



ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA DONATES \$1 MILLION TO HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Contribution caps emotional day of tributes during AKA's Centennial Celebration

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's International President Barbara A. McKinzie donated \$1 million to Howard University for the purpose of preserving the Sorority's legacy. The contribution represented the climax and culminating activity of four days of celebration that commemorated the 100th anniversary of the founding of AKA's first chapter, Alpha Chapter. The chapter started Jan. 15, 1908, on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. The culminating activity was held January 15, 2008.

The \$1 million gift will be used to preserve the heritage of the Sorority through a Founders' endowed scholarship in the name of Alpha Kappa Alpha's first national president, Nellie Quander. It will also be used to maintain the extensive collection of Sorority documents already housed at Moorland-Spangarn Research Center on Howard University's campus.

In an address before thousands of members who turned out for the birthday celebration, McKinzie said the gift would be a first step toward a larger contribution that will be made to the University by the end of the year. In presenting the historic check to the University, McKinzie challenged members to safeguard the history of the Sorority.

The Sorority also donated a digitized version of the *Ivy Leaf*, its official magazine, to the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center. The digital archive contains issues published from 1921 through late 2007.

The donation capped an emotional day that included a blessing of the pilgrimage at Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel. The ceremony began when International President Barbara A. McKinzie proceeded to the lectern and said:

"Happy Birthday, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority."

With those words, the final day of celebration, reflection and tributes began.

Following an uplifting service led by McKinzie, over 1,500 members from around the world returned to their "roots" to participate in this historic gathering. In silent reverence, they linked arms and weathered the chilly winter temperatures as they paid homage to the Founders and other members by walking the paths and visiting the sites significant to the Sorority on Howard's campus. Members wore green scarves with pink lettering made in Ethiopia and dark coats in tribute to the founders and others who were among the 16 women who first joined in 1908 and 1909.

One of the two sites on the silent pilgrimage where historical markers were placed was The Founders' Window at Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel that, erected in honor of the 16 pillars (founding members) of AKA. Also visited was the Slowe Window, which is next to the Founders' pane and is named in honor of Lucy Diggs Slowe, one of AKA's founders, Alpha chapter's first president and the first dean of women at Howard University.

The second stop the members reverently visited was the site of the former Miner Hall, where the Sorority was founded.

Throughout the journey, everyone was consumed with pride by the enormity of the moment and in knowing they were walking the same paths as their foremothers whose vision birthed Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

It was fitting that this historic and momentous occasion would conclude with the donation of the \$1 million to Howard. As McKinzie eloquently stated:

“If we don't preserve our heritage, no one else will. In the interest of safeguarding our legacy, we're more than happy to give \$1 million this day.”

She also challenged those assembled to continue the record of sisterhood and service that have made the Sorority endure for 100 years. It is this commitment to sisterhood and providing “service to all mankind” that has helped the Sorority grow from nine founders in 1908 on one campus, to 200,000 members at 975 chapters worldwide. McKinzie said Alpha Kappa Alpha's continued commitment to sisterhood and service would inspire the Sorority to continued greatness as it begins its second century.

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 by, and for, African-American college women. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, it is one of the world's leading service organizations. The Sorority's members have made a commitment “to serve all mankind” through a nucleus of more than 200,000 women in over 975 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and in the continent of Africa. Barbara A. McKinzie is the 27th International President. Because her term coincides with the 100-year anniversary, she is being hailed as the “Centennial National President.” McKinzie's administration is marked by the theme: ESP, which stands for Economics, Service and Partnerships. For more information, log on to www.aka1908.com.

Contact: Melody M. McDowell
Chief Information Officer
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
773-660-2001 – Office
312-371-8917 - cell
melodyaka@aol.com - e-mail