



SPEAKER 1:

Good afternoon.

Once a year, Kadelpians have the opportunity to celebrate Founders Day—to reflect on the rich legacy of the Society, to highlight recent accomplishments, and to define our vision for the future.

Kappa Delta Pi was founded at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana on March 8, 1911, but KDP’s story begins well before that date.

University of Illinois Professor of Education Dr. William Chandler Bagley wanted to organize a club with the purpose of raising teaching standards. He wanted to give students an opportunity for fellowship and an outlet to debate and study educational issues. He and a group of four of his students, including Truman Lee Kelley and Thomas E. Musselman, founded the Illinois Education Club at the University of Illinois in 1909.

Bagley tasked this first group of students with developing a constitution and standards for membership. He gave Musselman 18 more names, nine men and nine women, to invite into the club.

It was their hope to form an association with another undergraduate honor society in education, Pi Kappa Mu, a group that later merged with a graduate student honor society, to become Phi Delta Kappa.

Since Phi Delta Kappa limited its membership to men, the leaders of the Education Club decided against forming a united organization because they felt strongly that women should be included.

So, they created their own national organization that would be inclusive to all and support both undergraduate and graduate students pursuing teaching as a profession. It would be called Kappa Delta Pi.



KAPPA DELTA PI

INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY IN EDUCATION

The credit for the Greek letters is attributed to Dr. Bagley. In a letter written by Truman L. Kelley in 1930, he said,

“...’The words ‘knowledge, duty, power,’ in English are fraught with the full meaning of the educational ideal. The letters Kappa, Delta, Pi, are Greek, the most ancient form of language wherein is found a full discussion of the eternal problems of education’ ...these summed up Bagley’s ideal of the functions of the educator. I think it is a mighty fine summary.”

Today we honor these founders—pioneers in the field of education—who exemplify for us a spirit of leadership, integrity, and honor.

SPEAKER 2:

William Chandler Bagley

Dr. William Chandler Bagley, considered the founding father of Kappa Delta Pi, was someone you remembered. He was a small, spirited man with a good sense of humor who was admired and respected by all of his students. Most of them, when asked, particularly remembered his eyes, which were described as “brown, snappy, sparkling, and gay—they reflected the beauty of a life of service, toil, and fidelity to his fellow men.”

Each student felt they were someone special to Dr. Bagley, and that’s what set him apart: his sensitivity to their hopes and aspirations. Charter member Pauline Kleinbeck Blank said, “I can’t remember anything special about the meetings, but what I can remember a great deal about is its guiding spirit, William Chandler Bagley. To my way of thinking he was the perfect professor—capable, warm, and personally interested in every student, to the extent that he inspired in every prospective teacher a desire to bring out the best in every pupil he would be teaching. That spirit, together with his great intellectual ability, made him not only a great professor but a wonderful man.”



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SPEAKER 3:

Dr. Truman L. Kelley

Truman L. Kelley was a senior at the University of Illinois when he founded the Education Club with Dr. Bagley. He was elected as the first president and called the first meeting, which he recalled:

“All of the students approached were suggested by Dr. Bagley. These students were men and women in about equal numbers...This presidency was a tough position, for we had no precedents, no clearly defined purposes, no constitution and bylaws, no conditions for membership, and of course, no money.”

Kelley is credited with the beehive design on the Kappa Delta Pi emblem. He said that in order to be a good teacher, one must be like a bee, working tirelessly for the “common weal.”

SPEAKER 4:

Dr. Thomas Edgar Musselman

Thomas E. Musselman was both a great student and athlete at the University of Illinois—a championship tennis and baseball player.

When Kelley left the university from 1909-10 to teach mathematics at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Musselman took over as president of the Education Club. He was instrumental in its growth.

He is credited by Kelley as the “genius” behind much of Kappa Delta Pi’s first ritual and his influence extended to the modifications of the ritual and constitution through the years.



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Throughout the years, Kappa Delta Pi has grown considerably, now with an initiated membership that exceeds 1.2 million. Nearly 40,000 active members participate in collegiate and professional chapters.

Throughout its growth and various changes that the last century has brought, KDP has remained true to its mission of honoring the achievements of educators and promoting excellence in education. Our Society is guided by three values or principles for the benefit of humanity: scholarship, leadership, and service.

Thank you for being a part of this very special Founders Day. May we work tirelessly in the years to come to create a future for Kappa Delta Pi that is truly worthy of the magnificent legacy that we celebrate today.