

An Overview of the Society: Who We Are

Every Delta Kappa Gamma member. . . a leader for education. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is a professional honorary society of women educators. The Society promotes professional and personal growth of its members and excellence in education.

Established in 1929, Delta Kappa Gamma has attained major objectives in improving opportunities for qualified women employed at every level of education as well as in advancing the status of women educators. To this end, the Purposes set forth by the Founders continue to embody the spirit of the Society. The Purposes continue to be as valid in today's contemporary world as when first adopted:

- To unite women educators of the world in a genuine spiritual fellowship
- To honor women who have given or who evidence a potential for distinctive service in any field of education
- To advance the professional interest and position of women in education
- To initiate, endorse and support desirable legislation or other suitable endeavors in the interest of education and of women educators
- To endow scholarships to aid outstanding women educators in pursuing graduate study and to grant fellowships to women educators from other countries
- To stimulate the personal and professional growth of members and to encourage their participation in appropriate programs of action
- To inform the members of current economic, social, political and educational issues so that they may participate effectively in a world society.

Membership is by invitation and is extended to those women educators whose distinguished contributions and achievements in the field of education and to their communities are identified as outstanding.

The nurturing environment of the Society encourages all members to grow and reach the highest levels of professional and personal accomplishments their many unique talents allow. Members are committed to fulfilling their potential for greatness, for creativity, for leadership and for service through appropriate programs of action.

Each member has access to a limitless sphere of influence. The Society through its members brings together a world of common interests and focuses the collective energies of an international organization to achieve the greatest good for everyone involved in all fields of education--students, instructors and administrators.

Those who become members of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International are offered a lifelong association with other women educators engaged in the shared pursuit of common interests, goals and ideals. Delta Kappa Gamma members include classroom teachers, college and university professors, administrators and supervisors, librarians and educational specialists.

A candidate accepting the invitation to membership is initiated as a member of a chapter, a state organization and the international Society.

The three categories of membership are active, reserve and honorary. Active membership is by invitation to those educators who are employed in educational work with three or more years of experience and/or retired no more than two years from education. Reserve membership is limited to those members no longer able to participate. Honorary membership is extended to selected women

in recognition of their significant professional and/or community contributions to education who otherwise are ineligible for active membership.

Membership in the Society carries with it responsibility as well as honor. Those who accept the invitation to join commit themselves to taking an active part in programs, special projects and organizational activities.

Members are expected to participate at chapter meetings regularly and assume certain financial obligations as well. Dues are determined in accordance with the *Constitution*, the *International Standing Rules*, state organization bylaws and chapter rules. There are also nominal annual assessments to support professional and self-development programs.

The rewards of membership bear a direct relationship to each individual's commitment. Programs are designed to create a stimulating environment for the professional growth of each member as well as to focus group attention on current educational issues and to allow formulation of alternatives and solutions.

Within this framework, chapters carry out their own programs and projects. Each is encouraged to develop presentations and activities that fit the needs of its members, their educational communities and the talents of chapter members. An international program manual suggests ways to implement Society-adopted themes.

Programs are further enhanced at the state and international levels through special projects and meetings. State organization conventions and workshops are held annually. International conventions are held biennially and alternate with regional conferences.

The international Society awards a number of scholarships to members who are enrolled in advanced study programs. More than four hundred members have received these scholarships, many of which honor outstanding Society Founders and members. Many state organizations and chapters also award scholarships and study grants at their respective levels.

The Society has established a World Fellowship Fund to provide opportunities for women educators to study in colleges and universities not located in their countries.

In 1979, the Society celebrated its golden anniversary by establishing the Golden Gift Fund to advance further the Society's Purposes. This fund provides for leadership/management seminars; for travel grants to members attending international meetings where representation of the Society would help toward developing mutual understanding; for special stipends to research and offer alternatives to problems common to educators and/or education; and for workshops to address special member needs.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International presents an Educator's Award to the author(s) of a book which may influence future directions of education. The author(s) must be a woman from a country in which the Society is established. To be considered for the award, the book must be published or translated into English within a prescribed one-year period. The content must be of more than local interest with relationship, direct or implied, to education everywhere.

Other Society programs include the Eunah Temple Holden Leadership Fund for promoting special leadership development projects; the Emergency Fund, which gives assistance to members who sustain losses from natural disasters; and the International Speakers Fund, which assists with travel expenses incurred by speakers who address gatherings in countries other than their own.

A newsletter and professional journal are sent to members on a regular basis from International Headquarters. In addition, many state organizations and chapters publish newsletters. Monographs and research studies by members that are of interest to educators are also published.

The Society is governed by the *Constitution*, by the *International Standing Rules* adopted by the International Convention, and by an elected International Executive Board. The Administrative Board carries out the plans and policies of the Executive Board. State organizations and chapters are governed by policies set forth in their bylaws and chapter rules.

There are innumerable opportunities for professional growth. Each member is encouraged to participate and contribute to making the Society's programs and activities meaningful for the advancement of education. Every Delta Kappa Gamma member becomes a leader for education.

A Brief History The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

"It was late afternoon of a balmy spring day -- May 11, 1929 -- when a few friends of Dr. Annie Webb Blanton gathered at 2610 Whitis Avenue in Austin, Texas. The large two-story, red brick house with its Victorian cupolas was listed in the telephone directory as the University Faculty Women's Club. Great oaks shaded the veranda where Dr. Blanton greeted her Austin friends and those who had come by train to help her found Kappa Gamma Delta, later to be renamed The Delta Kappa Gamma Society."

The founding group of twelve women educators represented a cross-section of the teaching profession. There was a grade school teacher, a dean of women, three high school teachers, three elementary school principals, and four college professors -- Dr. Blanton was a professor of rural education at the University of Texas. In addition to Dr. Blanton, five of the members were from Austin: Anna Hiss, Helen Koch, Lalla M. Odom, Cora M. Martin and Ruby Terrill (Lomax). Already looking ahead to the formation of other chapters across Texas, Dr. Blanton had invited to membership six women educators from cities outside of Austin: Mamie Bastian from Houston, Ruby Cole from San Antonio, Lela Lee Williams from Dallas, Mabel Grizzard from Waxahachie and Ray and Sue King from Fort Worth.

The founding of the Society was the culmination of several years of dreaming and planning. "Ideas for the structure of the organization, its purposes and procedures had been evolving gradually. Letter after letter from Dr. Blanton to the prospective Founders carried drafts of the Constitution and Ritual to be scrutinized and criticized. Frequent meetings of the Austin women, especially those who lived at the Faculty Women's Club, brought modifications and refinements.... By the lengthy process of conferences and correspondence, many differences of opinion had been resolved among the twelve Founders before May 11.

"The financial aspects of the Society had to be determined -- on the local, state and national basis. There were committees to be appointed and duties to define. The symbolism and the insignia were to be discussed. The official song seemed to be the one finished product in readiness. Mrs. Martin had somewhat rephrased Dr. Blanton's lyric so that it could be sung to the tune 'Men of Harlech'." Shortly after the initiation ceremony, the Founders sat down to work on the draft of the Constitution.

"The Founders were well aware of the criticism that might be leveled at this new Society. Not only men, but also many women, opposed women's organizations. The suffrage movement had stirred strong reactions that could not be ignored. Within the teaching profession, discrimination was the rule rather than the exception. The practice was general that as soon as a woman teacher married, she was dropped from the staff. The few scholarships granted by colleges usually went to men. In university faculties, as in public schools, efficient qualified women educators were denied promotions. They were rarely elected to office or boards of professional organizations. These conditions combined to influence the purposes of the Society, the qualifications for membership and the manner in which Kappa Gamma Delta developed."

"Patiently, meticulously the Founders worked through the mass of details that demanded attention that night. Dr. Blanton was authorized to secure drawings for a fraternity key to be submitted by mail to the other Founders for their choice. They adopted the colors -- crimson and gold; they discussed additional initiation paraphernalia; they authorized a committee to secure incorporation papers for the state and national Kappa Gamma Delta.

"It had been a strenuous and important business meeting which had stretched into the early morning hour. Sue King, exhausted, had retired before the close of deliberations; but, by adjournment time, the pattern had been drawn for a Society unique in the annals of organizations and destined to become the largest of its kind in the world."