



GAMMA THETA TIMES

SIGMA CHI FRATERNITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

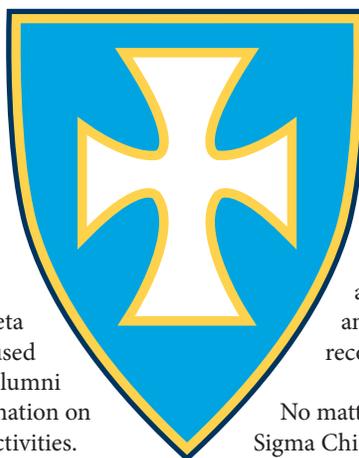
GAMMA THETA LAUNCHES NEW ALUMNI RELATIONS PROGRAM

RECONNECT WITH YOUR SIGMA CHI BROTHERS

As undergraduate members we build strong friendships with our brothers. Then after graduating, we quickly find many new interests, careers, families, and civic activities that occupy our time and attention. The day-to-day activities of life take over and, before you know it, we begin to wonder about our brothers and their lives.

With this in mind, our new alumni relations program is designed to reconnect our alumni brothers while cultivating awareness and involvement in the Gamma Theta Chapter. Twice a year we will be mailing a newsletter focused on communication with alumni. Each issue will contain alumni news, spotlights on brothers from various decades, information on upcoming events, and reports on chapter successes and activities.

Earlier this fall, a biographical update form was mailed and a digital version was emailed out to our alumni membership. This form asked alumni to verify the contact information we have on file, share personal or professional news, provide any military service information, and share contact information for lost brothers. Thank you to those who have already returned this form with your updates. If you haven't filled yours out yet, please take the time to look over your information and provide any necessary updates. These biographical updates play a vital role in



maintaining our records and enhancing our ability to facilitate meaningful relationships within our alumni community. They also allow us to collect information for the alumni news section of the newsletter.

By bolstering our alumni relations programming, we hope to strengthen the fraternal bond that ties us all together. I welcome your feedback on the newsletter and encourage you to get more involved. Our goal is to keep alumni informed about current projects and future plans, and to give all our Gamma Theta brothers an opportunity to reconnect with our good and great Fraternity.

No matter how many years have passed, we're all members of Sigma Chi for life. Alumni support is essential in maintaining our brotherhood, and we welcome support and volunteers at every level. By joining the board, submitting a new member recommendation, or simply sending article ideas for the newsletter, you can play an important part in our chapter's future.

In Hoc,
Gamma Theta House Corporation

DEDICATED TO SIGMA CHI AND HIS COUNTRY

John Briggs '67 Cherishes His Gamma Theta Experience and Military Service

When **John Briggs '67** arrived in Gainesville from Ocala to attend the University of Florida, he already had a good idea of where his home base would be. At that time, Sigma Chi had more members from his hometown than any other UF fraternity. John gained an instant family of 100-plus brothers at Gamma Theta, where he was thankful to hone his leadership skills to better his character, campus, and community. He also enrolled as a member of the class of 1966, but decided to redshirt one year to stick around for the senior year of classmate Steve Spurrier.

John's Big Brother, **Nick Boone '64** (younger brother to popular singer Pat Boone), was one of many men who helped prepare him to lead a successful life after graduating from UF. Along with giving back to Sigma Chi so others could have the same opportunities he had, it was important

to John to serve his country. He toiled through four years of Army ROTC and then proudly served in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. His Army and Sigma Chi roots have even intertwined over the years.

"When I was planning the annual reunion for my helicopter company from Vietnam, I contacted a fairly famous pilot, **Hugh Mills Jr., Eta Iota '74**. He flew the same type scout helicopter I flew at the same time and had written a very interesting book about his time in country called *Low Level Hell*," John said. "When I contacted him about being our keynote speaker, I found out he was also a Sigma Chi from Embry-Riddle University. He pledged there when the Army allowed him to finish his college education following the war."

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DEDICATED TO SIGMA

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After John’s significant contributions to the Army aviation community, Hugh sponsored his induction into Army Aviation’s Honorable Order of St. Michael. Following John’s prestigious honor, and his life-changing three-year tour as a helicopter pilot, he was inspired to recognize his Gamma Theta brothers who have also served in the military. It was that inspiration that led to the request for service information in the recently mailed alumni biographical update.

“Prominent architect Mike Hug designed the Pi Kappa Phi house a couple of doors down from our house and we got a tour of it at one of our Gamma Theta 2022 group meetings in Gainesville,” John said. “They had a large plaque in their common area dedicated to their members who had served. I found it very moving.”

John is the director of the recently formed Gamma Theta 2022 group, which has some very exciting plans in the works to help shape Sigma Chi’s future at UF for many years to come. He’s drawn some inspiration from Mike Hug and his experience as a construction lawyer that have given him some ideas that can be implemented at Gamma Theta. As the group refines those plans for Gamma Theta, they’ll be communicated with alumni.

John practices as a mediator with Upchurch, Watson, White & Max in Maitland and has 25 years of experience as a civil trial lawyer in central Florida. He became a construction lawyer by accident after getting hired by a professional liability carrier to defend the structural engineers who designed the original expansion of the Citrus Bowl in Orlando. He recalls that his own expert consultants refused to enter the construction site, as they were concerned the structure would collapse.

“This case led to me getting more and more involved in construction and design litigation until I moved into full-time mediation work, where I primarily handle construction-related cases,” John said. “And then there was a fun case when I represented a client named Jack Daniels in federal court, but I will save that for another time.”



John Briggs '67 and Mike Coates '68 on one of their golf trips to Ireland 10-15 years ago. Mike was John's roommate in 1964, which was the first year the current chapter house was open. Mike is a retired plastic surgeon and is a pancreatic cancer survivor.

Outside of his work and involvement with Sigma Chi, John enjoys playing golf, mostly with former roommate **Mike Coates '68**, who is a retired plastic surgeon and pancreatic cancer survivor. John also enjoys snow skiing, reading, traveling (especially with Viking), and spending time in the mountains of North Carolina during the summer. John has two sons. His youngest is a junior in high school and is looking to play lacrosse in college. John’s oldest is a senior at Embry-Riddle and has followed in John’s footsteps as a Sigma Chi with plans to become an airline pilot.

You can connect with John at jcbmediate@gmail.com. If you have served our country, John asks that you mail back the biographical update form with answers to the military service questionnaire portion to you can be recognized on a plaque to be hung in the alumni room of the chapter house.

ALUMNI UPDATE

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Ronald Neder '56 passed on to Chapter Eternal on August 20, 2020. He leaves behind Arlene, his loving wife of 63 years; their children, Pam, Ronald, and Janet; four grandchildren; two brothers; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Ronnie played on the freshman basketball team at the University of Florida. He was also proud to share Sigma Chi with his brother, **George**, and nephews, **Riley**, **Joey** and **Ben**. During his sophomore year of college, Ronnie joined the Army and was stationed in Alaska. Ronnie married Arlene on June 9, 1957, and graduated from UF in 1958.

Following his graduation for UF, Ronnie worked for US Gypsum and became one of their top sales reps in Louisiana. In 1961, Ronnie returned to Florida and started his own business, Gainesville Hardware and Building Supply. He enjoyed many successful years in the building industry, especially impressive given his own admission that he didn’t know one end of a screwdriver from the other.

Ronnie was passionately devoted to the Florida Gators, especially Gator basketball. He and Arlene hosted the 1970s Gator basketball teams many times. Three very special players, Tony Miller, Earl Findley, and Tim Fletcher, became their adopted sons. At a 2019 Gator basketball game, Ronnie was honored for his contributions to the basketball program. Ronnie and George, along with their wives, traveled to almost every Gator football game.

He was also a Mason and a member of the Gainesville Homebuilders Association, the Quarterback Club, and the Lion’s Club. Ronnie was a charter member and president of the Gator Touchdown Club and a charter member of the Gator Tipoff Club for basketball boosters. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville and became a charter member and Deacon of Christ Community Church.

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 Jacksonville, Fla.

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Roy Gilfix '22
 Cocoa Beach, Fla.

Social Chairman
Adrian Mercado '22
 Coconut Creek, Fla.

Health and Wellness Chairman
William Sawarynski '22
 Gulf Breeze, Fla.



Gamma Theta's executive board.

Undergraduate Brothers Prosper During the Pandemic

Gamma Theta Sees Growth Across the Board

Gamma Theta has had a couple busy months adjusting to all the different COVID-19 rules and regulations, but we've remained successful nevertheless. Despite the shift to online classes last spring, Sigma Chi still ranked in the top five in GPA among all University of Florida fraternities. We built on that momentum in the fall by initiating 36 new members. We are proud to be making strides in all areas even during these difficult times.

All About Academics

The active chapter posted a 3.68 GPA for the spring semester, which was the second highest GPA out of UF's fraternities. Our scholarship chairman set the tone for us academically by reorganizing the library and providing incentives for brothers who earn 4.0s.

Prioritizing Philanthropy

While it was disappointing to have an abrupt end to in-person classes and activities in the spring, we were thankful to finish Derby Days before the onset of the pandemic. We were thrilled to raise about \$16,000 for the Huntsman Cancer Institute. Even though COVID-19 made it difficult to do our normal fall philanthropy events, we enjoyed participating in philanthropy events for other Greek organizations such as Zeta Line Dance, Tri Delt Triple Play, and Chi O Sandblast.

New Recruitment Format, Same Sigma Chi Vision

Our recruitment team overcame the last-minute hurdles of virtual recruitment to bring in 40 new members this fall. It was encouraging to see that UF had some of the strongest recruitment numbers out of all SEC schools. It was a successful recruitment week, and we're looking forward to helping our new members become

leaders who are committed to the betterment of character, campus, and community.

Making a Difference in Our Community

We courted Zeta Tau Alpha in the spring, and although we couldn't celebrate traditionally during Homecoming week, we're looking forward to rescheduling those events with them on the day of the Orange and Blue game. This fall, we paired with Alpha Delta Pi to do a walk from fraternity to sorority row for the Max Gruver Foundation, which both our international fraternities support to raise awareness against hazing. We also enjoyed virtually connecting with Sigma Chis nationwide at the Krach Transformational Leaders Workshop.

Congratulations, Brothers!

We are excited for our seniors who have already earned full-time job offers following their summer internships. Some of the companies they will be working at are Lockheed Martin, Bank of America, CDW, and Whiting-Turner.

Looking Forward

Although we couldn't host any alumni events or participate in intramurals this fall due to the pandemic, we're hopeful to hosting Mother-Son and Father-Son Days and resume intramurals in the spring. While COVID-19 has created a lot of unexpected challenges, we're thankful to have each other and still grow through Sigma Chi's ideals. We wish good health to all alumni as we push forward together through the pandemic.

In Hoc,
Carson Black '21
 (813) 728-0120
 carsonblack545@gmail.com

ALUMNI UPDATE

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Tom Huenefeld '61 passed on to Chapter Eternal on April 4, 2020, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Before retiring in 1996, he worked for U.S. Bank predecessors First National Bank and Star Bank in Cincinnati for 30 years. He retired as senior vice president. His first job was for his family's business, the Huenefeld Co., which developed the first glass door oven.

Tom was a well-known Cincinnati historian. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award in February of 2020 for his involvement with the Greater Cincinnati Business Hall of Fame. The award was presented by Junior Achievement and the Cincinnati Museum Center. Tom played a big role in starting the Greater Cincinnati Business Hall of Fame. He served as a member of the steering committee and selection committee every year since the inaugural Hall of Fame class in 1991.

ALUMNI NEWS

Dick Petry '53 is a retired United Methodist minister. His oldest son, Richard, is a Sig from Florida Southern. His youngest son, **Andy '86**, and both his grandsons, **Anderson '17** and **Nick '20**, are all Gamma Theta Sigs. Dick was honored as a Significant Sig in 2019. At UF, Dick was a football letterman, president of the Wesley Foundation, secretary of religious affairs, clerk of the honor court, and a Florida Blue Key and University Hall of Fame member. He lives in Marietta, Ga. Email: ra_petry@yahoo.com

Angelo Spoto Jr. '54 has served as the past president of Watson Clinic Foundation, American Group Practice Association, Florida Allergy Society, and as the past CEO of Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine. He lives in Lakeland, Fla. Email: kebeja@aol.com

Jeff Miller '57 served as an FIA circuit judge from 1987 to 2020. He is a member of the FIA and AIA bar associations. Jeff lives in Kissimmee, Fla.

Hugh Latta '60 was honored as a Significant Sig in 2019. He lives in Chattahoochee Hills, Ga. Email: hlatta@bellsouth.net

Len Vincenti '64 and his wife, Laura, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August of 2020. They live in Dunedin, Fla. Email: lenvincenti@gmail.com

Mel Sanderson '66 spent 28 years working in Orlando, Fla., as a manufacturer's rep. He retired and moved to Alachua, Fla., in 2004. Mel's wife, Sandra, was a Zeta at UF. They enjoy going to Gator football and basketball games. Email: melsandy@windstream.net



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Attention: *This newsletter is intended for alumni, undergraduates, and parents. If your son is still attending the University of Florida, 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.*

John "Jeff" Ellis '68 and his wife, Lexi, adopted their daughter, Coco, in 2010 from China. Coco is now 11 and in the fifth grade. Jeff, Lexi, and Coco have traveled to 24 countries and two homes, one in Arlington, Va., and the other in Delaplane, Va. Jeff and Lexi also have three other children, two daughters and a son. Email: johnjellis1@verizon.net

Wayne Rogers '69 played baseball at UF from 1966 to 1970. He was honored several years ago at a celebration of 100 years of UF baseball as one of the top 100 players to play at UF. Wayne lives in Sarasota, Fla. Email: wayne@waynearogers.com

Dave Holbrook '70 is still practicing law. He and his wife, Sarah, have four children and six grandchildren. Dave tries to maintain contact with brothers from his class. He lives in Orlando, Fla. Email: dholbrooklaw@aol.com

Tommy Todd '73 has been married to his wife, Tina, for 47 years. They have two beautiful grandchildren, Wyatt and Abigaile. Tommy enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time on the Suwannee River with **William Green '73** and his sons. He lives in St. Petersburg, Fla. Email: tommy@tommytoddlandscape.com

James Hummel '77 has spent the last eight years flying as a retired park ranger for the National Park Service. He's been a bush pilot in Alaska, tracked wolves near Cape Hatteras, and tracked moose near his home in Voyageurs National Park. Recently, he's been enjoying time with his grandchildren in their motorhome in Florida and Yellowstone National Park. James lives in International Falls, Minn. Email: jimandmary@frontier.net

Dave Lewis '79 was elected as the national vice president of the Society of American Foresters in 2016 and served as national president of SAF in 2018. He represented 11,000 foresters across the U.S. and served six years on the SAF board of directors. Dave lives in Monticello, Fla.

Don Moore '79 has served as an airline pilot for American Airlines for 42 years. His wife, Marz, is a flight attendant for American Airlines. His children have all been very successful. Don's sons, Scott and Kyle, are TV show producers. His daughter, Mandy, is an award-winning actress. She is the lead actress on NBC's drama, "This Is Us." Don loves Gator football and never misses a game. He lives in Longwood, Fla. Email: donmoore777@mac.com