



THE DRAGON'S TALE

FALL 2023

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEBRASKA CHAPTER, THE ALPHA TAU OF BETA THETA PI

CHAPTER PRESIDENT REPORT

Time really does fly. It is hard to accept that I am now in my senior year—my last year living in the Beta house and serving as chapter president. Last semester was a huge success for the chapter, characterized by academic achievements and fond memories. I would be remiss if I did not thank **Mike Wortman '67** and **Mark Antonson '04** for their continued support. Our chapter would not function efficiently without their consistent guidance.

This summer, seven members and I attended the 184th General Convention of Beta Theta Pi in Dallas, TX. We voted on the official ritual and bylaws, attended leadership academies, and built friendships with Beta brothers from chapters across the U.S. and Canada. We also received an award for Academic Excellence. (See the separate Scholarship Report.)

Mike Wortman and **Josh Mikus '21** made a “breakout session presentation” about our mentoring program—one that has been adopted by Alpha chapter (Miami University in Oxford, OH). Our chapter has been working with some of their members since last fall, and to honor a request from the General Fraternity, we shared our program with many other chapters. The General Convention also made time for some fun, and a particular highlight was when a “Beta!” chant broke out at our excursion to the Texas Rangers baseball game.

The University of Nebraska-Omaha now has a Beta colony, joining UNL and Creighton as Nebraska members in Beta’s broad domain.

Another group of members joined me in attending our annual Experience Company retreat hosted by **Grant Gregory '60** at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY. Over food, drink, and golf, we spent considerable time discussing the continual growth of the chapter and The Experience Company. (See the separate report from The Experience Company.) We also heard from legendary former Pittsburgh Steelers coach Bill Cowher as he shared insight on lessons he learned on leadership. We are very grateful to Grant for hosting this phenomenal experience.

We had our inaugural Parents’ Weekend on October 20-21. Active members’ parents were invited to a formal event at Pinnacle Bank Arena on the evening of October 20, enjoying each other’s company with music and drink. We reconvened at the chapter house the following morning for a tailgate and our annual Parents’ Auction. Many then headed to Memorial Stadium to watch the Cornhuskers beat the Northwestern Wildcats. We are excited about the opportunities to invite parents into our “Beta lives” and share some of the great things happening at Alpha Tau.

Finally, I would like to thank my executive team for their help during this term. Each has simplified my life by exceptionally fulfilling their positions. From them, I have learned so much about myself: how to lead and get the best out of those you work with. To the rest of the chapter—actives and alumni—it has been an honor serving as your president. Thank you so much for entrusting me with this opportunity. I am so proud to be a Beta.

Yours in __kai__,

Grant Auman '21

president@nebraskabeta.com



CHAPTER COUNSELOR REPORT

The first semester of the 2023-24 school year for the Beta men began with an activity that is now in its ninth year, so maybe it is almost a tradition. Gallup Inc. has developed an assessment that helps determine the strengths of individuals. Gallup has studied the topic based on the results of over 31 million people from all over the world who have taken the assessment. They identified 34 Strength Themes, and from the assessment, the Top 5 for an individual are ranked as the most likely to be used when interacting with others and completing tasks. This fits the vision of StrengthFinder founder Dr. Don Clifton for strength-based organizations to focus on what people do well. *Editor's note: Dr. Clifton, a Nebraska native and UNL graduate, was chairman of Gallup, Inc. from 1988 until his retirement. Upon his death in 2003 in Lincoln, Gallup and the Clifton Foundation donated \$30 million to UNL to create the Don Clifton Strengths Institute.*

Each new member takes an online Strengths assessment at the beginning of their first year. Every individual in the new member class had a coaching session with me early in the school year—a conversation about their Top 5 Clifton Strengths. This began in 2015 when The Experience Company was beginning to implement many of the activities that have become part of the success of our organization—like mentoring and internships. At that time, I was asked to become a Certified Strengths Coach and conduct a coaching session with each new member.

In the time I have been conducting these coaching sessions, I have learned about individual new members and about the group of men who make up the undergraduate chapter. 301 men have taken the StrengthsFinder, and we notice trends. The most common strength is **Competition** (likes to win). The next four are **Achiever** (hard worker who completes tasks), **Futuristic** (visualizes what can be), **Restorative** (problem solver who fixes things), and **Adaptability** (can adjust to people and situations). It is easy to see from being around the chapter that those Top 5 themes fit and describe our chapter.

During our coaching sessions, each member discusses how he uses his Top 5 to be successful academically, how these Strengths help him be a better Beta, how he can grow in his leadership skills, and what this all means as he travels the journey along his career path. It is reassuring to hear how these young men can articulate and share their thoughts about their future. In many cases, they chose Beta because they believed being a member of our chapter gave them the best chance to maximize their Strengths and be successful in their careers. Many members have shared discussions they had with Betas during the recruitment process that were very different than the conversations at other fraternity recruitment events—and was the deciding factor in their decision to join Beta.

Because my number one Strength is **Individualization** (listening to understand each person's story), I have been honored to be able to spend time with these outstanding young men. I have heard their individual stories, their goals, and their hopes for their careers in the future. I also meet with each new member a second time in February, after they have completed one semester of college. In that second meeting (which will be a total of 602 individual meetings), we continue to discuss how they can use their strengths to the fullest advantage as they move along their career path.

I'm glad I'm a Beta, and I'm glad they are all Betas, too.

Yours in __kai__,
Mike Wortman '67

Recruitment Report

Alpha Tau chapter of Beta Theta Pi has enjoyed another highly successful recruitment season. On behalf of our recruitment team of **Nolan Connor '22**, **Joe Sutko '23**, and me, we thank our generous alumni and active chapter for their unmatched assistance and support this past summer. Our recruitment pitch is highly centered around our involved and supportive alumni; your input helps maintain our recruitment pitch's effectiveness.

This fall, we welcomed 39 new members to Alpha Tau chapter. With an impressive average ACT score of 27.5 and a GPA of 3.92, these individuals are poised to elevate further our chapter's reputation for academic excellence and leadership. We are confident they will flourish into the future leaders we envision them to be. These new members are from diverse backgrounds and skills sets and come from six states: Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri. Two new members are involved in the Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management, an interdisciplinary honors program combining business, computer science, and engineering. Four new members are in the Nebraska Business Honors Academy. These efforts would not have been possible without the assistance of Nolan and Joe. Their insights and charisma played a pivotal role in attracting these exceptional individuals to our chapter.

The experience of serving on the recruitment team for the past two summers has been nothing short of extraordinary. The connections and skills acquired during this time will serve me well beyond my college years. I am deeply grateful to the active chapter for electing me as the recruitment chairman, and I will forever cherish these moments.

Yours in __kai__,
Will Henningsen '22
recruitment@nebraskabeta.com

WELCOME

NEW

MEMBERS

Brady Alderson*Kansas City, KS*
Blue Valley High School**Luke Feist***Beatrice, NE*
Beatrice High School**Isaac Lagman***Papillion, NE*
Papillion South High School**Roland "Gus" Parker***Marquette, WI*
Marquette High School**Tyler Alexander***Kansas City, KS*
St. Thomas Academy**Owen Frederick***Papillion, NE*
Papillion South High School**Aiden Makovicka***Woodbury, MN*
East Ridge High School**Cole Payne***Kansas City, KS*
St. Thomas Academy**Ryan Beavers***Belleville, KS*
Belleville High School**Derrien Gatchel***St. Louis, MO*
Parkway West High School**Ty Mandachit***Lincoln, NE*
Lincoln North Star High School**Josh Rohrig****Omaha, NE*
Millard North High School**Will Blatchford***Lincoln, NE*
Pius X High School**Jackson Hain***Elkhorn, NE*
Elkhorn South High School**Ben McCarthy***Omaha, NE*
Creighton Prep**Chase Ruch***Elkhorn, NE*
Elkhorn High School**Joey Born***Chaska, MN*
Chaska High School**Seth Hauserman***Minden, NE*
Minden High School**Jack Miller***Elkhorn, NE*
Elkhorn South High School**Mason Ryan***Omaha, NE*
Skutt Catholic High School**Eamonn Boyle***Chicago, IL*
Marist High School**Jack Healey***Omaha, NE*
Skutt Catholic High School**Jackson Miller***Lincoln, NE*
Lincoln Southwest High School**Trenton Sander***Lincoln, NE*
Lincoln Southwest High School**Tyler Castle***Lincoln, NE*
Pius X High School**Jacob Hyder***Omaha, NE*
Millard North High School**Tobey Moylan***Oconomowoc, WI*
Oconomowoc High School**Lucas Thompson***Papillion, NE*
Papillion South High School**Karter Coleman***Olathe, KS*
Olathe West High School**Caden Kahrer***Woodbury, MN*
East Ridge High School**Ben Nodes****Omaha, NE*
Omaha Central High School**Aden Williams***Omaha, NE*
Millard South High School**Owen Crone***Omaha, NE*
Millard West High School**Fletcher Kelly***Omaha, NE*
Creighton Prep**Andrew Olsen***Lincoln, NE*
Lincoln North Star High School**Nathan Zinnel***Elkhorn, NE*
Elkhorn South High School**Jude Dunwoody***Omaha, NE*
Creighton Prep**Andrew Knobbe***Omaha, NE*
Creighton Prep**Oscar Parizek***Omaha, NE*
Westside High School

*Legacy

NEW MEMBER FAST FACTS

**39**
MEMBERS**2**
LEGACIES**WHERE
NEW MEMBERS
COME FROM**
OUT OF STATE: 12OMAHA METRO: 9
LINCOLN: 6
REST OF NEBRASKA: 12**27.5**
**AVERAGE
ACT SCORE****3.92**
**AVERAGE
GPA**

THE EXPERIENCE COMPANY REPORT



From left: Drew Spadaro '17, Will Henningsen '22, Barrett Mooney '22, Josh Mikus '21, Nolan Connor '22, Jackson Gaulke '22, Bill Cowher, Grant Gregory '60, Grant Auman '21, Will Wooden '23, Grey Friesen '23, and Steve Andersen '60.

In July, several board members of The Experience Company (TEC) traveled to GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY, for our annual retreat. The food and golf were wonderful, but our focus for the three days was planning our continued support for Alpha Tau chapter. To those with a valid email address, our annual report was sent on August 2. The report is also available on the chapter website, and we would strongly encourage you to read about our efforts at nebraskabeta.com/tec.

Much of our discussion centered around the three distinct priorities that contributed to our underlying mission and recent success. The first area of focus included the creation of a platform providing the Alpha Tau recruitment team with a vetted list of high-potential incoming freshmen who are attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This will further enhance our ability to consistently recruit an outstanding new member class, and one incoming freshman from this platform joined Alpha Tau this year.

The second area included the establishment of an internal Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database and digital communications platform. This will enable TEC to effectively support the vast network of alumni, business leaders, parents, active members, and recruits.

Our third key area of focus has been the establishment of six \$1,000 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) scholarships for incoming new members of our chapter. The creation of these scholarships allowed the recruitment team to have another effective resource at their disposal during the latest recruitment season. A highlight of the Parents' Weekend reception included awarding seven \$1,000 scholarships to current new members, thanks in part to The Experience Company. Six new recruitment scholarships---along with the pre-existing Men of Principle scholarship---were introduced this summer to help attract high-potential candidates to the house. The scholarships were awarded to the following (hometowns listed on page 3): **Aden Williams**, (Men of Principle), **Fletcher Kelly**, **Will Blatchford**, **Owen Crone**, **Aiden Makovicka**, **Jacob Hyder**, and **Tyler Alexander**.

The Experience Company is also working on future funding for additional scholarships. We are giving five years' worth of naming rights on future \$1,000 scholarships to alumni or specific pledge classes. Additionally, a plaque will be placed in the chapter house with the individuals or classes that provide donations for these scholarships. This focus, along with the recruitment enhancements, will improve our ability to recruit and develop the highest quality students on campus.

Going forward, our key priorities will include supporting and improving the quality of our existing mentorship and internship programs, capitalizing on our latest recruiting enhancements to further entrench the chapter as the top fraternity on the UNL campus, and increasing engagement with Alpha Tau alumni and parents.

This final priority is perhaps the most crucial of them all. We believe that a fraternity should not be an organization that a person joins for just four years and then quickly dismisses the importance of the fraternity as they enter the work environment. Rather, engagement should be a lifelong foundation and network that supports an individual in all that they do. Likewise, there is significant opportunity and potential in connecting parents of Alpha Tau chapter with alumni, creating opportunities to collaborate both personally and professionally.

Our ninth group of mentors and mentees were matched in September. More than 150 different Alpha Tau alumni have given of their time and talents for our mentor program.

All alumni, actives, and parents who are interested in funding one of the six STEM scholarships can go to our donation page at nebraskabeta.com/support-tec and select the drop-down option "recruitment scholarship." There is an annual funding option in addition to the existing monthly donation option, allowing you to make a recurring gift on either schedule.

Best regards to the Betas and parents who have provided support.

Drew Spadaro '17
President
The Experience Company

Cole Wellman '17
Chairman
The Experience Company



Scholarship Report

In spring 2023, Alpha Tau chapter achieved a cumulative all-house GPA of 3.54, securing the second-highest GPA on the city campus. (The first-semester GPA was 3.57 for the entire chapter.) Our commitment to intellectual excellence is unwavering, and we have recently extended our efforts to emphasize professional growth. At this summer's General Fraternity convention in Dallas, Alpha Tau was presented with a Virginia Tech Award for Academic Excellence.

This semester, as part of our bi-weekly study hours, our first-year students will have the opportunity to participate in an event led by a résumé specialist. This individual will conduct a seminar-style workshop to enhance our freshmen members' job marketability.

This summer, the scholarship team has been working with the new members to improve their initial schedule, as the active chapter has been rating professors and classes internally over the past two semesters. Our desired outcome is to improve the new members' college experience and help build the foundation for future semesters.

This year, we will continue weekly grade checks to help improve new member GPAs. These checks allow the scholarship team to review each new member's grades and goals and enable conversations on improving academically throughout the year. In fall 2022, we found that some new members who fell short in their GPA struggled with mental health issues outside of Beta. In addressing these issues externally, the result will be a healthier new member class and a byproduct of better grades.

Last semester, we had the privilege of electing two outstanding assistant scholarship chairmen, **Ethan Buso '22** and **Will Wooden '23**. I am immensely grateful for their invaluable contributions and dedication to the scholarship team.

Yours in __kai__,
Jackson Gaulke '22

NEW MEMBER EDUCATION REPORT



We are off to a tremendous start of the year as the 2023 new member class has hit the ground running. Will, Nolan, and Joe recruited an exceptionally talented class interested in music, sports media, STEM, and other fields. These young men are energetic, driven, and eager to become the men into which they hoped college would develop them.

As is the case with all first-year college students, they have needed assistance learning to manage time wisely and stay on top of many moving pieces. Their academic performance has been superb to this point, and they are working diligently to keep pace. In terms of academics, they have one collective goal in mind: to beat the outstanding GPA of 3.68 obtained by last year's class.

The two new member education assistants (**Drew Gleason '23** and **Nathan Siy '23**), the scholarship team, and I have implemented fluid strategies for tracking their academic standing as the semester progresses. Such methods include weekly grade checks, a test board, and division of competitive teams of new members, each striving to achieve the highest group GPA. We are determined to drive the academic success of this class and excited to see the results at the end of the semester.

This year, the active chapter implemented a new, unique program into the new member process. UNL has recently begun allowing fraternities to accredit their new member programs. There are six fraternities that include this class in their new member program. Alpha Tau is the latest chapter to take advantage of this opportunity. The class is called an ALEC (Agricultural Leadership Education and Communication) course, and the Beta class is taught by **Pete Allman '76**. Started in the 1970s on east campus for students to learn more about emotional intelligence and leadership, it was so popular that it has now expanded to both campuses and been made available to all students.

For Alpha Tau, every Tuesday night, new members learn about values, goal setting, identity, communication, conflict resolution, diversity, and other dynamics that help create good leaders. After class, new members stay to learn more about Beta songs, lore, and how the class subjects tie into being Men of Principle. This is an excellent opportunity for our new members to earn college credit while doing the work Beta asks of them. We are incredibly grateful to Pete for dedicating his time to teaching the class, and we are excited for many more in the future to participate in this unique program.

We cannot wait for this year's class to experience more of Beta's long-standing traditions, including family pairings, Dynamo, and our Winter Formal. Thus far, they have expressed a strong sense of fulfillment with the opportunities Beta provides, with many of these goals being the reason they were drawn to our chapter during the recruiting process. I am ecstatic to have the opportunity to galvanize their transition to college and thrilled to witness their development as the semester progresses.

Yours in __kai__,
Charlie Lorkovic '22

PHILANTHROPY REPORT

As we started our new school year, Alpha Tau chapter hosted two philanthropies for the fall semester. On September 14, the annual Burger Bash benefiting Lincoln Lighthouse was held. Lighthouse serves Lincoln area at-risk youth through meals, activities, and tutoring. Burger Bash attracts students from all over campus as well as alumni. This year, we set a record with more than \$2,000 raised. I would like to thank **Pete Allman '76** for again allowing us to host this event; it is one of the chapter's favorites.

An exciting new philanthropy was held on November 15. In partnership with Delta Gamma, Beta hosted a Thanksgiving meal with all the traditional trimmings at our chapter house. Proceeds benefit the Lincoln Open Door Mission, an organization that feeds, clothes, and houses people living in poverty. At press time, the amount of our proceeds had not been determined.

Beta continues to strive for excellence through volunteering. This fall semester, Betas will have combined more than 800 community service hours for the Lincoln community. I am proud of the work the chapter has done to give back to our city, and we look forward to our continued efforts. If you would like to support one of our events, please email me at philanthropy@nebraskabeta.com. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Yours in __kai__,
Burke Keane '22



Active members enjoy our new outdoor patio furniture.



The new chairs are a fantastic addition to the patio.

Beta Parent Alliance

The Beta Parent Alliance continues its tradition of holding our annual silent auction fundraiser with the goal of raising funds to purchase items for the house. In the past, we raised funds for a refurbished piano, living room furniture, new dining room chairs, and a big-screen television to make the chapter house a home.

This year, the parents decided to replace the outdoor patio furniture at the chapter house. While the silent auction was successful, the purchase of the furniture would not have been possible without the additional generous support of \$2,800 provided by several Beta alumni. The furniture is heavy and highly durable. It includes Adirondack-style chairs, an outdoor dining table with four chairs, and end tables.

In addition to purchasing the new patio furniture, the Parent Alliance repaired and repainted the existing outdoor benches in "Beta Blue." All the new furniture was used during summer recruitment when patio barbecues were held on Thursday nights.

This fall, the chapter hosted a formal dinner for parents on October 20. The following day, the parents held our traditional silent auction. We raised over \$8,000 that will be able to be used for improvements not yet identified. Parents will be decorating the house for the holidays on November 26 and hosting a formal on December 1.

Due to printing deadlines, we were not able to ask for items to donate to the annual silent auction, but alumni might keep that in mind for next year. If you have questions, you are welcome to contact the Parent Alliance leaders at any time: Theresa Keane at teachykeane@gmail.com or Dorothy Endacott at dorothyendacott@gmail.com.

Dorothy Endacott
Beta Parent Alliance

Social Report

This semester, members of Beta Theta Pi have been busy with academics, campus, and community involvements—and social events.

On September 1, we had our first semi-formal modeled after Michael Reubin's White Party. It was great seeing everyone in the same building after the summer, and the members enjoyed a fun and safe formal with their dates. On October 6, we had our annual Dynamo formal with a group of our members performing a concert.

We returned to Chicago on November 3-5, and enjoyed an out-of-town formal as we begin to wrap up the fall semester. We will be ending the semester on December 1 with our Winter Formal to be joined by Kappa Alpha Theta and Delta Gamma.

Our assistant social chairmen, **Grey Friesen '23** and **Will Peterson '23**, have been working on organizing Nebraska Student Union tailgates, setting up sober socials for the new member class, and assisting with the formal schedule. Social events often leave us with lasting memories that stand the test of time, and we eagerly anticipate the exciting moments that the rest of the fall semester brings.

Yours in __kai__,
Conner Gokie '22



WHAT MAKES NEBRASKA TICK

*John "Stokes" McCollister '67
Talks Brotherhood
and Public Service*

As a moderate Republican, **John "Stokes" McCollister '67** appreciates the unique nature of the Nebraska Legislature, also known as the "Unicameral."

"When I would go to national conferences and describe our nonpartisan, one-house legislature with no caucus system, all the other legislators I talked to were envious," the former two-term state senator said. No such setup exists in the U.S. Congress or other 49 state legislatures, all of which are bicameral (two-house) systems.

With only 49 members in the entire state Legislature, John found it much easier to build relationships with his colleagues compared to larger, partisan governing bodies. In that sense, it's not unlike his college years with Beta Theta Pi.

FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

John joined Beta as a freshman alongside his high school friends, thanks in part to then-recruitment chairman **Steve Hutchins '64**, who is still a great friend today. "Just like now, the men Beta pledged were high-quality folks—men of character," he said. "Being around those kinds of people was a good experience and made you want to excel in the things you did."

Alpha Tau held many social functions with Delta Gamma, which introduced John to his wife of 52 years. John is also grateful to the many alumni who are involved with the chapter. "I think it's one of the best chapters in the fraternity, and the awards we have received are testament to that."

GETTING THINGS DONE

The transition to a unicameral legislature took place in the 1930s, inspired by U.S. Senator from Nebraska George Norris's trip to Australia

(where the state of Queensland had a similar system). Although most of the state senators have a personal party affiliation, the Legislature is officially nonpartisan and limits members to two consecutive four-year terms. (John recently finished his second term due to term limits, and left office in January 2023.)

Another unique legislative function: with no majority/minority leaders blocking certain legislation, every bill gets a hearing. "In most states, one of the two parties runs the show—not so in Nebraska," John said.

John passed several major bills in his eight years as a state senator for Omaha, including a renewable energy bill that's resulted in over \$3 billion in renewable energy investments for the state, as well as a DACA driver's license bill, which enabled over 3,000 Dreamers to drive in the state. Prior to that, he helped run the family business, McCollister and Co., for 35 years. He also served five terms on the board of the Metropolitan Utilities District, which provides gas and water to the Omaha area.

DOING GOOD WORK

Having left office, John looks forward to volunteering and spending time with family. He's currently volunteering in development with Together, the Omaha food pantry. John has served as a mentor in Alpha Tau's mentor program, and mentored other young Betas interested in government throughout his career. "I hope my mentees have enjoyed the Beta association as much as I have."

John lives in Omaha and has a younger brother (**Steve '68**), a nephew, and an uncle that are also Betas. He can be reached at mccollister.john@gmail.com.

ALUMNI NEWS

Tom Chambers '62 continues to be involved in marathon running. See the fall 2018 issue of *The Dragon's Tale*. nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202018%20Fall.pdf.

This past Independence Day, Tom ran "four miles on the fourth of July" in a Denver-area race. His time of 45 minutes and one second was a race record, and it resulted in a first-place finish for his age group of 80-plus-year-old men. Tom ("Chili") has now completed 850 races, including 65 triathlons. Chili is a retired State Farm Insurance agent in the Denver area and can be reached at tschambers582@msn.com.



Spring Day 1965: In the spring issue, the Nebraska alumni magazine included this picture, but with a desire for more information. The magazine thought this picture was from 1974, but after feedback from **Bob Keim '65** and **Bruce McKeag '65**, it was determined that the picture was from Spring Day 1965, on the ag (east) campus. Appearing in the picture were Bruce (with the dragon sweatshirt on the left side of the picture), Bob with the plaid shirt on Bruce's right, and fellow pledge brother **Tom Formanack '65** on Bruce's left (shorts and white shirt). Bob may be reached at keimfinance@gmail.com, Tom at tjformanack@gmail.com, and Bruce at bm93558@windstream.net.



Bob, Bruce, and Tom watch the tug of war on Spring Day 1965.

Doug Anderson '67 has been an active competitor in state, regional, and national masters track and field meets since retiring in 2014. Doug enjoyed a nearly four-decade academic career, including 20 years at Arizona State University and 15 years at Penn State, where he served as dean of the College of Communications and professor of journalism.

In July, Doug earned a bronze medal in the pentathlon (75-79 age division) at USA Track and Field's national master's championships at North Carolina A&T. His soundbite: "You want to be at the 'young' end of master's track and field divisions, just the opposite of Little League baseball." He completed the combined-events trifecta in 2018 (70-74 age division) by earning fifth place in the national indoor heptathlon, fourth in the national outdoor pentathlon, and sixth in the national outdoor decathlon at Grass Valley, CA, where his Beta pledge father,

Steve Hutchins '64, provided two days of nonstop encouragement and support. Doug and Steve's friendship extends back to 1963. Doug, when he is not running around the United States, may be reached at daa7@psu.edu.

David K. Karnes '68 was selected for inclusion into the Omaha Business Hall of Fame in August 2023. Dave passed away in October 2020, and his full obituary can be found on page 4 of the spring 2021 issue of *The Dragon's Tale*: nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202021%20Spring.pdf.

Dave continues to be recognized for his contributions to Omaha and the State of Nebraska.

Bryan Tuma '74 was, for 32 years, an employee of the Nebraska State Patrol. He was the superintendent of the patrol for six years before he retired. After a short period of retirement, Bryan was appointed as the Assistant Director for the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. Bryan was very involved during the Nebraska flooding in 2019. He retired for a second time from public service—but was recently appointed by Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen to be the new executive director of the state's Crime Commission. When contacted, Bryan said, "This one came out of the clear blue. I did not expect this and I was not soliciting for the position. Like most state agencies we have a lot of issues to address, staffing is challenging, and the diversity of issues spreads resources thin. But those are the issues, and I look forward to engaging in the efforts." Bryan was chapter president his senior year and can be reached at bjt422@gmail.com

(Editor's note: when I reached out to Bryan for this article, he responded with the following comments. They are worth sharing.)

"For the first time in more than 40 years of state service, I am now working in downtown Lincoln. I frequently take the time over lunch to walk to the Student Union and past the Beta house. Man, the memories every time I walk by there. I always think about how Beta impacted my life. The Greek system gets a bad rap and people seem to look for opportunities to cast it in a negative light. Mistakes get made, and a few bad examples make it more difficult for the other members. That is to be expected, and similar situations can occur in student housing or other areas of the University setting. Those who want to bash it never take the time to identify Greek members who benefited from the structure and discipline with academics, the opportunity to learn socialization skills, mentoring, networking, support, and most of all friendship."

Lighthouse: *The Dragon's Tale* has had several stories about Lighthouse, a Lincoln after-school program for teens who are at risk for many unhealthy behaviors. Alpha Tau chapter spends many hours each semester volunteering at Lighthouse, which was founded by **Pete Allman '76**, Pete's wife (Maureen), and James Perry. In May, the *Lincoln Journal Star* newspaper published a story with the headline: *She found a home at the Lighthouse, and now she has a full ride to Notre Dame.*

The article tells the story of Jenifer Guadalupe Solano Becerra, an immigrant from Mexico, and the support she received from Lighthouse. Congrats (again) to Pete and the Lighthouse staff for all they give to Lincoln. Pete may be reached at peter.allman@doane.edu.

SEE WHAT YOUR BROTHERS ARE UP TO!

Jay Seiboldt '78 retired as Chief Operating Officer of Farm Bureau Financial Services on August 1. Jay spent almost 42 years in the property and casualty industry and shared it has been a great career with a great company. He started with Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Nebraska as a field adjuster, and through the years worked in claims, underwriting, research and development, sales, and finally as the COO for the company.

Jay said it is time to travel, spend time with family, and look for new adventures. "If anyone wonders if the property and casualty industry is a great place to work, I would give an emphatic yes. Enjoy the ride and keep the faith."

Jay's father, **William Jr. '42**, was an Alpha Tau Beta, as well as Jay's two sons, **Tyler '05** and **Grant '09**. Jay's younger brother, **Eric '86**, rounds out the family contributions to Alpha Tau. Jay may be reached at jwseiboldt@gmail.com.

Chris Stokes '89 a Boeing 787 Dreamliner pilot for United Airlines and an Air Force combat veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, was elected to the Lincoln Airport Authority Board in May 2023. Chris' primary focus is to bring more major airlines to Lincoln, the nation's 72nd largest city. Chris was the top vote-getter in the spring city election, and in his first attempt at an elected office, he received over 7,000 votes more than his nearest competitor.

Chris has also been featured in several stories in *The Dragon's Tale*. The most recent was last fall's issue: nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202022%20Fall.pdf. Chris, when not flying or working for the Lincoln Airport Authority, may be reached at cbstokes1@gmail.com.

Scott Baird, Yale '90 and roll number 2731, in the same Lincoln election as Chris Stokes (above), saw his wife, Leirion Gaylor Baird, win reelection as Lincoln's mayor for the second time. Scott and his older brother, **Todd '88**, are the sons of **Sam Baird '63**.

Tony Bock '98 has worked in production and writing for several national organizations since his UNL graduation. The *Late Show with David Letterman*, CBS News, the ABC television network, and the Discovery, History, and A&E channels are included. Tony has also performed stand-up comedy from coast to coast and been the opening act for many headliners, including Larry the Cable Guy. An Omaha native, he was an early UBER employee, launching and managing marketing and operations for the ride service in Omaha, Lincoln, and western Iowa.

Tony has launched Omaha's first and only daily morning podcast and newsletter, called OMAPOD (free subscription with email at omapod.com). The podcast link and all streaming platforms are provided in the newsletter. Tony's podcast centers on relevant, impactful conversations with community leaders and ordinary folks doing uncommon things and telling unforgettable stories. The newsletter features other links to start your day smarter—a brief, curated collection of the best from all local media and the events you must know about.

Do you have a good Omaha-related story looking for an outlet? Contact Tony at tony@omapod.com.

Cheney Neesen '10 has returned to his hometown of Lincoln from Denver. For almost two years, Cheney, who is a CPA, was in management with a Denver accounting firm. Since January, he has been the chief financial officer for GridCon, a construction company working with concrete support for the electrical industry. Cheney has been involved in our mentor program and can be contacted at cheney@gridconamerica.net.

Alan Davis '16 graduated with an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. He has also started a new position as Senior Associate at McCarthy Capital in Omaha. Alan is on the board of The Experience Company (serving as treasurer) and is a mentor in Alpha Tau's mentor program. Alan can be reached at aeudavis2@gmail.com.

Jesse Rood '16 was featured in the Alumni News section of *The Beta Theta Pi* magazine this past spring. When Jesse was an undergraduate, he had an interest in being a firefighter, and had some meetings with a captain for Lincoln Fire and Rescue that were arranged through our mentor program. Jesse has served the Air Guard Fire Department in Lincoln for the last three years.

Jesse won the World Record for axe throwing in the Nebraska State Games of last year. His 89-foot throw shattered the previous record of 70 feet. Jesse can be reached at jesse.rood25@gmail.com.

Luke Johnson '17 is now a Senior Risk Analyst for Ameriprise Financial Services in Minneapolis, MN. Since his UNL graduation, Luke has worked for several financial institutions—the last several in the Minneapolis area. Luke can be reached at ljohnson97@hotmail.com.

Jack Russell '19 is currently enrolled in the University of Nebraska College of Law. Jack plans to graduate in May 2025, with the goal of pursuing a career doing government relations/lobbying, most likely in Lincoln. Jack clerked this past summer for Kissel, Kohout, ES Associates LLC (a lobbying firm based in Lincoln) and plans to continue to work there through the upcoming school year. Jack can be reached at jackrussell540@gmail.com.

Sam Rice '20 is a spring UNL graduate. A year ago, Sam (the former communications chairman for our chapter) worked for the Los Angeles Clippers. Sam has plenty of exposure to videography and turned down an offer with the Clippers to remain in his hometown of Lincoln. Sam accepted a creative media specialist position in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Athletic Department. He will remain as a freelance videographer and Digital Media Specialist. (*Editor's note: having worked with Sam, he has a great work ethic, and we wish him the very best success in his new venture.*) Sam can be reached at samwrice22@gmail.com.

Our Mystic Shrine

John C. Dean '43 entered Our Mystic Shrine in Glenwood, IA, on May 26, 2023. He is AT 695. John was raised in Glenwood and worked summers at the Glenwood State Bank. John enlisted in the Army after high school graduation and when he turned age 18. He went to officer candidate school and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Infantry. He served in Europe to coordinate the deployment of war dogs back to the United States. He was discharged from the Army in 1946 and started college at UNL. He graduated in three years and then enrolled at the University of Nebraska School of Law in 1949. After one year of law school, John was recalled to the service during the Korean Conflict and was stationed at Ft. Riley, KS, as commanding officer of the Scout Dog Training Center. He was released from the Army in 1952, graduated from law school in 1953, and ultimately returned home to Glenwood to work beside his father at the Glenwood State Bank.

John was very active in his community and state and national organizations. He continued to work at the bank until his passing. He testified before the U.S. Congress on banking issues and was invited to Russia to discuss agricultural law to help modernize their farming practices. He made hunting trips to South Dakota in his 80s and reluctantly gave up horse training at age 90. John supported Alpha Tau's capital campaign to renovate our chapter house. In 2015, John and pledge brother J. P. Cullen (from Wisconsin) made a trip to Lincoln for a tour of the remodeled chapter house. **Jim Hewitt '53** was in school after John and described himself as an "avid listener of John's when he talked about law school and the military." Jim said he "appreciated John's wisdom, and I would like to let people know what a fine Beta he was." John was also well-known to **Grant Gregory '60** who noted that John "was my mentor as a young boy. He recruited me to Beta and came to my initiation ceremony at Alpha Tau. He was a great patriot...and we were the closest friends for life."

John is survived by his wife, Carol, and a daughter, two sons, and a son-in-law among other relatives. One son is **Grant Dean '83**, a Tau Sigma (Iowa State) Beta. (The other son is Jeff Dean, who went to college in Wyoming and lost his way as a Sigma Nu.)

William T. Greer '48 entered Our Mystic Shrine on September 7, 2022. He is AT 787. Shortly after Bill's birth, the family moved from Omaha, NE, to Falls City, NE. Bill and a younger brother attended UNL on ROTC scholarships, and Bill earned his degree in Chemical Engineering in 1951. Bill met Kathryn Graybill when both were undergraduates (Kathy said she was the only woman he ever dated), and they married in Lincoln in 1953. Bill was accepted at the University of Nebraska College of Dentistry in 1951 and graduated in 1955. After serving his military commitment, Bill and Kathy moved to Colorado Springs, CO, in 1958.

The couple had four children, and swimming dominated their time. (Bill was a swimmer at Lincoln High.) Their children took lessons through the YMCA swimming program, and Bill and another person helped kick this off the ground. Bill became a coach, and the growth

of the program drove the formation of the Colorado Springs Swim Team (CSST). By this time, Bill's dental practice was thriving. Through patient contacts, he pushed for the funding and construction of Colorado Springs' first municipal swimming pool. This became the center of CSST's program. This broadened Bill's network of swimming relationships, and Bill became certified to referee college swim meets. In 1968, the Olympics were held in Mexico City. Colorado Springs was selected for its altitude to be the home training base for all sports in preparation for the Mexico City Olympics. With Bill's referee credentials, he was selected to referee the swim qualification meets. Bill's passion for education was in his family's DNA and led to his election to the board of education.

To honor his mother's distinguished career in education, which included being elected as the first female school superintendent of the State of Nebraska and establishing the U.S. Department of Education under President Carter, Bill endowed the Dr. Edith S. Greer Distinguished Chair in the College of Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in fall 1991. Bill was president of the Colorado Springs Dental Society from 1969 to 1970.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Kathy, and four children.

Charles Loring "Andy" Smith '53 entered Our Mystic Shrine in Tampa, FL, on June 1, 2023. He is AT 888. He was born in Tampa and lived in several cities in the southeast part of the USA until moving to Central City, NE, in 1947. He attended Northwestern University in Chicago, later transferring to the University of Nebraska where he majored in English and political science. He graduated in 1956 and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. At UNL, Andy was president of Alpha Tau chapter, one of 13 members of The Innocents Society (the senior men's honorary), president of the All-University Fund, treasurer of Nebraska Builders, and a member of Kosmet Klub and Student Council.

He attended the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Program at Quantico, VA, following graduation. Andy served two years at Camp Lejeune, NC, where he was an artillery battery commander. For the next six years, he was a reservist in the Marine Corps Third Marine Division, attaining the rank of Captain.

He joined Procter & Gamble in 1958, holding sales management positions in several cities. In 1975, he was transferred to Cincinnati, OH, where he and his wife resided until they moved to Tampa in 1988. After retiring from P&G, Andy worked as national sales director for John Morrell, a division of Chiquita Brands International. He later worked as a sales consultant for many national brands.

Andy is survived by his wife of 57 years, Linda Jensen Smith, two daughters, and other relatives.

James W. Lines '59 entered Our Mystic Shrine in St. Louis, MO, on July 18, 2022. Jim is AT 999. Jim and his fellow pledge brother, **Tom Jacob '59**, both came to UNL as high school classmates from Mendota, IL. Jim was a graduate of the UNL School of Pharmacy and was a pharmacist for Walgreens in St. Louis for 41 years. Jim was the best man at the wedding of Tom and his wife.

In addition to his career with Walgreens, Jim was an avid sports fan and loved word games. He is survived by his wife, Lynne Starr Lines, and other relatives.

Jonny L. Wendt '65 entered Our Mystic Shine on June 11, 2023, in Sun City West, AZ. He is AT 1142 and was the honor pledge his freshman year. Jon was born in Council Bluffs, IA, grew up in Nebraska (mostly in the Ashland area), and according to the obit Jon himself wrote, he "barely graduated from Ashland/Greenwood High School in Ashland, where he was a less than super jock, participating in football, basketball, track, and American Legion baseball. He did, however, sparkle in home economic and typing classes."

Upon his high school graduation, Jon became a United States Marine before attending UNL. He was a freshman at age 21 when his pledge brothers were all 17 or 18. His maturity was exhibited throughout the chapter, according to one of his pledge brothers. Jon transferred to the University of Indiana at the end of his sophomore year at UNL, and after graduation from Indiana, he completed graduate work at Sam Houston State.

Jon's professional career was as a proud and devoted special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He retired after almost 24 years of service, and then (per his obit), "continued various odd jobs, consistent with his personality and demands by his then-roommate and wife (Bernice Raiter Wendt) until 'full' retirement. Jon lived in 13 states, just keeping ahead of the IRS." (This included Colorado, and Jon renewed many Beta acquaintances with the Bugeaters group in the Denver area. The Bugeaters were featured in the fall issue in 2022: <https://nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202022%20Fall.pdf>) "He was a member of the American Legion, Beta Theta Pi social fraternity, the Moon Saloon Bible Study class, the Corte Bella Vets and Rusty Zippers, Can/Am, Summer Studs golf groups. His desire to help had him working with Habitat for Humanity and St. Vincent DePaul Food Center." See the spring 2018 issue of *The Dragon's Tale* for information on Jon's involvement with his Corte Bella community: nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202018%20Spring.pdf.

Jon was incredibly proud of his USMC years, and the Corte Bella Vets had a Marine flag at the community's entrance lowered to half-staff in honor of Jon's service to our country.

Jon's wife, Bern, preceded him in death last year. Survivors include brother Larry, Larry's wife Jan, and other relatives.

Delbert E. Snoberger '66 entered Our Mystic Shrine on September 21, 2023. He is AT 1181. Del was born in Hastings, NE, and grew up on a farm near Trumbull, NE (about 15 miles from Hastings).

He graduated from UNL in 1969. At UNL, Del was a member of ROTC and was in the U.S. Army from 1969-73. He served a tour of duty in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Bronze Star. He attained the rank of Captain by the time of his discharge.

Del obtained a master's degree in management from the American College in Bryn Mawr, PA. He also earned his Chartered Life Underwriter and Chartered Financial Consultant designations during his 32-year career in the insurance industry. Del enjoyed playing golf and tennis, and he was a second-degree black belt in tae kwon do. He was an active member of the Rotary Club of Tulsa, and vice president of the Oklahoma Cornhusker Club.

Upon learning of Del's death, several comments came in from his pledge brothers. One said, "How shockingly sad to learn of Del's passing. He was one generous, sincere, and warm-hearted man." Another said, "I enjoyed playing a lot of basketball with Del. He was a great guy."

He is survived by his wife Sharon, brother **Don '67**, and many other relatives. He was preceded in death by a son and two brothers.

Michael Hanich, M.D. '67, entered Our Mystic Shine on January 1, 2022. He is AT 1194 and was a resident of Kearney, NE.

Mike was born and raised in Holdrege, NE. After graduation from UNL, Mike obtained his medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. He then served two years in the United States Army as a physician. Following his military service, Mike and his wife, Karen, moved to Kearney, where he was a physician at Kearney Clinic for 34 years, retiring in 2013. He also served as the medical director at the Mt. Carmel Home in Kearney until 2019.

Survivors include his wife, Karen, one daughter, one son, and other family members. Mike was preceded in death by one son, brother **Steve Hanich '71**, and a sister.

(Editor's note: *The Dragon's Tale* and the General Fraternity were only made aware of Mike's death in September. Steve's obit was in the fall 2021 issue.) nebraskabeta.com/sites/betathetapi/files/Dragon%27s%20Tale%20-%202021%20Fall.pdf

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THE DRAGON'S TALE

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LEAVING A LEGACY

You can support Nebraska Beta through your estate planning. Interested alumni can include Alpha Tau chapter of Beta Theta Pi in their estate language via specific bequests. If you would like to contribute to the improvement of the physical plant (1515 R Street), the bequest can be to the Beta Theta Pi Charitable Fund with The University of Nebraska Foundation. If you would like to obtain naming rights on an Experience Company scholarship, the bequest can be made to The Experience Company.

If you have questions about how to best accomplish this, please contact your estate planner or reach out to **Sam Brower '15** for assistance. Sam is an attorney with Cassem Tierney law firm in Omaha and can be reached at sbrower@ctagd.com.

In a related topic, The Experience Company (TEC) funded six \$1,000 scholarships for the recruitment team to use this past summer. Several competing fraternities also offer scholarships to recruits. The recruitment team leveraged the six \$1,000 scholarships very

effectively. The chapter declared the scholarship program successful, and TEC is working on future funding for additional scholarships.

The Experience Company currently provides mentors and internships to actives in the house. Read more about TEC at nebraskabeta.com/tec.

Scholarships exist from gifts made in memory of **Roger Myers '60** and **Dave Karnes '68**. **Jonny L. Wendt '65** had donations made in his name to TEC upon his death; see this issue of Our Mystic Shrine. Some pledge classes are considering funding naming rights on future scholarships. **Please consider our chapter when making an estate plan. Thanks!**

This information should not be construed as legal advice or tax planning advice. For such advice, you are encouraged to consult an attorney and a qualified tax professional before making any legal or tax planning decisions.