

# The Red Door



OHIO IOTA CHAPTER OF SIGMA PHI EPSILON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO – SEPTEMBER 2015

## Ohio Iota Wins 7<sup>th</sup> Straight Buchanan Cup at Conclave in Nashville



- Chapter earns first in Academics and Athletics at UT
- 5 undergraduates tapped into Blue Key and elected President, VP (Songfest Chair), and Treasurer
- 8 members tapped into Mortar Board and elected President and Wrap Up Toledo chair
- Membership surpasses 100



President Dexter Emch raises Buch cup after receiving the award on stage at the Country Music Hall of Fame.



Past Undergraduate Presidents Eric Croak and Nick Dorner, and Alumni President Ted Behnken, proudly display the Chapter's 7<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Buchanan Cup.

## It Truly Is Great to be a Part of an Experience!

**M**y message this newsletter is simple. You have an incredible chapter at UT, and growing every day!

We truly work hard to make sure that your gifts are spent wisely. We are so proud of this chapter, and the best part is the friendships we have developed over the past years. Even more amazing, the brothers who have just graduated are so excited to help, and we are spreading out, making an impact upon other colleges and helping out. Thank you! It's exciting to think that we have a good thing going here, and without your help, it would be very difficult.

One of the most exciting events at Conclave is going to the Brotherhood Luncheon. If you have never attended, you are missing a great part of Sig Ep. We had the great privilege of having Larry Leake, our 1951 President, join us for this event. What a great day we had with him. In his mid-80s, Larry fit right in, and was so proud he could be there with his brothers. That is it, being a part of a great thing.

This Fall, we have a lot of great activities, and hope you will join us. Tailgates every home game, and Homecoming on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Join us for the Parade Party at Croaks, the Tailgate, and at game time!

We had a few good alumni help with the funding of Conclave. My thanks go out to these brothers, especially for the work of Randy McCullough '81, who worked hard to make sure that 28 undergrads could attend Conclave, and Mark Mandula, who set it all in motion!

Only 8 Gold Cups were given out. It is so exciting to work with this chapter, and instead of dealing with problems, we get to work on helping them achieve good solid results. If you ever want to help, we can always find a spot for you. Just drop me a line at tedohio@aol.com, and give us a chance!

Last, it truly is a great time to enjoy Sig Ep. We have accomplished so much, but we have a huge hill to climb! Thank you to our board, for such a rewarding position!

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Aaron Degiulio

## Jeff Witt, Thank You for Your Service!

**J**eff Witt will definitely be missed as he moves on to his new position at the University of Michigan. During my first term as Vice President of Operations, I was responsible for our academics and was fortunate to work directly with Jeff. During his time as our faculty adviser, Jeff introduced his academic plan to brothers who unfortunately happened to fall below our grade standards. Jeff was eager to have those few brothers contact him and delve into opportunities of improvement to get back on top of their studies at the University.

Jeff's resources felt unlimited as he knew the exact direction to send active members looking to bounce back with their academics. I am a firm believer that Jeff's belief in the chapter played a significant role in our academic success over the years.



Jeff didn't stop with ensuring we achieved academic success. He also made an effort for the chapter to improve personally and professionally. Jeff would frequent chapter meetings and executive board meetings to stress constant communication and to be a familiar face to all of the actives. Every year during our Balanced Man Scholarship dinner, Jeff would be one of our key note speakers delivering his "10 tips of college" speech at the dinner. The speech contained extremely valuable tips to the whole audience

but was especially valuable to the scholarship finalists as they began their journey at the University of Toledo. Jeff Witt's experience at the University was an asset for the undergraduate chapter and he will certainly be missed.



## Believe We Do

**O**n Tuesday, August 11, 2015, a group of undergraduate brothers crammed into a Midas van to head to Nashville for the 54<sup>th</sup> Grand Chapter Conclave for our fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. With no one having any Conclave experience in the past, we had no idea about the journey we were about to embark on.

The week started on that Wednesday when the brothers who had been through the Epsilon rite of passage attended a special celebration of our ritual, which included the ritual today side-by-side with the ritual that was approved 50 Grand Chapter Conclaves ago at the 4<sup>th</sup> Grand Chapter Conclave in 1907. Sitting in the congregation, it really hit me how no matter what state or era a brother was initiated in Sigma Phi Epsilon, we all are here because we believe in the American college fraternity, and what we as brothers in Sigma Phi Epsilon believe and hold dear to our hearts. It was also a very proud moment to see Ohio Iota brother Alex Wisniewski on stage as Chaplain in the current-day version of the ritual.

Thursday started with a gang of blue polo shirts (which our alumni provided for us) overtaking the Presidents Ballroom at the Opryland Convention

Center to sit in on the first session of the day "The Dark Power of Fraternities." It was a very informative session on what some fraternities suffer with and how troubled fraternities can influence young men and lead them in the wrong direction. I believe that it was actually during the panel discussion that we received word that the legislation was passed to conform all chapters nation wide to the Balanced Man Program. That news drowned out all the discussion about the so-called "dark power of fraternities" and made me think of all of the good that SigEp brings to the national fraternity scene all the way down to the 813 acres that the University of Toledo sits on. We build balanced men. We do not feel the need to do things the same as the rest of the fraternity world; we are as what our founders wanted us to be, different.

Thursday evening began with a parade of over 1600 brothers all walking together to the Grand Ole Opry for the Balanced Man Celebration. Because we were one of the largest delegations at Conclave, we were able to carry the state flags and fraternity flags on stage during the precession, once again

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representing Ohio Iota and The University of Toledo. There was a lot of recognition of the brothers who guide the fraternity at a national level like the Regional Governors (which included brother Ron Binder), past grand chapter presidents, and the current national board of directors. I know I was getting really anxious through all of these segments of recognition, until the moment that we were all waiting for, Buchanan Cup announcements. It took a while, but at last, Ohio Iota was recognized with our 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive Buchanan Cup! We were one of 9 chapters to receive the honor (with 1/3 of gold Buc Cups staying in Ohio). To add to it all, as President Dexter Emch was walking off the stage with our gold, we let everyone in the Grand Ole Opry know who we are with a TOLEDO. A Buc Cup is not just a golden bowl on a stand that looks really cool. Within the cup is 2 years of hard work in the classroom, steps made in our involvement on campus, an amazing story with a past president and his family, alumni support, working in the community, and so much more. That is what makes the Buc Cup such an amazing award to win.

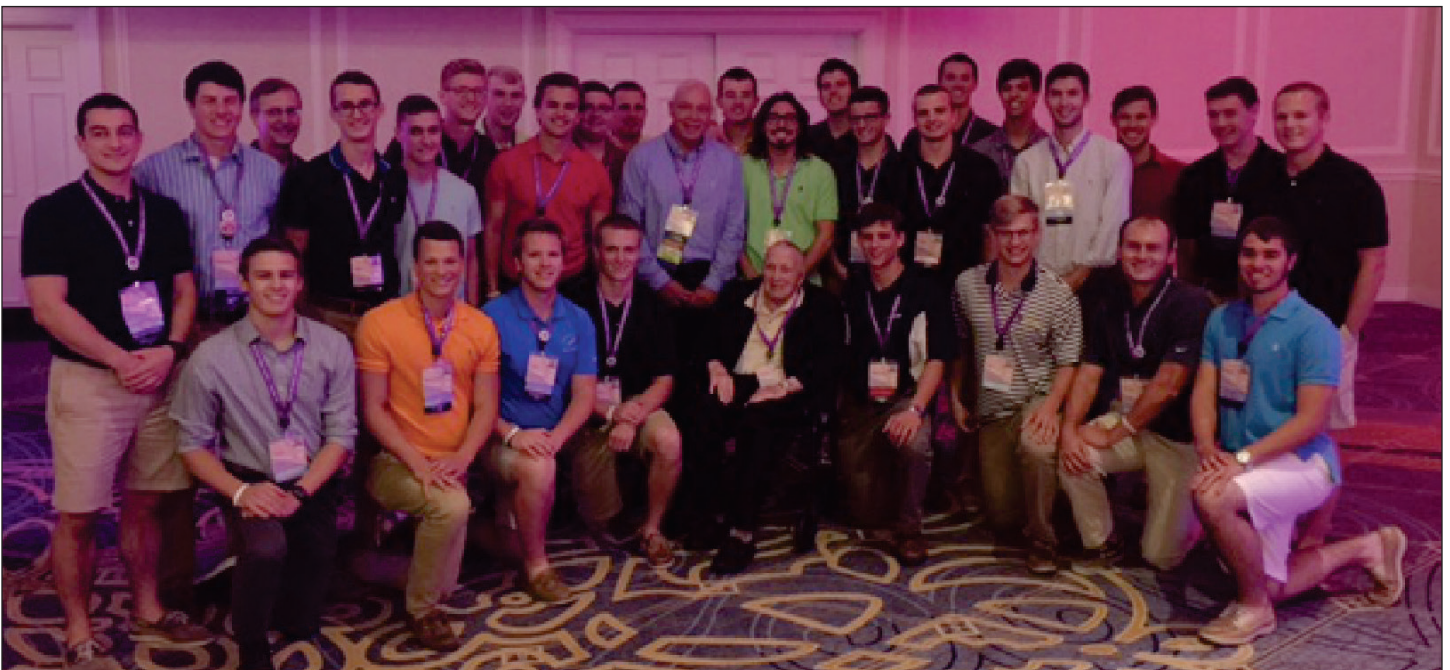
The rest of the weekend was filled with more sessions on improving our undergraduate chapter, a lot of well-deserved standing ovations, brother Larry Leake making an appearance at the brotherhood

luncheon, and a workshop on Saturday with just Ohio Iota that truly made everyone do as the theme of Conclave said, Believe. It amazing to see the ideas and improvements we can brainstorm with 28 minds all working together. We came up with many ideas and practices to put into place to help boost us up to our next Buc Cup.



The Conclave experience ended with the Alumni Awards Banquet on Saturday night. We saw many men recognized for achievements, and the Conclave banner auctioned off, with all proceeds going to the Phillip A. Cox Volunteer Institute. The banner sold for a record shattering \$200,000 to Indiana Beta, Brother Cox home chapter.

The five days at Conclave were some of the best of my time in college. I have been to many conferences in the past for Residence Life and this blew them out of the water without a doubt. I want to send a special thank you to all the alumni who supported the cause, for taking so many brothers to Conclave this year, because it would not have been possible without all of you. Special thank you to brothers Ted Behnken, Matt Blecke, Tim Croak, Randy McCullough, Mark Mandula, Jared Sisley, Ron Binder, Larry Leake, Andrew O'Donnell, and Mike Callas for accompanying us on this trip of a lifetime. IT IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE GREAT TO BE A SIGEP!



At Conclave, Larry Leake, President from 1951, joined the Chapter at the Nashville Brotherhood Luncheon.



# Undergraduates President's Report

**M**y name is Dexter Emch and I am the current president of the undergraduate chapter of Ohio Iota. Throughout the past semester and over the summer the chapter has been very busy. We have been continuing to live everyday with our cardinal principles of Virtue, Diligence, and Brotherly Love. I could not be more proud of the hard work and dedication that every member has put in this past semester.

We started off the semester with our annual alumni board/executive board retreat at Ted's lake house. This was a great way for our executive members to bond and develop new ideas with our amazing alumni board. After the retreat the entire executive board had the fuel to make sure that the chapter continued to stay on top.

About a month after our retreat the executive board was joined by several other aspiring leaders from the chapter in Chicago for Carlson Leadership Academy. We brought home several awards including the Donald McCleary Member Development Award, Chapter Home of the Year, Manpower Excellence Award, and brother Nicholas Dorner was selected as the Zollinger Outstanding Senior. Upon our return to Toledo we attended the Greek Recognition Night on campus. We were awarded first in academics and sports among all IFC fraternities.

At Songfest our performance won us 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the fraternity division. We also had five members tapped into Blue Key Honor Society, eight members tapped into Mortar Board National Honor Society, and brother Todd Klewer was named the emerging male leader.



As the semester came to an end we were able to finish it off with an intramural championship in soccer as well as a second place finish in softball. We also recorded our highest GPA to date with a 3.452 with 92 active members.

This summer we had the opportunity for 28 brothers to attend Conclave in Nashville, Tennessee. This was possible only because of several generous donations by our alumni. While in Nashville we were awarded the chapters 10<sup>th</sup> Buchanan Cup and 7<sup>th</sup> in a row, which shows 14 years of chapter

excellence. While at Conclave our brothers were a part of a huge change in our fraternity's national bylaws as legislation was passed to implement the Balanced Man Program as our only member education program. Our members were able to attend several seminars including how to elevate our chapter's BMP, a recruitment boot camp, and how to make our fraternity relevant on today's campus. We were also joined by Larry Leek, one our first chapter presidents here at The University of Toledo, at the Brotherhood Luncheon on Thursday.

With the motivation that we gained in Nashville we are ready to hit the ground running this year. We will be hosting our Balanced Man Scholarship Dinner in which we received over 200 applicants. On Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting our Parent's Tailgate and we invite all parents and alumni to attend. October 10<sup>th</sup> our football team will take on Kent State at 3 p.m. in the homecoming football game. We would like to invite all parents and alumni to campus that day to watch our chapter along with the lovely ladies of Delta Delta Delta in the homecoming parade.

## Founder's Day Celebration

On November 1<sup>st</sup> we will hold a Founder's Day celebration featuring guest speaker and past 1969 chapter president Jim Lowry. The event will start at 7 p.m. and take place off campus at 3456 Bently. The Burning Heart ceremony will begin at 9 p.m.

# Scholarship Report

**T**hanks to all alumni who continue to support the Sig Ep undergraduates in scholarship and leadership! Also, a special thanks to all who contributed to our drive to send undergraduates to Sig Ep Conclave 2015. Ohio Iota alumni helped make it possible to send 28 active brothers to Nashville, giving us bragging rights for best attendance this year. The conclave leadership and operations programming was top notch and gave the guys a bonding experience worth much more than the price of registration.

I'm proud to announce that we'll be making our first scholarship award for the Sigma Phi Epsilon Presidents Club Scholarship In Memory of Robert Gates this academic year. This scholarship was initially established in April of 2013 and remembers Robert Gates' role in Toledo Sig Ep's transition from the local Chi Beta Chi fraternity to the national Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. We passed the endowed mark of \$25,000 this past year, making it eligible to produce scholarship money for chapter officers living in the house. Many thanks to all the brothers who help make this possible.

We're set to award \$12,000 in scholarship and leadership awards to more than 15 brothers this 2015-2016 academic year. As alumni, we are making a difference and influencing the development of Sig Ep balanced men at Ohio Iota. I am amazed at how far our scholarship efforts have come over the years and I look forward to exponential growth into the future.

Following is a summary of our Sig Ep funds:

## **SIGMA PHI EPSILON OHIO IOTA CHAPTER/ BALANCED MAN SCHOLARSHIP:**

Established in 1984, this is a general scholarship fund awarding actives based on involvement, academics, service, and financial need. This is a great choice if one of the more targeted funds aren't quite the right fit.

## **DICK AND KAY BENSMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR SIGMA PHI EPSILON:**

Established in 2011, this fund seeks to award Junior or Senior Sig Eps with an above average grade point and a preference toward graduates from Toledo Public Schools.

## **RICHARD L. AND GAIL W. SPRINGER SIGMA PHI EPSILON LEADERSHIP FUND:**

Established in 2005, this fund promotes leadership training opportunities for Sig Eps, providing funding for various camps and academies.

## **SIGMA PHI EPSILON MARGARET R. AND JOHN MANDULA JR. CHALLENGE FUND:**

Established in 2003, this fund seeks to award Sig Ep "Balanced Men" excelling academically and in campus and chapter involvement. This fund has been well supported by many, including the four Mandula brothers, who many of you know.

## **STEGMAN SIGMA PHI EPSILON LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP FUND:**

Established in 2013 by Richard Stegman, this fund seeks to benefit Sig Ep upperclassmen based on Leadership and Need. The scholarship recipient must be at least a sophomore in good academic standing and recognized by his peers in leadership activities during his undergraduate years.

## **SIGMA PHI EPSILON PRESIDENT CLUB SCHOLARSHIP IN MEMORY OF ROBERT GATES:**

Established in 2013 in memory of Robert Gates, this fund was seeded by past presidents of Sigma Phi Epsilon and Chi Beta Chi. Robert Gates, then President of Chi Beta Chi, was instrumental in choosing a National Fraternity called Sig Ep. Its purpose is to fund Scholarships for the Ohio Iota President and his Officers and to defer the cost of living in the Chapter House. Awards are made semi-annually based on need and application.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- If you have questions or need help, feel free to contact me at [Randy@TheMcCulloughs.us](mailto:Randy@TheMcCulloughs.us).
- This link will allow you to give directly online: <https://give2ut.utoledo.edu/default.asp>.
- Be sure to designate your gift to one of the above funds.
- Your gift is tax deductible.
- You can give as much or as little as you want.
- You can put it on your credit card or write a check.
- You can do a recurring gift on your credit card.
- You can be a part of this!

You can help make a difference!

# Balanced Man Scholarship Dinner a Success!

Saturday, August 29 marked the annual Balanced Man Scholarship Dinner. Selecting the eleven scholarship winners from a pool of two hundred applicants was a long and difficult process, but all of the hard work of the Vice President of Recruitment Kyle Boyers; the BMS Chairmen Chris Mills, Erich Greulich, and Jay Cok; and the rest of the committee, finally paid off. This was possibly the largest BMS banquet ever assembled by Ohio Iota. Forty-eight finalists were invited to the banquet; each of whom received a certificate and the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.

The banquet began with an address by current Chapter President Dexter Emch. Brother Lukas Zastrow gave the invocation, and then dinner began. Between the finalists, their families and guests, the undergraduate and alumni SigEps, and the other special guests, an estimated two hundred and fifty people enjoyed the delicious meal. Following the dinner, the two keynote speakers, Brother Donovan Nichols (class of '04) and Brother Timothy Croak (class of '82), captivated the audience. Because both speakers are alumni of Ohio Iota, they were able to

directly connect their messages and advice to the benefits that SigEp has to offer. Numerous parents mentioned at the ice cream social following the dinner that they initially prohibited their sons from joining a "frat," but after listening to the speakers they wholeheartedly wanted their sons to be a part of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity.



President Dexter Emch presenting the 1<sup>st</sup> place Scholarship, the Greg Smith Award.

The banquet concluded with the revealing of the scholarships. Chairmen Chris Mills and Jay Cok presented the first ten scholarships. There were six \$250 awards, three \$500 awards, and one \$750 award. The top scholarship was then presented by Kyle Boyers. This BMS banquet was the first since the passing of Brother Gregory Lee Smith late last year, and it was decided that the top \$1000 scholarship was to be dedicated in his name. Kyle gave a short speech about not only all that Greg accomplished in his few short years at Toledo, but more importantly about the lives that he touched. It is unfortunate that most of the members of the audience were unable to truly grasp the significance of the award being named in Greg's honor; however, the dedication served as a reminder to all of the SigEps of how Greg was truly the epitome of a servant leader, a loving brother, and a balanced man. We look forward to seeing all that the Balanced Man Finalists are going to accomplish in the years to come.



Balanced Man Scholarship recipients.

## SIG EP NEEDS YOUR HELP !

### 2015 Membership Campaign

100% of your Gift is used to Help the Undergraduate Chapter,  
as well as pay for all Alumni Events and Communications.  
Visit **WWW.SIGEPTOLEDO.COM** and Donate with a Credit Card,  
or simply clip off this form, and mail it back with your check to the address below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form with your donation to: **Sigma Phi Epsilon, 3523 Kenwood, Toledo, Ohio 43606**



## **Sigma Phi Epsilon**

**Ohio Iota Alumni Association**

**3523 Kenwood, Toledo, OH 43606**

### **Remember to Designate Your Gifts to UT!**

When making gifts to UT, be sure to designate them to the Sig Ep Balanced Man Scholarship Fund, the Sig Ep Mandula Scholarship, the Springer Leadership Fund, the Bensman Scholarship, Sig Ep Presidents Club Scholarship, or the Stegman Leadership Scholarship. These endowed funds with UT provide undergraduate scholarships and leadership grants that help the chapter tremendously. The next time you make a UT gift, be sure to designate it to Sig Ep!

## **Homecoming 2015**

**P**lease join us for this year's homecoming celebration. It will be on Saturday, October 10, and will start with the parade party at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Tim and Sarah Croak, 2545 Middlesex Dr. Immediately after the parade venture to campus where the SigEp tailgate party will be held in the northwest corner of lot 10. The game will be held at 3 p.m. against Kent State University. Tickets for the game can be purchased through the UT ticket office; phone 419 530-4653.