



Phi Gamma Delta Zeta Chapter

Zeta Chapter Complete History

1871 - 1900

The history of Zeta Chapter does not begin at the Indiana chapter. Zeta was originally organized in 1852 at Maryville College in Tennessee. The designation was then assigned to the Indiana chapter upon its founding on May 22, 1871. The men charged with installing the new chapter of PHI GAMMA DELTA were from Asbury College, now Depauw University. The members of the installation crew were Francis Asbury Friedley (Depauw '71) and Marcus S. Claypool (Depauw '71).

The founders of Zeta at [Indiana University](#) were all well known men on campus: James Shannon Nave ('72); Columbus C. Nave ('71); Robert C. Chandler ('74); John Slaughter Newby ('73); Richard D. Simpson ('73); Alfred Harrison Harryman ('74); Sanford H Drybread ('74).

Phi Gamma Delta was the sixth fraternity to establish a chapter at Indiana. The founders had investigated a number of other fraternities before deciding on PHI GAMMA DELTA. During the early years of the chapter, meetings were held in secret. The most frequent meeting place was in a vacant 3rd floor home over the county jail. Later the chapter met in members' homes, arriving only singly or in pairs.

The first record on an established hall is in a letter from William Paynter ('80) who recalled that in 1876 the chapter had a room and a half on [College Avenue](#), just off the square. It was customary, in the spirit of the fraternity, for a brother to show up in a place of another if one could not keep an appointment with even the "stadiest" of sweethearts. The chapter then moved in 1883 to a second story room over the butcher shop. This hall was used until 1886, when the chapter moved to larger and better quarters in the Old



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Sudbury Building. After moving twice more, the chapter ended up in a bare room on [Kirkwood Avenue](#).

In 1892, a five-room hall was furnished by John A. Hunter ('82). The chapter then met on Saturday nights and following a formal meeting they played games, wrestled, and boxed in the back rooms. In this room at the turn of the century the first damaging fire occurred at Zeta. It was noted that the payment of cash insurance adjustments gave the treasurer a blacker, more nourished look.

1900-1950

In 1902, Zeta became one of the first fraternities to live together near the University campus in a common house. The house, at the corner of [Kirkwood Avenue](#) and [Dunn Street](#), was rented.

When Dr. Joseph Swain resigned as President of I.U., he offered his house to the University for the sum of \$9,000. This offer was refused and Mrs. Swain, a Kappa Alpha Theta, next sought out the Theta chapter as a likely buyer. It also refused. Then Mrs. Swain, a loyal FIJI girl in her college days, saw to it that Phi Gamma Delta had first option on the property among fraternities. The home was purchased for \$500 in cash and \$500 each year until the interest and principle were paid. Zeta chapter thus became the first fraternity at [Indiana University](#) to own its chapter house. The transaction was formed on June 4, 1902 for a fifty-year tenure, and this established the basis upon which the present corporation is built. The house was on the location where the present house stands---on [Third Street](#), in the southwest corner of the campus.

Life for Zeta continued prosperously in the new house which was called Beechwood, due to the trees which surrounded. Then on the night of February 17, 1910, the most serious catastrophe in the chapter's history struck: a fire



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started in the basement furnace room, completely consuming the old house, original charter, archives, furniture, and of course all personal belongings. One of the few things saved from the fire was the chapter Bible, which today displays scorching where it was seared by flames.

Temporary rented quarters were obtained until the house could be rebuilt. Plans were immediately begun to raise the funds necessary for rebuilding, which were added to the \$6300 received from insurance.

John Hunter volunteered to donate all the Bloomington limestone needed to construct the new \$50,000 house on the old location. There is a story, unsubstantiated but plausible, that Henry Gentry donated the use of elephants from his famed circus to haul the stone from the quarry.

The University was again offered the property to avoid confusion in case of future annexation, but they again refused. After construction was started, however, notice was served on the house corporation that the University wanted to annex the property, and with the help of FIJI governor Thomas Riley Marshall (Wabash 1872), the property was not condemned. The house was completed in 1912.

When World War I came, about 70 Hoosier FIJI's went into the Army. The new Beechwood was then requisitioned by the Army as a barracks and the new hardwood floors were covered with boarding for protection. Because of fuel shortage, no dances were held in 1918 until April.

Indiana's new chapter house was formally dedicated with seven FIJIs in the committee for arrangements. Also, the den was refurnished with red leather furniture. In 1929 Zeta became the first house on campus to voluntarily have a housemother. Seven FIJIs starred in the famous "Jordan River Review" of 1929.



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Once in 1931, when the Betas tried to steal the Norris Dinner pig, Zeta succeeded in fooling them by placing a roast Airedale in its place.

Zeta instituted the chapter house tutor plan in 1933 with Jim Hatfield, a track star, being the first to hold this position. Fraternities all over the country have followed Zeta's institution of the plan. During the summer of 1937 the interior of the house was completely redecorated and renovated, a new recreation room being added at the same time.

Zeta won the coveted Cheney Cup for the first time in 1940-1941. Once again, when World War II came along, Beechwood was emptied of its owners. The Army took over the house and temporary quarters were rented nearby.

Early in 1948, a plan was initiated to remodel and rebuild the house, which was 30 years old, due to the post-war increase in campus population; the present house was not large enough to accommodate all the brothers. At the Norris Pig Dinner of 1950 it was announced that the process of building a new wing would begin on April 2.

1951-1996

After five years of planning and organizing, the new wing finally became a reality. On April 27, 1951, ground was broken for the first step of the new building program. Since that time, a new wing was constructed with a kitchen, dining room, 14 study rooms, three bath and shower rooms, a recreation room, and several large storage rooms. The outside of the house was remodeled by the addition of new storm windows and a sun porch.

Since 1939 Zeta had won or placed in competition for the Cheney Cup and for the Jordan Bowl every year! The year 1956 is one that no Zeta FIJI will ever forget. In that year, the chapter won the Cheney, Jordan, and Beta graduate awards, placed second in the Baker Cup, won campus scholarship, [IU Sing](#), [Little 500](#), and the intramural trophy.



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1967 was another fine year for the Zeta chapter. In that year the chapter once again won the Cheney Cup for its excellence in overall chapter efficiency. Four years later in 1970-1971 excellence was again displayed at Zeta chapter. It was a year that could be rivaled only by the 1956 year. Zeta won the Cheney, Jordan, and Brightman Awards, placed first in campus scholarship, Intramurals, and [IU Sing](#). In addition, chapter won the Beta graduate award, Regatta, and placed fourth in the [Little 500](#).

In 1975, the Zeta capital campaign fund drive was initiated. Over a three-year period \$127,000 was raised to completely rewire the house, add a new roof, replace all of the plumbing, and various other improvements.

In August of 1978, Brother Louis A. ('56) received the highest appointment a Phi Gam can achieve in the International Fraternity. He was elected Archon President, presiding over the entire Phi Gamma Delta fraternity system. This was indeed an honor for Zeta chapter. Also that year, Zeta was recognized for achieving two accomplishments. First, the all-campus intramural trophy was retired at Zeta, because the Phi Gams had won the trophy for an unprecedented four years in a row. Secondly, Zeta chapter was recognized by the International Fraternity for achieving a superior academic achievement record for 19 years in a row.

The 1986-87 year was one of the greatest in Zeta's history. During the course of the year, the chapter won the intramural trophy, the scholarship trophy (both semesters), the Interfraternity Council's Outstanding Greek Chapter Award, the [Little 500](#), and the Beta Graduate Cup for the outstanding chapter in all of Indiana. The 20th FIJI Academy rounded the year out for Zeta when they won the Brightman Trophy and Cheney Cup. Furthermore, former chapter president Andy Detherage ('87) won the Wilkinson Award for the most outstanding senior Phi Gam in the nation.



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In addition, in that same year the graduate brothers recognized the undergraduates' successes and efforts by putting together a \$1.5 million renovation project for the chapter house. This project began in the summer of '87, and many hard hours were volunteered by graduated brothers to bring the \$750,000 Phase I to completion. The climax of this effort came on October 24, 1987, with a formal dedication of the Phase I project. House Corporation members George Ginn '57, Bill Miller '62, Chapter President Greg Moore '88, and Executive Director Emeritus Bill Zerman (Michigan '49) spoke at the ceremony, and afterwards the ribbon was cut to the chapter's new formal living room. This renovation is a lasting testament to the positive graduate and undergraduate relationship, which exist at Zeta.

The 87-88 year was another banner year for the fraternity. Zeta continued its excellence by bringing home the IFC's most outstanding chapter award and for the first time in Zeta's history won the Cheney Cup back-to-back. Also, at the 1988 Eklesia, David G. Elmore ('55) became the second Zeta graduate to be elected Archon President. In the summer of '88, Phase II of the most recent renovation was completed adding expanded dining facilities and a modern kitchen. At the Pig Dinner in 1989 Brother Elmore announced that he was offering a \$50,000 donation for the new dining room with the stipulation that the other graduate brothers matched his donation. Brother Elmore gave the money in memory of his mother and all other FIJI moms.

In the '94-'95 year Zeta historian Andrew S. Hipskind ('95) was awarded the Wilkinson Award for the most outstanding senior Phi Gam in the nation. Zeta also won its sixth Little 500 championship and took over first place in the all time point's standings for the race. Zeta celebrated their 125th Anniversary in '96. They also captured the Intramural Sports trophy for the sixteenth straight year and finished above the all men's fraternity average for the 38th consecutive semester. The Zeta chapter continued its tradition of excellence by



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retaining the Intramural Sports trophy and the bragging rights of being number 1 in grades in the '96-'97 year. These are two feats that will never be matched but continued. '97-'98 was another banner year for Zeta as they retained the Intramural Sports trophy and won a sweeping victory at [IU Sing](#).