

# The Red Door



OHIO IOTA CHAPTER OF SIGMA PHI EPSILON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO – MARCH 2023

Tarak Davuluri '24

## Undergraduate President's Message

**M**y name is Tarak Davuluri, and I am bestowed with the honor of serving as the 73rd President of the Ohio Iota Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon. I am currently a Junior studying Biology with a pre-med concentration along with minors in Chemistry and General Business. The Fall 2022 semester was filled with exciting achievements. The Ohio Iota Chapter once again ranked atop of IFC for chapter GPA. This marks 41 straight semesters for Ohio Iota topping IFC in GPA! In the preceding Spring, our chapter was recognized for raising the most philanthropy dollars which we added on to in the Fall by raising \$2000 through our two philanthropy dinners: Sig Ep Sundaes and Sig Ep Sliders. One thousand dollars was donated each to Cherry St. and Big Brothers Big Sister of Northwestern Ohio.

This semester began with our Executive Retreat graciously hosted by the man himself, Brother Ted Behnken, at his lake house. At this retreat, continuing to forge our brotherhood and reignite the passion for rituals was discussed. We have been working our way towards these goals, having over 80% of the chapter present at our Sigma Ritual and holding countless brotherhoods at the Chapter House, including chess, speed eating competition, and a movie night. Spring recruitment is always a demanding task, but the chapter was well-equipped this semester. Led by the Vice President of Recruitment, Brother Rudy Dua,

we recruited nine outstanding new members along with one 365 member so far. These numbers lead IFC, but we are still looking to recruit more through 365 by the end of this semester. We hosted our Philanthropy Dinner (Sig Ep Sliders) on March 16 at the Chapter House where sliders and mac n cheese made by the brothers were served. All proceeds go to Big Brothers Big Sisters. On April 1, around 25 brothers will be taking the stage for SongFest. Led by coordinators Peyton Elliot, Greg Shulkosky, and Carter Wheaton Rodriguez, we have high expectations and are looking forward to putting on a show. To wrap up the semester, our annual Senior Dinner will be held in the Grogan Room, located in Savage Arena, on April 29 at 7 p.m. We hope to see you all in attendance. We appreciate your unbroken support for this chapter, past, present, and future. This chapter is fortunate to have the continued support of active alumni and as a result, our successes are also your successes. We hope to see all of you at our upcoming events and want to remind you that you are always welcome to come to the on-campus house. As most of you know, the Red Door is always open.



## 2023 Senior and Alumni Annual Awards Dinner

*All are welcome!*

**Saturday, 29 April 2023**

6 p.m. cocktails | 7 p.m. dinner | \$30.00

**Grogan Room – Savage Arena**  
2025 N. Douglas Road, Toledo, OH 43606

**RSVP at [sigep Toledo.com](http://sigep Toledo.com)**

Scott Irwin '85

## Career Achievement

In his 15-year tenure as president and CEO, Scott has architected an impactful and profitable growth strategy for Aktion Associates. This strategy has brought Aktion national prominence as a Value Added Reseller (VAR) and Managed Services Provider (MSP).

Today, Aktion is one of the largest and most respected VARs in the United States. Leading ERP publishers and IT providers such as Sage, Infor, Acumatica, Deltek, Microsoft and IBM choose to partner with Aktion to deliver their solutions. Aktion ranks #16 on Accounting Today's 2022 VAR 100 list and has received numerous recognitions and industry awards. Aktion is also a 2023 Top Workplace Award recipient.

Embracing the concept of "entrepreneurial leadership," Scott empowers the Aktion team to organically grow their respective business units. As a result, division unit and company profitability made 2022 Aktion Associates' most profitable year ever.

Recognized among his peers as an expert on the tangible benefits of incorporating technologies as a



key component of a strategic plan, Scott regularly attends executive forums and events where he addresses business leaders on this topic.

Scott joined Aktion Associates in 1985 as a college intern. After graduating, he was hired as a sales rep and soon became Aktion's top performing sales representative, earning several promotions. Serving for several years as the head of Aktion's largest business unit, Scott was named president of Aktion Associates in 2005. Today, Scott is the sole owner and Chief Executive Office of Aktion Associates.

Scott is a member of the Young President's Organization (YPO), a global leadership of extraordinary chief executives. An accomplished sailor, he served as president of the Tartan Ten National One Design Sailing Class. Scott earned degrees in Computer and Marketing Logistics from the University of Toledo.

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Ted Behnken '82

## Alumni Board President's Message

The years are moving quickly, and this year certainly proved how much energy it takes to keep a volunteer organization alive! In the spring of 2022 we were awarded the National Fraternities Outstanding Alumni Operational Excellence Award. We have received that distinction seven times in the last twelve years! Furthermore, Jordan Jones was given the Outstanding New Volunteer award!

So yes, it takes a lot of time, talent, and of course, money, to make all of this happen!

2025 is the new 2020.... Meaning, we will celebrate 75 years in 2025, pending no pandemic, as a Sig Ep chapter. Homecoming 2025 will be our BIGGEST YEAR EVER!

So, with that said, we are two years away. If you would like to serve on the 75<sup>th</sup> Reunion Committee, we would love to hear from you. (Tedohio1@gmail.com)

We are soon to have 2000 members. We are just shy by 36, and in 2023, I fully expect to initiate Brother 2000! That's incredible.

So, as we approach 2025, we will be asking for your financial help. It will take a lot of money to organize the event. We have not asked for dues in quite a few years. We saved diligently, and we want to make sure that we are well funded for 2025 to make it happen. 100% of your gift is used for Sig Ep.

If you want to get this moving...send a gift to SIGMA PHI EPSILON, 3523 Kenwood Boulevard, Toledo, Ohio 43606

The logo for Sigma Phi Epsilon (SigEp) features the word "SigEp" in a stylized font. "Sig" is in red and "Ep" is in purple. The letters are bold and have a slight shadow effect.

Robert Witt '60

## Founders Circle Award

**R**obert Witt, Pin #272, is our 2023 Recipient of the University of Toledo Sig Ep Founder's Circle Award.

Robert grew up north of New York City, and applied to the Engineering School at the University of Toledo in 1956. He moved on campus, living in Dowd Hall. In 1958, he decided to join Sigma Phi Epsilon, and never looked back. His new member class had 10 members, including Charles Walters and Bruce Kuntz.

Robert graduated in 1961, with a Bachelors Degree in Chemical Engineering. He worked at Dupont in the paint division, and decided to get a law degree from Toledo and graduated in 1966. Subsequently, he worked for Owens Corning, in the fiberglass division. Yet, he missed his family at



Dupont, and instead, decided to go into private practice. He also returned to Toledo in 1981 and obtained his Biology Degree.

Robert's biggest patent case came from embryo research with cattle. He won that case, and that soon developed into embryo development for human beings.

Robert has been a community organizer, and loves the outdoors. He helped with NIFTI for over 20 years as their board president, and later, with the Toledo Urban Forestry Commission. He worked closely with Mike Collins, past mayor, and loves to give back to the Toledo Community. He believes we need to invest in planting trees, so our community can prosper!

Dave Achen '72

## Volunteer Excellence Award

**D**ave Achen grew up in Lakewood, Ohio and chose to pursue a Business Administration degree at The University of Toledo in 1968. He attended a mixer at the student union to meet new people and become involved in university life. A group of Sig Eps were inviting students to a rush party, which eventually led Dave to pledging in late Fall 1968. After graduating in 1972, he remained in the Toledo area working within the financial services industry, retiring from Edward Jones in 2016.

Following graduation, Dave became involved with the Ohio Iota Alumni Housing Corporation.

This group was instrumental in moving the Sig Ep residence first to the Dorr Street house and finally to its current location on the University of Toledo Campus.

Dave currently resides in Sylvania with his wife of 48 years, Claire. They have two daughters and four grandchildren.



## New Letters for Sigma Phi Epsilon

**P**rior to the Senior Dinner of 2022, a group of brothers were asked to help with a cause. Brother Behnken contacted Brother Alan Thompson to head a special task force to honor our chapter by replacing the Letters at the Sig Ep House.

The Winthrop Street Gang got together, and decided this was a very worthwhile cause. Al worked very hard, and after a few months, raised enough money to buy new letters. Al was so



diligent with emails and phone calls, asking brothers from 335 to help!

This spring, 2023, the new letters will be installed at the campus house. The quality is incredible, and a picture of the PHI Clearly shows the results!

How appropriate that the PHI in our Ritual stands for Diligence. Al was incredibly diligent, and kept this band of brothers focused on the end result!

*Here's to the brothers of 335 Winthrop!*

# Spotlight on President's Club Scholarship

The full name of this fund is the Sigma Phi Epsilon Presidents Club Scholarship – In Memory of Robert Gates (Fund 1302113). The charitable focus of the fund is to promote academics, living in the house, and leadership in the local chapter. It was created and championed in 2013 by Brother Ted Behnken to honor Robert Gates, our founding president at Ohio Iota. He was at the helm of our local chapter as we transitioned to the national organization of Sigma Phi Epsilon in 1950. The fund was christened at our Senior/Alumni Dinner in April of 2013 by Janet Gates, Robert's daughter, and also by Larry Leake, 1952 President and friend of Robert Gates. Janet was able to recount some biographical information about her father, Bob. He was born in New Jersey in 1927, but wound up in Toledo graduating from DeVilbiss HS where he met his long-time wife, Carol. He served in the Army Air Corps before attending UT to earn an engineering degree. Bob joined XBX local fraternity, the predecessor of Sig Ep, and at a time when many local fraternities were transitioning to national fraternities, he led the chapter through the decision process to choose Sigma Phi Epsilon...a choice that has stood the test of time. After college, he served Alcoa for 43 years as a successful executive. In Janet's words, "He was a family man who, with his wife Carol, exemplified all of the characteristics of the Greatest Generation."

It is notable that Ted endeavored to "prime" the fund by reaching out to past presidents to be the first to give. And in yet another act of Sig Ep leadership, the past presidents stepped up to push the fund's

Robert Gates 1950



balance past its endowed mark in the first year. The fund is now our third largest fund with an endowed balance surpassing \$65,000 and yielding over \$2000 per year in scholarships.

One of the interesting things I found in researching this topic was the list of past presidents contacted to help kick start the fund. The list runs from 1948 thru 2013 and includes the following names. Rouch, Peters, Gates, McPhail, Leake, Line, Gollan, Harsel, Kent, Curto, Cosgrove, Morgan, Richie, Herrold,

Harste, Dankowski, Matthews, Abella, Sheffer, Lowry, Krajewski, Palmer, Duncan, Berg, McGovern, Lammers, Myers, Goldberg, Bowers, M. Mandula, J. Mandula, McCullough, T. Croak, Schalitz, Tschantz, B. Dunwoodie, Bixler, Pescara, Garand, J. Dunwoodie, Karban, Pullar, Nowak, Shadoan, Kurlough, Falkenstein, Scheel, George, Geagan, Schaub, Avery, Hagemeyer, Husser, Rodriguez, Schmidt, Bresson, Hoying, Bauer, Scharf, Lehmann, Gonzalez, Sisley, Miller, Iachini, E. Croak. My guess is that if you're reading this article, you'll recognize a past president in this list.

Our President's Club fund continues to grow with its roots in Bob's leadership along with the many presidents that followed him. If you're inclined to help promote such a legacy, it's as easy as going to <https://www.utfoundation.org/give/giveonline.aspx> to process your gift electronically. Use the search box at the bottom left of the page and search for the name or number of the fund at the top of the article. It's a legacy worth remembering!

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## Recent Scholarship Awards

### BALANCED MAN:

Patrick Mischak  
Roshan Sirole  
James Goodyear

### BENSMAN:

Jarod VanHersett  
Payton Elliott  
Tarak Davuluri

### MANDULA:

Joel Kasik  
Patrick Fox  
Rudy Dua  
Roshan Sirole

### PRESIDENTS CLUB:

Cameron Hoffman  
Ricardo Flores

## SUMMARY OF OUR SIG EP FUNDS:

- Sigma Phi Epsilon Ohio Iota Chapter / Balanced Man Scholarship (1300144)
- Dick And Kay Bensman Scholarship for Sigma Phi Epsilon (1301894)
- Richard L. and Gail W. Springer Sigma Phi Epsilon Leadership Fund (1301386)
- Sigma Phi Epsilon Margaret R. and John Mandula Jr. Challenge Fund (1301204)
- Sigma Phi Epsilon President's Club Scholarship – In Memory of Robert Gates (1302113)

# Carlson Leadership Academy

**T**welve undergraduates and three alumni attended the Carlson Leadership Academy in Chicago, IL the weekend of February 17-19, 2023. The Carlson Leadership Academy (CLA) is a regional conference held by Sig Ep Headquarters. At CLA undergraduates can attend a variety of tracks to learn best tips and practices for executive board positions. There is also a track for newer members titled Rising Leaders. Throughout the weekend the undergraduates attended various sessions focused on better themselves along with how to better the chapter. They shared thoughts and ideas with chapters from Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The alumni in attendance also had specific programming that looked to help increase volunteering, how to navigate new upgrades to the Sig Ep website, and how to best communicate with the undergraduate chapter. After the weekend our undergraduates had a better understanding of what is expected of them and many new ideas to bring back to Toledo.

Ohio Iota was also recognized with three awards at the Saturday awards dinner. These included the Donald C. McCleary Member Development Award, Benjamin Hobson-Frayser Excellence in Communication, and the Sunago Mentorship



Excellence Award. The Sunago Mentorship Excellence Award is a new award given to AVCs that have an alumni volunteer matched to each undergraduate executive board member.

This was a great weekend for Ohio Iota. We were able to learn and share many best practices with other chapters, but we were also recognized by Sig Ep Headquarters for all the hard work both the undergraduates and volunteers do. Hopefully we will be receiving some more awards at Conclave in August!

## Grand Chapter Conclave

August 2-6, 2023

San Antonio, Texas

### Alumni Challenge!

**A**lmost 30 active Toledo Sig Eps attended the last Conclave in Denver – one of the largest of any chapter delegation. Much credit is due to Sig Ep Alumni that provided financial support to help make it possible. We know this is a great brother-

building event that creates lifetime memories for our chapter and brothers.

This coming Conclave will be in San Antonio, Texas and the expense will be a big challenge. Our chapter is larger and the distance is great. But our alumni are great and generous!

Please consider a gift to help send an active brother to National Conclave. Send a check to Sig Ep Conclave, 3523 Kenwood Boulevard, Toledo, Ohio 43606 or email Ted or Randy, (TedOhio1@gmail.com or Randy@TheMcCulloughs.us) for more information.





## **Sigma Phi Epsilon**

Ohio Iota Alumni Association

3523 Kenwood, Toledo, OH 43606

# **Sig Eps Soaring Past Seventy!**

*Toledo Sig Eps are again preparing to Soar Past Seventy with our 2023 Homecoming and 73<sup>rd</sup> Birthday Celebration! Put Homecoming 2023 on your calendar now and plan to join Ohio Iota Brothers and Golden Hearts. It's a great day to be a Sig Ep!*