Foundation. We could not do any of this without the generous contributions of the alumni community, and we are forever grateful. The focus on education has helped to generate a cumulative GPA of 3.43 for the spring 2018 semester—among the highest of all fraternities at Cornell.

#### Learning Commons Update

The Learning Commons has become a state-of-the-art location for collaborative study for brothers throughout the semester. At virtually any time, brothers can be seen utilizing the high-speed Wi-Fi and flat-screen televisions and conducting small group meetings. In addition to the daily impact, the Learning Commons has hosted a variety of events. We hosted prominent speakers including Greek University CEO Michael Ayalon, who

spoke about leadership and the state of the Greek system, and **Dr. Kurt Rasmussen '80**, who shared his perspectives as the Director of the Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The brothers also used the Learning Commons to host an Open Mic night, a new and unique way for the chapter to support philanthropic activity, which raised more than \$500 for the Ithaca Community School of Music and Arts.

#### College Mentors for Kids Update

The Foundation's signature program, College Mentor for Kids, went through a period of transition during the past 12 months. Sigma Pi did not retain the leadership positions it once enjoyed; however, our commitment to the program remains strong as a record 10 new brothers joined the team, two of whom became transportation directors. We look forward to rebuilding our large leadership presence in the program during the coming years.

#### Board Member Activities and Changes

As we mentioned earlier this year, Kurt and **Sandy True '78** were recognized for their outstanding work in their professional and volun-

teer lives respectively. I have assumed a new role with an early stage technology company that helps companies and individuals maximize their philanthropic activity and participation. Additionally, the board voted to add **Connor Riser '16** as treasurer, replacing **Aaron Klein '12**, who remains on the board.

As a result of transitions and departures, we are actively looking to fill open board seats with individuals who can help take the Foundation to the next level. Please contact me or anyone else on the board if you are interested to learn more.

#### Thankful for Continued Support

We thank all of you have supported the Foundation with generous donations during the past year. 2018 was a very successful year, as 52 alumni and friends of Mu Chapter contributed \$33,420. We look forward to continuing to build the Foundation and its impact within the brotherhood as well as the Ithaca community.

Fraternally,  
**Tom Silver '81**  
President  
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## THE 2018 HONOR ROLL OF PATRONS

We are truly grateful to the 52 dedicated alumni and Sigma Pi friends who contributed \$33,420 to the Educational Foundation throughout 2018. These individuals recognize the importance of brotherhood and securing Mu's future—we thank you for your dedication to Sigma Pi and quality education.

Albert Beck '52	Michael Quaid '75
James Keene III '57	John Stetson Jr. '75
Jim Palmer '60	Gary Wicks '75
James Unckless '66	William Forman '76
Arthur White '66	Thomas Garr '76
Robert Colbert Jr. '71	Robert Bernstein '77
Richard Fish '72	Richard Cahoon '77
Gregory Fisher '72	James Franz '77
Frederick Hoge '72	Matthew Petti '77
Steven Sanford '73	Robert Ruhlman '78
William Strusz '73	Kent Sheng '78
Steven Booth '74	Sandy True '78
Thomas Brotherton Jr. '74	Steven Bergh '79
James Forbes Jr. '74	David D'Orlando '79
Bert Hurlbut '74	Wayne Forman '80
James Kraker '74	Kurt Rasmussen '80
Peter Muth '74	Jarett Wait '80
James Chamberlain '75	Joseph Ruocco '81
Jeffrey Craver '75	Thomas Silver '81
William Dougherty '75	Steven Novak '83
Edward Gogol '75	Scott Wilson '83
Vance Harrison Jr. '75	Jean Simoes '99
Stephen Lozier '75	Alexander Deyle '06
John Morrison '75	Aaron Klein '12
Frederick Parker '75	John Parker '12
Peter Phillips '75	Connor Riser '16

## A FOUNDATION FOR A STRONG FUTURE

### Continued Financial Support Helps Mu Flourish

As discussed in previous reports, the Educational Foundation has invested heavily during the past two years in the *Dining and Learning for the 21st Century* campaign. During the past year, we also devoted a large number of funds to upgrading the chapter house's Wi-Fi infrastructure by switching over to Cornell University's Red Rover. Not only will this provide faster and more reliable internet services, but as an added bonus the service will be available free of charge, eliminating the chapter's monthly cost for services.

Our current portfolio is \$92,794, after making the previously mentioned significant gifts earlier in 2018. The domestic equity markets' most recent bout of volatility began early in the current quarter, with the portfolio down 3.71% in the quarter through November 30, as compared to the Mu Chapter's custom benchmark return of -3.90% as well as the S&P 500's Quarter 4 return of -4.94%. Year to date, the portfolio is up 1.17%, as compared to the 1.90% and 5.11% year to date returns of the benchmark and S&P 500 Index, respectively.

As a reminder, the portfolio is more geographically diversified than the S&P 500 and generally holds moderate levels of liquidity to support the charitable operations of the Foundation. We would like to thank all of our generous supporters this year with their gifts totaling \$33,420.

Fraternally,  
**Connor Riser '16**  
Treasurer

## Years in the Making

### The Mu Chapter Learning Commons Opens Its Door

The Educational Foundation would like to thank our loyal alumni and friends of Mu for not only contributing to *Dining and Learning for the 21st Century* project, but to those who attended the official ribbon-cutting of the new Learning Commons in September. The creation of this new space, as well as the improvements made to the kitchen, stop-and-go, and other basement areas, could not have occurred without generous donations from our supporters.

On any given weekday, brothers are found in the Learning Commons working around the tables, using the grab and go monitors for group projects, visiting the stop-and-go for late-night snacks, and hosting brotherhood events. The grotto's use has increased significantly and will be a huge perk of living in the house for years to come. Thank you for helping us achieve this massive undertaking.



Alumni during the Adolphus "Dolly" Hailstork Dining Room and Learning Commons dedication this September.



# A Man's Quest for Excellence

## Remembering the Late Jim Keene '57 and His Lifetime Achievements

### Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Fraternity

- Pledged and initiated in 1953.
- Served one term respectively as house manager, recruitment chairman, and first counselor; served two terms as Sage.
- Served 20 years as president of the Alumni Board.

### Accomplishments and Recognitions

- As an undergraduate, Jim introduced the concept of expanding the dining room to better accommodate the membership at daily meals.
- Served as vice chair and later chairman of the Heritage Drive to raise money to renovate and expand the chapter house.
- Served as chairman of the three-man construction committee to accomplish the renovation and expansion of the chapter house.
- Conceived and completed the McGraw Place Project, which allowed for significant expansion of the fraternity's property and the addition of 15 parking spaces.
- Conception and supervision of the construction of the Sigma Pi Beach.
- Reorganization of the alumni board, which involved drafting bylaws for the governance of the fraternity.
- Creation of the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation with the assistance of Director **Steve Hobbs '80**.
- Establishment of the James H. Keene III Sage Endowment Fund in 2012.
- Recipient of the 2014 Founders' Award, the highest honor within Sigma Pi.

### Business Career

- Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc. of Omaha, Neb., 1958-86.
- Humboldt Specialty Manufacturing Co. of Omaha, Neb., 1993-2018.

### Community Accomplishments and Awards

- Founder of the Opera Omaha Council.
- Founder of the Brownville Concert Series.
- Received the NEBRASKALander Award and the Governor's Arts Award jointly with his wife, Ruth.



*The late Jim Keene '57 during Mu's centennial celebration weekend in 2013. The Educational Foundation mourns the loss of our founder and brother, who passed away in October of 2018.*

### Civic Involvement

- Trustee, Doane University  
Crete, Neb.
- Member of President's Council, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation  
Williamsburg, Va.
- Board member and co-chair of private fundraising, Nebraska Shakespeare Festival  
Omaha, Neb.
- Member, Cornell University Council  
Ithaca, N.Y.
- Board member, co-chair, and program director of the Brownville Concert Series, Brownville Fine Arts Association  
Brownville, Neb.
- President and chairman, Opera Omaha  
Omaha, Neb.
- Board member, chairman of the Omaha Symphony Foundation, and president of the Omaha Symphony Men's Council, Omaha Symphony Orchestra  
Omaha, Neb.
- Trustee, Joslyn Art Museum  
Omaha, Neb.
- Advisory Board, Johnson Art Museum  
Ithaca, N.Y.

- Member, Sigma Pi Educational Foundation  
Lebanon, Tenn.

### Personal

Survived by his wife, Ruth; son, James; and daughters, Ruth Ann, Sarah, and Martha.



*A portrait of the late Jim Keene '57, prominently featured at the chapter house.*





## COLLEGE MENTORS FOR KIDS PROGRAM EQUIPS MEMBERS WITH SKILLS TO EDUCATE AND LEAD

This fall semester, College Mentors for Kids has once again provided elementary school students from nearby underprivileged communities with the opportunity to engage in fun educational activities with supportive Cornell mentors. **Dan Sanderson '21** was one of 10 members who joined College Mentors for Kids for the first time this semester. One of the things that drew him to the program was the opportunity to spend time with the older brothers who were already a part of the organization. Dan explained why this was the highlight of the week for many of the brothers who volunteered:

"I feel like there are few opportunities to make a positive impact on the Ithaca community in such a fun way. For me, having the chance to forget about schoolwork for a couple hours to just have fun with elementary school kids was amazing. Seeing my "Little Buddy" (the organization's term for the younger students) run off the bus each week to tell me about his day was so gratifying. He began to really start looking up to me, and I got the feeling that I was having a large influence on the way he viewed learning."

With ideas for the organization's weekly activities coming from multiple people, creative games and lessons were never in short supply. Transportation Directors **Max Cook '20** and **Cam Peterson '20** would hear the students' reactions to the activities as they supervised the bus ride home. Max explained that one of their favorite activities this year was an engineering lesson where the students built rollercoasters out of pool noodles and marbles. Max smiled as he heard the kids, none of whom had ever ridden a rollercoaster, brag to each other about how fast their marble flew down the noodles.

College Mentors for Kids is remarkable in that by facilitating the mentor relationships between college and elementary school students, it creates positive influence for both sides. For this reason, the organization has long been a favorite of Mu Chapter, and the brothers look forward to seeing what the next semester of College Mentors for Kids has in store. If you are interested in learning more about this organization or would like to donate, we invite you to visit [collegementors.kintera.org/cornell](http://collegementors.kintera.org/cornell).



*Justin LaClair '19 walks with his "Little Buddy" around the Cornell Lab of Ornithology this fall.*



*Undergraduate brothers with Jarrett Wait '80 and Andrew Ross Sorkin '99 at the DealBook Conference during Career Weekend this fall.*



*Mu brothers Kyle Schwartz '21, Jake Newschaffer '20, Cam Peterson '20, and Jon Caen '19 with John Rumble '65 at the Cornell Club during Career Weekend in November.*



*Undergraduates during the DealBook Conference in New York City this fall.*

## A Stage for Opportunity and Growth

### *Career Weekend Provides Chapter with Invaluable Contacts and Experiences*

The brothers of Mu Chapter are proud to report on the success of the 14th annual Sigma Pi Career Weekend. Beginning on November 1, the weekend kicked off with a welcome dinner at Orsay Restaurant with more than 60 combined undergraduate brothers and alumni. Since we had such a successful speaker last year, we continued the tradition this year, hosting Johnson Graduate School of Management graduate Jeff Hanson. Jeff spoke about the value of creating and developing a personal brand and how to use that as a platform for future success. After a tremendous night of networking, storytelling, and introductions, the undergraduate brothers spent Friday visiting the firms of our generous alumni. Some of this year's visits included Cortec Group, CoVenture, First New York Securities, Goldman Sachs, Lazard, and Riskified.

Throughout the weekend, the undergraduate brothers were fortunate to learn more about various industries, form meaningful connections, and garner meaningful professional advice. Additionally, thanks to the generosity of **Andrew Ross Sorkin '99**, 11 undergraduate brothers were able to attend the 2018 DealBook Conference. The conference offered unique insight into the success of featured speakers, such as Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Snapchat Founder Evan Spiegel, Goldman Sachs Senior Chairman Lloyd Blankfein, and many more. We would like to thank our loyal alumni for their unparalleled generosity and commitment to the professional development of the undergraduate brothers, and we look forward to the continued success of Sigma Pi Career Weekends.

## WORKING TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW

### **Greek University CEO and Mu Discuss the Challenges Facing Fraternity Life**

The Sigma Pi brotherhood had the pleasure of hosting Greek University CEO and professional speaker Michael Ayalon at the Learning Commons for a constructive discussion on hazing, alcohol abuse, sexual harassment, and a variety of other topics. The Learning Commons space was utilized to seat brothers and the monitors were used by Michael to display his PowerPoint presentations.

During the four-hour discussion, brothers actively engaged in discussions on a plethora of subjects. Michael offered the chapter tremendous advice on recruitment, risk management, and chapter goals. We also spent much of the time learning about hazing problems across America, how to recognize and correct alcohol abuse, and how to prevent sexual harassment. The brotherhood is very thankful for both Michael's time and the facilities provided by the alumni. The Learning Commons was an essential aspect of this successful event. We look forward to hosting more speaker events in the Learning Commons in the future.



*Greek University CEO Michael Ayalon during his presentation to Mu Chapter where the group discussed the state of Greek affairs in the newly constructed Learning Commons.*





*Josh Sones '19, Josh Even '19, and Ari Perlmutter '19 perform at Sigma Pi's inaugural Open Mic Night hosted in the new Learning Commons in November.*

## On with the SHOW

### Mu Showcases Chapter Talents through Philanthropy

On November 28, the brothers of Sigma Pi took a tremendously successful new approach at philanthropy. Embracing the fraternity's rich musical past, **Cal McKinney '20** spearheaded an open mic night, raising more than \$500 dollars for Ithaca Community School of Music and Arts.

The Learning Commons once again proved its incredible versatility: brothers brought down carpets and furniture and set up a stage and light system to transform the dining room into a makeshift music hall. The improved basement space provided the brotherhood with the opportunity to share an unforgettable night sitting next to their closest friends.

With the whole brotherhood, Sweetie Pis, and Cornell friends in attendance, the chapter house was filled with applause and laughter as act after act took the stage. The audience was delighted by an a cappella performance, acoustic guitar solo, abstract expressionist comedy, and much more. Although it's unlikely that the next American Idol was discovered on stage that night, the open mic night illuminated musical and comedic talents that reminded each member how fortunate they are to be a part of such a talented fraternity.

Beyond the joy it brought to the brotherhood and Sweetie Pis, the brothers were grateful for the opportunity to support the Ithaca community that we call home. Time and time again, the brothers prove that when they put their heads together, even philanthropy can be an opportunity for great fun. In light of the event's success, the brothers hope to make it an annual event.



## MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA PI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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## The Truths of Addiction Dr. Kurt Rasmussen '80 Shares Drug Abuse Knowledge and Avoidance Tactics with Mu



*Dr. Kurt Rasmussen '80 speaks to the brotherhood about the dangers associated with addiction and drug abuse in the Learning Commons this fall.*

On October 14, the brothers of Mu Chapter were visited by **Dr. Kurt Rasmussen '80** to discuss the science behind the dangers of addiction. Kurt serves as the Director of the Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences at the National Institute of Drug Addiction and shared his knowledge on a wide range of addiction topics during his talk. Whether it was the role of endorphins in neuroscience or the cultural implications of vaping, Kurt had the data and experience to expand each brother's understanding of the field. It was a hum-

bling experience for the chapter to have such an accomplished alumnus share his time and knowledge, and brothers took the opportunity to ask him questions after his discussion. Kurt not only educated the brothers about the reality of addiction within the U.S., he explained how to identify addiction in friends and provided resources to brothers, should they ever need help. The brotherhood thanks Dr. Rasmussen for his time and for addressing relevant topics to our young men.