

**Phi Alpha Speech  
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August 25, 2006**



Some of you out in the crowd might wonder why it is that distinguished gentlemen in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s stay active in an organization like Zeta Psi. Well, I'd like to tell you what makes fraternities special and why Zeta Psi is special.

First, let's look at fraternities as group of guys living together, meeting together, and socializing together. Heck, you can do that anywhere on campus. But in a fraternity you actually learn how to interact in society. At first that society is the fraternity, then it grows to the Greek system, then the campus. You learn to interact with people, you learn to promote a product and yourself, you learn to lead, you learn to budget, you learn to plan. Basically, you learn how to do the very things you'll be called on to do in life.

Surprisingly these qualities are not taught anywhere else on campus. What class teaches you how to run a meeting? What club allows you to manage a budget? What organization gives you experience in leading 30 or 40 people? Fraternities provide that environment. And what organization could forgive you like a fraternity can? As my friends in Toronto often say "where else can you manage a \$50,000 budget, screw it up, and not lose your job?" Fraternities give you Life Experience.

When you students go looking for a job you're going to have to go through the hiring process. You'll be competing against all those other recent graduates. Remember, your GPA is the most valuable thing you'll take from college – make it something you can be proud of and brag about. But getting a job will take more than a good GPA. You'll need to show "what else you got?"

Just think how nice it's going to be in an interview when you get to brag about the 40 people you managed, or the \$200,000 budget you ran, or the \$20,000 you raised for charity? Most of your competitors can't say that. They'll be blabbering about being floor captain in the dorm or getting a B+ on a group project. Being in a fraternity helps you start ahead of those other students.

If you don't think being in a Greek organization helps you become a leader let me give you some statistics: even though Greeks make up less than 1% of the United States population, 3 of the last 4 Presidents, 130 of 535 legislators, 18 of 50 Governors, and over 100 CEOs of companies in the Forbes 500 are Greeks.

So what about Zeta Psi? Now I'm a big fan of the entire Greek system. But Zeta Psi is special. Think about it.

Let's look at what we are. There are over 1,500 colleges in North America and 800 have Greek systems. Zeta Psi has 50 chapters and colonies. All 50 of those chapters are at colleges in the Top 120 in North America. We're at the Top 8% of all schools in North America. What does that mean? It means that to go to a school with a Zeta Chapter you have to be smarter, more competitive, and more prepared than 92% of the 3,000,000 college bound students each year.

Let's look at who we are. 100% of our membership comes from a pool at the Top 8% of students in college. Of that pool of students about 10% look at fraternities. On a good size campus that might be 400 men. Out of that group Zeta Psi typically selects from the upper half. So, doing the math, if you're a member of Zeta Psi you're in the top 5% of college men in North America. Tell me that's not special.

Here's another thing special about Zeta Psi. When you get back to your campus and are sitting at your first chapter meeting I want you to look around the room. Stop at each guy and look at each face. You'll be looking at your Best Man, your groomsmen, your doctor, your lawyer, your business partners, and your friends. These are the people you'll know for the rest of your life. I can attest to that. My best man, 3 of my groomsmen, 3 ushers, two business partners, my lawyer, and my closest friends are all Zetes.

My time as Phi Alpha is almost up. Though my work with Zeta Psi will continue after I leave office, this is a significant milestone in my life. Tomorrow, after 13 years of service as a board member and then an officer, I'll no longer perform those functions. Throughout my time helping to shape the direction of Zeta Psi I've kept in mind "The vision of Bill Comstock."

"Zeta Psi aims now to furnish a substitute for home life and home training during the formative period of a young man's character, and the result it should achieve, if the home life and home training are rightly carried out, is to turn out into the world self-respecting, original-thinking, self-controlled, purposeful gentlemen."

That's my vision too – "to turn out into the world self-respecting, original-thinking, self-controlled, purposeful gentlemen."

I want to finish by answering the question as to why we distinguished gentlemen still hang around Zeta Psi after all these years. I think it's best be answered by a poem included in an article written by Herb Carlberg, AB '22 in The Circle magazine some 20 years ago. I read this and cut it out thinking I'd use it if I ever had to give a Zeta speech....

The Bridge Builder  
William Dromgoole

An old man, going a lone highway,  
Came at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a Chasm vast, deep and wide;  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.  
"Old man" said a pilgrim near,  
"You are wasting your strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
You will never again pass this way;  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,  
Why build you this bridge at evening tide?"  
The builder lifted his old gray head –  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followeth after me today,  
A youth whose feet must pass this way;  
This chasm that has been but naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim –  
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."

All of us that stay involved in Zeta Psi highly value our experience and want to see others have the opportunity to do the same. Plus, who doesn't like to associate with winners? For 35 years you'd never seen someone walking around in a Texas Longhorn, burnt orange hat, but in the last six months everyone has one? Are they converted Texas Fans? No, they want to associate with a winner. Zeta Psi is a winner. Zeta Psi provides something we seek – a lifelong connection of good friends.

And with coming to an end here I'm reminded of a quote I heard by Oscar Wilde:

"Some people bring joy WHERE ever they go, and some WHEN ever they go." So now I go. Thank you all.