



# A-TAU OBSERVER

ALPHA TAU OMEGA • UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN • FALL 2012

## Gamma Theta Continues to Improve, Receives True Merit Once Again *Collegians and Alumni Credited for Turning Chapter Around*

Gamma Theta is once again a True Merit chapter, receiving the national fraternity's highest honor at ATΩ Congress in St. Louis this August. In addition, Gamma Theta won two Storm Strap Awards: one given to the chapter and one to former President **Rob Pirnie '09** for overcoming adversity and achieving excellence. The chapter also won ATΩ Excellence Awards in the following categories: recruitment, scholarship, communication, and chapter operations. Lastly, **Sean O'Brien '09** was an at-large recipient of the ATΩ Foundation Undergraduate Scholarship. All in all, Congress couldn't have gone any better for Gamma Theta! **To see the chapter's acceptance speech, the official press release from ATΩ, and photos from the event, visit the ATΩ website at [www.atonebraska.org](http://www.atonebraska.org).**

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank our undergraduate members for the countless hours they've invested in Gamma Theta and for returning our chapter to its rightful place among the best ATΩ chapters in the country. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the current leadership of the house, including President **Joe Dougherty '09**, and past leaders, Rob Pirnie and **Jeff Hansen '09**. As alumni

of ATΩ, we should all take great pride in the success of our chapter over the last two years. As a board, we'd like to thank the key contributions of alumni, especially in the area of recruitment. The last two pledge classes are full of men who would make you proud. The recent class of 25 recruits fits the mold of being true gentlemen, scholars, and athletes.

With these exciting gains at Gamma Theta, the board recognizes that now is the time to analyze the long-term needs of our chapter. We are in the preliminary planning stages of identifying the needs of our chapter house, including facility and house space, systems and physical deficiencies, as well as looking at alternative solutions. We are studying the needs of our active and alumni members with the intent of keeping Gamma Theta competitive with other top Greek housing on campus, while providing a safe and desirable environment for our undergraduate brothers.

As you can see, Gamma Theta is back on track and running at a high level. A lot of hard work has gone into rebuilding the membership with high-quality, young men. Strong alumni support



*Jacob Widick '11, Sean Wade '11, Wade Reigle '11, Joe Dougherty '09, Kaleb Huefle '11, Nate Mattison '09, and Shane Forney '09 proudly display the seven awards Gamma Theta won at ATΩ Congress this summer.*

equates to a strong chapter. We look forward to what the future holds for Gamma Theta and to your involvement in that process. If you want to get more involved with the chapter, please send us an e-mail at [atonebraska@gmail.com](mailto:atonebraska@gmail.com).

Love and Respect,  
**Jon Sevenker '95**  
ATΩ Board of Trustees

## MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE CELEBRATE WITH ATΩ DURING ANNUAL ALUMNI TAILGATE



*Alumni and friends gather at the ATΩ chapter house during Homecoming.*

Gamma Theta held its annual alumni tailgate at the chapter house on Saturday, September 29, before the Nebraska-Wisconsin Homecoming football game. We had a great turnout, with more than 100 people stopping by the house to enjoy great food, camaraderie, and a beverage or two. We were pleased to have alumni representatives present from every decade between 1950 and 2000.

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank our new housemother, Cheryl, for playing a big role in encouraging our undergraduate brothers to take pride in how the chapter house looks inside and out. Numerous alumni commented on how great it looks.

Partnered with Chi Omega and Pi Kappa Alpha, our undergraduate brothers built a Homecoming display that made all of our alumni proud. As a payoff for their hard work, they were awarded first place for best lawn display. It was apparent that ATΩ had the best display, as judged by the number of people stopping, looking, and taking photos. Be sure to check out the ATΩ website at [www.atonebraska.org](http://www.atonebraska.org) for photos of the Homecoming display, as well as the tailgate event.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# ANNUAL ALUMNI TAILGATE

*(Continued from page 1)*

A special thanks goes to all the alumni who stopped by the house. Thank you to **Norm Fanning '97** of 100 Brand Beef in Wauneta, Nebraska, for donating the beef for the event. Also, thank you to Bruss Brothers for donating the brats. Finally, we'd like to thank the hard work of several undergraduates, including President **Joe Dougherty '09**, **Shane Forney '09**, and **Nate Mattison '09**. We look forward to another great tailgate next year and hope you'll join us.

L&R,  
**Jon Sevenker '95**  
**Tom Luebke '99**  
 ATΩ Board Members



*ATΩ partnered with Chi Omega and Pi Kappa Alpha to win first place for their lawn display, Once Upon a Homecoming.*



*The lawn display, which featured mythical creatures and elements from Cinderella, was admired by many onlookers who stopped to snap photos.*

## STAY CONNECTED

Alumni, make sure you're receiving updated news, event details, and important chapter communications via e-mail. Send your updated e-mail address to the board at [atonebraska@gmail.com](mailto:atonebraska@gmail.com).

## Alumnus Believes in Work Hard, Play Hard Philosophy Q&A with Rob Mitchell '77



*Mike Hupp '77, Brad Tolstedt '77, Rob Mitchell '77, and Jim Alexander '79 enjoy a day on the greens during their golf trip to Ireland.*

Valentino's pizza on Sunday nights, sneaking into the Tube Room to watch Charlie's Angels during study hours, and the Stooge Room. There are so many more. Oh, and the library. I liked the library a lot.

**Q: If you could change anything about your undergraduate experience, what would it be?**

**A:** I honestly don't think I would change much of anything. Perhaps organized a grassroots political effort to eliminate mystery meat from the dinner menu rotation? Also, I think I missed a get-together once for some stupid reason. I shouldn't have let that happen.

**Q: What degree did you earn and what year did you graduate?**

**A:** I earned my bachelor's degree in business administration in 1980 and my master's degree in 1982. My mother was pleased and mildly surprised.

**Q: What did you do after college?**

**A:** I went to work as a tax accountant. I had about \$12 and student loans to pay off, so it was time to work. I'm a tax partner at Deloitte, a company that specializes in audit, financial advisory, risk management, consulting, and tax services. I've been here for 30 years.

**Q: What advice can you share with undergraduate members?**

**A:** First, make the best friends of your life. Second, have a blast. Third, do not forget that school is the main reason you are there. If you do forget, you will sacrifice the first two.

*Rob and his wife, Rondi, who serves as treasurer of the Parents' Club, reside in Omaha, Nebraska. They have two children: Nick '11 is a Gamma Theta at UNL and Morgan is a junior in high school. In his free time, Rob enjoys traveling, golfing, and listening to live music. "I like it best when I can combine all three!" He can be reached at [romitchell@deloitte.com](mailto:romitchell@deloitte.com).*

**Q: What influence did Gamma Theta have on your life?**

**A:** Well I met the best friends of my life when I was there and that is a big influence for sure. Most of the lessons I learned were about interacting with others. Even though most or all of us were from Nebraska, there were a lot of unique personalities and different backgrounds. You learned to respect everyone, even if you didn't always agree with them. Also, we lived with a strong work hard, play hard frame of mind, as established by the upperclassmen at the time. We all had fun, a ton of fun. But we also focused on class and were expected to do well in school. There were a few bumps in the road here and there, but generally all of us turned out to be successful in life; some of my brothers spectacularly so.

**Q: What are some of your favorite memories from your undergraduate years?**

**A:** I could write a book, as could most of the guys that were around back then. Some of my favorites: pledge sneak, going to The Rail on Thursdays, Western Nebraska Awareness Night, the Fiji-Tau Tussle, flag football, Little Sister parties, Big Red football, all of the great personalities that lived on Golden Row, playing pitch at all hours, Elk Creeks at Sandy's,



## *Thank You, Alumni, for Your Generosity*

**W**e are truly grateful to the 52 brothers who contributed \$5,725 to Gamma Theta this spring. Thank you—your assistance is vital to our success! Alumni are listed by initiation year under the appropriate giving levels. If an error has been made in recording your gift, or your name has been mistakenly omitted or listed improperly, we sincerely apologize. Please contact our campaign coordinator at (785) 843-1661 with any corrections.

**Founders Circle**  
*(\$1,000 and above)*  
 Robert Dudley '79

**Heraldic Cross Club**  
*(\$500 to \$999)*  
 Henry Damkroger '67  
 Donald V. Nix, D.D.S. '72  
 Brad L. Tolstedt '77  
 Kent R. Therkelsen '87  
 Matthew Heyne '90

**Azure & Old Gold Club**  
*(\$250 to \$499)*  
 Daniel Anderson '70  
 Thomas Schueth '83

**1865 Society**  
*(\$186.50 to \$249.99)*  
 Lauren D. Lampert '37  
 Eugene A. Deeter '44

Wayne Garrison '66  
 John A. Harnly '70  
 Michael D. Messman '92

**White Tea Rose Society**  
*(\$100 to \$186.49)*  
 William Taylor  
 Lauren D. Lampert '37  
 William Gayer '43  
 Fred Fuller '44  
 Theodore F. Randolph '46  
 Merle Stalder '47  
 Robert Ebers '54  
 Bert Pyle '54  
 Gerald W. Rounsborg '54  
 Rady A. Johnson '57  
 John C. Kerwin '57  
 Winston Wade '58  
 Gerald Keown '59  
 Robert E. Mundy '59  
 Garrett Smith '73

Bryan Slone '76  
 Jon D. Carlson '77  
 Jeff F. Crist '77  
 Michael Hansen '77  
 Michael Hupp '77  
 Robert J. Mitchell '77  
 Gregg Davidson '79  
 Ward Reesman '83  
 Jerome P. Bonnett Jr. '84  
 Richard Kutilek '84  
 Carter Kokjer '87  
 Daniel Couse '90  
 Eric Schepers '90  
 James R. Barrett '94  
 Scott Wanetka '94  
 Jarred W. Fichtner '95  
 Michael Croom '96  
 Reed L. Anderson '98  
 Joseph Casey '99

**Gamma Theta Supporter**  
*(\$50 to \$99)*  
 Tod J. Smith  
 John Douglass '41  
 William S. Olson '48  
 Harry Spencer '48  
 Paul E. Holm '50  
 Jack Des Enfants '53  
 James F. Panzer, M.D. '59  
 John A. Power '61  
 Howard N. Smith Jr. '61  
 Thomas Milligan '62  
 Michael Schlatter '65  
 Michael Furmanski '68  
 Craig A. Anthony '70  
 John Beshaler '74  
 Mark Buckley '74  
 James Wefso '74  
 Brett Bunney '78  
 Darin Hill '86  
 David Pleiss '86

Bryan Hill '87  
 Jeff Erickson '92  
 Scott Fisher '92  
 Brian Chaney '97  
 Christopher Wangsness '98  
 Jeffrey West '01  
 Todd Spohn '02  
 Brent Taylor '02  
 Victor Ryan '06  
 Colton Nielsen '07  
 Matthew Schafer '07

**Other**  
*(Up to \$49)*  
 Claude Berreckman '52  
 Gary Frenzel '56  
 John Jewett '83  
 Bernard Inbody '92  
 Brian Hendricks '95  
 Jason Steffes '00  
 Matthew Olson '02

## **Officer Position for ATΩ Leads Brother to True Calling in Life Spotlight on Michael Stephens '88**

**W**hen **Michael Stephens '88** reminisces on his undergraduate years, it's hard for him to choose a favorite memory. There are just so many. He loved participating in intramurals with his brothers, watching TV in the Tube Room, munching on Elli burgers on Wednesdays, and attending annual get-togethers like Lobster and Lowenbrau.

Michael was initially drawn to Gamma Theta for its reputation of academic and athletic success. What he gained as a member, though, was so much more. "The lessons I learned revolved around building relationships and having pride in how you represent yourself and your house," he said. "The basics of friendship, communication, trustworthiness, and loyalty were solidified during my four years at ATΩ."



After earning his bachelor's degree in business management from UNL in 1991, Michael went on to earn his master's degree in sports management from Western Illinois University in 1994. After college, Michael worked for the Omaha Royals for eight years before spending two years with the Kansas City Royals as manager of corporate sponsorship sales. In 2002, Michael became director of licensing for the UNL Athletic Department. He later added director of concessions and director of corporate marketing to his title in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

In addition to his previous roles, Michael was named assistant athletic director for UNL in 2009. His job is to lead marketing operations, including game-day promotions, ticket marketing, concessions, the Huskers Authentic Team Store, and the Spirit Squad.

His advice to undergraduates is to "get involved on campus as it will help you find your true interest and calling in life." His year as intramural chairman for ATΩ peaked his interest in sports and played a big role in his decision to pursue a career in the sports industry. He also urges undergraduates to enjoy each day and alumni to reach out to each other and reconnect.

"ATΩ is part of my life every day through memories and friends," he said. "Whether in the same city or spread out across the country, my brothers and I stay in touch. They are my lifelong friends."

Michael and his wife, Lisa, who was an Alpha Phi at UNL, reside in Lincoln, Nebraska, and have two children, Trevor (14) and Andrew (10). Michael enjoys spending time with family at Husker events and watching his children participate in their sporting events. He can be reached at [mstephens@huskers.com](mailto:mstephens@huskers.com).

# Welcome, New Members

**Thomas Christofferson**  
**Dylan DeRoin**  
**Drew Dudley\***  
(Father **Bob Dudley '79**)  
**Pat Dutton\***  
(Brothers **Mark Dutton '08** and **Matt Dutton '09**)  
**Sam Elliott**  
**Cole Ferrell**  
**Brandon Guenther**  
**Austin Hall**  
**Jason Hiemer**  
**Elliot Kanne**  
**Jacob Landolt**  
**Colton Loftus**  
**Connor McDonald**  
**Alex Morsey**  
**Micah Neil**  
**Matt O'Rourke**  
**Mitch Peppmuller**  
**Eli Perrett**  
**Brandon Raatz**  
**Justin Saegabarth**  
**Ben Spektor**  
**Travis Stoltenburg**  
**Kyle Thompson**  
**Alex Underwood**  
**Cody Wesely**

*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Elkhorn, Neb.*  
*Norfolk, Neb.*

*Blair, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Norfolk, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Elkhorn, Neb.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Cozad, Neb.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Valentine, Neb.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Norfolk, Neb.*  
*Sioux Falls, S.D.*  
*Lincoln, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*  
*Elkhorn, Neb.*  
*Omaha, Neb.*

*\*Legacy*



## A-TAU OBSERVER

**Nebraska Gamma Theta  
of Alpha Tau Omega  
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**ATTENTION:** This newsletter is intended for alumni and parents. If your son is still attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 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.

## Gamma Theta Sets Goals to Ensure Success, Plans to Bring Home True Merit Bowl Every Year Chapter Thankful for Amazing Support from Alumni and Friends

Last year was a very successful one for the men of Gamma Theta, and we are excited to be back on campus. At the 80th Alpha Tau Omega Congress this summer in St. Louis, we received seven national awards, including the True Merit Bowl, one of the biggest awards a chapter can receive. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous hard work and dedication of our members; the guidance and support of our amazing Board of Trustees; the behind-the-scenes help from our Parents' Club and house director, Cheryl; and especially the extraordinary alumni support we have received since our return to campus. We wouldn't be as successful as we are today without our strong alumni backing, and we are truly appreciative for all that you have done to show your support for our chapter.

Even though we experienced so much success last year, we are not complacent as a chapter. We feel that there is so much more that we can accomplish, which speaks volumes to the drive and dedication of our members to continuously



*Members enjoyed a day of go-kart racing during a brotherhood event this September.*

improve ourselves. Our goal is to win the True Merit Bowl every single year. To ensure this happens, we plan to increase philanthropy hours and donations by adding a new philanthropic event this spring, increase our overall G.P.A. so that we rank in the top five among fraternities, and encourage more members to apply for campus leadership positions. Overall, with our hard work and the support of our alumni, we are confident we will achieve our goal and eventually win the Top Chapter Award.

We experienced a great fall recruitment, signing 25 new members. We are still looking to recruit a few more this fall and sign five to 10 more this spring. If you know of any men who would uphold the values of ATΩ and make great additions to our chapter, please contact me, our recruitment chairman, or a member of the Board of Trustees. Our new members are halfway through their pledge program and have shown that they are hard-working, determined members who will be great contributors to our chapter.

I would like to, once again, thank all of our amazing alumni for everything you've done for ATΩ. Please stop by the Old Stone Fortress anytime you're in the area. We'd love to meet you.

Love and Respect,  
**Joe Dougherty '09**  
Chapter President  
jdougherty25@huskers.unl.edu