



# A-TAU OBSERVER

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

## Board of Trustees Supports Chapter Achievements, Requests Alumni Participation

### Momentum Continues

The momentum we gained last summer and fall has carried over into 2012. Gamma Theta continues its climb to once again being the top fraternity on campus and one of the strongest ATΩ chapters in the country. This rapid rebound was made possible by the hard work of the undergraduates, especially the executive board and recruitment chairmen, as well as the involvement of our alumni around the state and country. By all accounts, the dedicated men who are in the chapter now are most representative of the guys who made ATΩ great for so many years.

### True Merit Contenders

The 80th Congress will be held at the Hyatt Regency in St. Louis from August 1-4. We mention this because Gamma Theta is once again up for True Merit, something the house corporation hopes will become an annual occurrence moving forward. For more information about Congress, visit the chapter's website at [www.atonebraska.org](http://www.atonebraska.org).

### Recruitment Dates Shortened

We hope to build on our strong 2011 recruitment by enlisting the help of our alumni again this year. The summer recruitment time frame has been compressed because UNL has accelerated the date for breaking a university residence hall contract. Therefore, we'll need to have the recruitment class filled out by the end of June rather than the end of July. If you know someone who would make a great addition to ATΩ, please forward their contact info to [atonebraska@gmail.com](mailto:atonebraska@gmail.com) or to our recruitment chairmen listed on page 2. For more information about recruitment, visit the Rush ATΩ page on the chapter's website.

### Increased Alumni Participation

Strong alumni support has extended to participation in alumni events. Our most recent Founder's Day and Tau Tee Off, held March 31 and April 1 respectively, saw increased alumni participation and we are grateful to all who attended these events. For more on Founder's Day, see the article from **Tom Luebbe '99** on page 4.

### Alumni Board Roles Separated

National Headquarters has requested that all ATΩ chapters have a house corporation separate from the board of trustees. The house corporation will

be in charge of the physical plant and property of Old Stone Fortress and will meet three to four times per year. If you are interested in serving on this board, please e-mail us at [atonebraska@gmail.com](mailto:atonebraska@gmail.com).



*Shane Forney '09, Connor Matthias '10, Zach Hoff '09, and Cord Scheuth participated in Tau Tee Off on April 1.*

### Staying Competitive on Campus

In order to remain competitive with other fraternities and residence halls on campus, ATΩ is exploring several avenues to pursue updates and renovation projects. If you are interested in being involved in the process of planning for the financial and logistical operations of such an endeavor, please let me know.

I know I speak on behalf of the board when I say that we're very excited about the direction of the chapter, the progress that has been made, and the future of the Gamma Theta.

L&R,

**Jon Sevenker '95**

ATΩ Board of Trustees  
[atonebraska@gmail.com](mailto:atonebraska@gmail.com)

## SAVE THE DATE

### SUMMER BARBECUES

Join us on May 30, June 7, June 13, June 21, or June 27 for any of our recruitment barbecues at the chapter house. Contact our recruitment chairmen (listed on page 2) or President **Joe Dougherty '09** at (402) 430-6398 or [jdougherty25@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:jdougherty25@huskers.unl.edu) for more information.

### INITIATION CEREMONY

Join us as we welcome our newest pledge class into ATΩ and the Gamma Theta brotherhood on Sunday, October 28.

### HUSKER FOOTBALL

Reunite with your ATΩ brothers and meet the current undergraduates at the Husker football tailgate this fall at the Old Stone Fortress. Details will be announced soon.

# UNDERGRADUATES CONTINUE TO IMPROVE CHAPTER AND STRIVE FOR GREATNESS

## BACK ON TOP

I think the men of Gamma Theta will agree with me when I say that this semester has flown by. We have kept ourselves busy participating in philanthropy events, recruitment, and alumni and parent events, among many others. I am very proud to say that the active members of Gamma Theta have done an incredible job putting us back on the road to True Merit and returning ATΩ to its rightful place as one of the top fraternities on campus.

## ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

As members of ATΩ, we put a tremendous emphasis on academics as we continuously try to improve our chapter's rankings. In the fall semester, we were in the middle of the fraternity rankings. We knew this was not good enough, and we put it on ourselves this semester to bring our chapter to the top of the fraternity rankings. In order to do this, we initiated a few programs including mandatory study hours for anyone earning below a 3.0 G.P.A. We also started a G.P.A. fantasy draft where the chapter is divided into teams that compete against each other for the best average G.P.A.

## GOLF TOURNAMENT A SUCCESS

On April 1, we hosted our third annual Tau Tee Off, a four-team golf scramble that benefits the TeamMates Mentoring Program in Nebraska. I would like to thank everyone who made this event a great success, including the more than 80 participants who golfed in this year's tournament. I also want to thank those who donated multiple pin prizes and the alumni and friends who sponsored the event by buying a hole. We were pleased to raise more than \$1,500 this year.

## SEVEN MEMBERS INITIATED

Spring recruitment was a huge success. We recruited seven high-quality new members who perfectly represent the high standards of ATΩ. This spring we stressed that it was everyone's obligation as a member of the chapter to act as a recruitment chairman and find the best guys available to become new members.



*Dan Freese '10, Josh Mitten '11, Connor Matthias '10, Nick Mitchell '11, James Van Pelt '11, and Sean Wade '11 volunteer for the UNL Red Cross during a Husker basketball game.*

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I would like to thank all of our amazing alumni for everything you have done to support ATΩ. The last few years have not been easy, but we believe that through our hard work and dedication, we are setting ourselves up to contend for True Merit on a yearly basis. None of this would be possible without your tremendous support. Our hope is to win True Merit this year at Congress, which will be a testament to the hard work we have all put into this chapter as well as your unyielding alumni support. Please feel free to stop by the Old Stone Fortress anytime, meet the new guys, and reminisce about your times here at ATΩ.



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

## Welcome, New Members

**Connor Gibson**

*Blair, Neb.*  
 Blair H.S.

**Cole Lueckenhoff**

*Lincoln, Neb.*  
 Lincoln Southwest  
 H.S.

**Robert Sherrill**

*Lincoln, Neb.*  
 Lincoln Northeast  
 H.S.

**Thomas Kastner**

*Hamel, Minn.*  
 Wayzata H.S.

**Tyler Mancuso**

*Omaha, Neb.*  
 Millard North H.S.

**Jonathan Lainson**

*Hastings, Neb.*  
 Hastings H.S.

**Theodor Okerstrom**

*Plymouth, Minn.*  
 Wayzata H.S.

## RECRUITMENT RECOMMENDATION

Alumni, we value your input in choosing our new members. If you know of an accomplished young man who is attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is interested in Greek life, please contact our recruitment chairmen.

**Nate Green '09**  
 (402) 762-5249  
 nategreen36@gmail.com

**Michael Pfeifer '09**  
 (402) 612-0186  
 mpfeifer3319@yahoo.com

**Brandon Keech '11**  
 (443) 534-5347  
 brandon\_keech@hotmail.com



## Undergraduate Juggles Responsibilities, Learns Valuable Lesson from Experiences

Spotlight on Ted Elliott '09

**R**unning your own mattress business isn't typically a job you think of when coming up with ways to make some extra cash during college, but **Ted Elliott '09** was up for the challenge. He heard about the idea from some friends who attend Texas Tech, met with the dealer who coached him on how the program works, and then started his own branch in Lincoln.



"I buy my mattresses from a wholesaler, store them in a couple of storage units, and then post ads on Craigslist," Ted said. "I sell my mattresses lower than anyone else in town."

As a double major in accounting and finance, Ted not only juggles his tough course load and mattress business, but also his responsibilities as a third-year member of the Gamma Theta executive board.

"I was on the board during the hard years for Gamma Theta, so I had to take on a lot of responsibility, which made me grow up really fast," Ted said. "I learned how to balance being in charge while still being everyone's friend and peer."

Although Ted's experience on the board was a rollercoaster at times, he credits the struggles for bringing him and his brothers closer together. His advice to other members is to "get off to a good start with your grades so you can set the bar high and stay motivated to keep improving. It's easier to stay ahead than to try and climb to the top later."

After graduating this May, Ted plans to work as a summer intern for Deloitte Accounting Firm in Omaha. He then plans to return to Lincoln to get his master's degree in professional accounting. As for his mattress business: "I plan to still run it in graduate school and own it afterward, but let someone else in the fraternity do the selling." Ted can be reached at [telliott@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:telliott@huskers.unl.edu).

## Alpha Tau Omega



## Alumnus Supports ATΩ to Ensure Opportunities for Future Brothers

### Q&A WITH KEN WEST '73

**Q: Why did you decide to join Gamma Theta?**

**A:** I lived in the dorms during my freshman year and then moved off campus my sophomore year with some of the guys I met my freshman year. I was not really enjoying the experience. I always felt like I was missing something. I wanted to be more involved in and be around campus activities. **Don Nix, D.D.S. '72**, who I played freshman basketball with, invited me to the chapter house for a Monday night dinner to meet other guys in the house and to watch the Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier boxing match. It was great to be around a bunch of guys hanging out, laughing, and enjoying each others company. After that visit I knew I wanted to be a part of the Gamma Theta brotherhood. It's what I had been missing. I joined the chapter that next semester.

**Q: What were some of your favorite memories as an undergraduate?**

**A:** I'll never forget our east wing "munging" sessions. Around 10:30 or 11 p.m. many of us who lived on the east wing of the house on the second floor, along with other interested brothers, would get together and talk about current events, sports, political issues, current campus events, etc. We would get into some really interesting conversations and talk until the wee hours of the morning.

**Q: Do you have any family members who are also Alpha Tau Omegas?**

**A:** I have two brother-in-laws, **Vance Jernstrom '74** and **Ross Jernstrom '75**, who are Gamma Thetas, which is actually how I met my wife, Valerie, who was a Tri Delta at UNL. Two of my sons, **Jeff '01** and **Andy '05**, are also Gamma Thetas, as well as my nephew, **Brett West '92**. My father-in-law, **Dr. Roger Jernstrom, South Dakota '49**, was an ATΩ at the University of South Dakota. It's been great to share the ATΩ bond with all of them.

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

**A:** I jumped right into work. After earning my bachelor's degree in architectural studies in 1976, I started working for an architectural firm in Omaha. For the past 31 years I have



worked for DLR Group, one of the top 10 largest architectural/engineering firms in the country. I was the Omaha office leader for 10 years and have been a principal in the firm since 1988. I'm now the Regional Marketing Leader and Corporate and Higher Education Sector Leader for the Central Region of DLR Group, which includes the Omaha, Lincoln, and Des Moines offices.

**Q: What motivated you to get involved with the chapter as an alumnus?**

**A:** A good friend of mine, **Bob O'Neal '71**, who serves as our house corporation president, asked if I would participate. That was 14 or 15 years ago. I said yes, and I've been on the board since then. Both of my sons have been in the house since I've been on the board.

**Q: Why do you think it's important to support Gamma Theta?**

**A:** You should give back to things that had an influence on your life. By supporting Gamma Theta, you are ensuring other young men have the opportunity to experience the same things you did as an undergraduate. It's also a way to stay connected with other brothers, past and present. By getting involved as an alumnus you develop a strong bond and new relationships. Plus, it feels good to give back!

*Ken and his wife have lived in Omaha, Nebraska, since 1975. They are active in various state, community, and city activities. They have three sons, who are each married, and three grandchildren. Ken can be reached at [kwest@DLRGROUP.com](mailto:kwest@DLRGROUP.com).*

## Thank You, Alumni, for Your Generosity

We are truly grateful to the 45 brothers who contributed \$6,155 to Gamma Theta last fall. Thank you—your assistance is vital to our success!

Donors from this fall 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

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

**1865 Society**  
*(\$186.50 to \$249.99)*

**White Tea Rose Society**  
*(\$100 to \$186.49)*  
William Taylor  
Eugene A. Deeter '44  
Robert Ebers '54  
Wayne Garrison '66  
John A. Harnly '70  
Bryan Slone '76  
Jon D. Carlson '77  
Jeff F. Crist '77  
Robert J. Mitchell '77  
Gregg Davidson '79  
Thomas Schueth '83  
Carter Kokjer '87  
Daniel Couse '90  
Michael D. Messman '92  
Jarred W. Fichtner '95  
Michael Croom '96  
Joseph Casey '99

**Gamma Theta Supporter**  
*(\$50 to \$99)*  
Tod J. Smith  
Fred Fuller '44  
Paul E. Holm '50  
Winston Wade '58  
Gerald Keown '59  
John A. Power '61  
Thomas Milligan '62  
Michael Schlatter '65  
Michael Furmanski '68  
James Wefso '74  
Darin Hill '86  
Bryan Hill '87

Scott Fisher '92  
James R. Barrett '94  
Brian Chaney '97  
Reed L. Anderson '98  
Todd Spohn '02  
Brent Taylor '02  
Matthew Schafer '07

**Other**  
*(Up to \$49)*  
Gary Frenzel '56  
Bernard Inbody '92  
Matthew Olson '02



# A-TAU OBSERVER

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of Alpha Tau Omega**  
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**Lincoln, NE 68542**

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## Alumni and Undergraduates Honored at Founder's Day Event March 31

Alpha Tau Omega held its annual Founder's Day event on Saturday, March 31, at Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln. Around 100 brothers came together for the event and made it a great success. Alumni enjoyed the opportunity to meet the active chapter and thank them for all of their hard work over the past couple of years. Twenty-five upperclassmen were honored as the "Refounding Fathers" of Gamma Theta. Their efforts are truly appreciated in righting the ship and building a solid foundation for the chapter going forward.

The tradition of honoring the 25th anniversary pledge class continued, with the 1987 class taking their turn. **Mike Chochon '87, Bryan Hill '87, Blake Dillon '87, Brian Sognefest '87, Mick Ruff '87, Kent Therkelsen '87, Michael Bischof '87, and Bob Frost '87** each shared an important lesson they learned from the chapter and how their ATΩ experience shaped who they are today.



*Brothers from the 1987 pledge class celebrated their 25th anniversary during Founder's Day.*



*For their efforts in rebuilding Gamma Theta, 25 upperclassmen were honored as "Refounding Fathers" during Founder's Day.*

Perhaps the best moment of the night came when **Jeff Erickson '92** and **Mick Messman '92** presented a memorial check to House Corporation President **Bob O'Neal '71** on behalf of their pledge brother, **Willie Leahy '92**, who passed away in 2011. Willie's parents, Dick and Sandy Smith, were recognized during the presentation as well. In attendance from the 1992 pledge class were **Bernie Inbody '92, Wyatt Luenenborg '92, Brett West '92, Mike Bailey '92, Jon Meier '92, Sam Shafer '92, Gregg Uehling '92, George Schlothauer '92, Steve Brewer '92, and Scott Greder '92**. The presentation drew a well-deserved standing ovation from the chapter in honor of Willie, who left us too soon and served as a great example of brotherhood for the current members of Gamma Theta.

A special thanks to **Kelly Hoffschneider '96** for allowing us to use the Hillcrest Country Club. We'd like to thank everyone who attended and hope to see you all back again next year.

L&R,  
**Tom Luebke '99**, Alumni Co-Chairman