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UNITY MARCH BRINGS TOGETHER DIVINE NINE TO DELIVER POWERFUL MESSAGE TO AMERICA'S LAWMAKERS

Alpha Kappa Alpha's Centennial Convention was memorable for its pageantry, symbolism and its powerful messages transmitted to the world. The most potent example of its activism was the Unity March, where 30,000 members from the nine predominantly Black Greek fraternities and sororities linked arms as a unified force and marched from the National Council of Negro Women headquarters to the Capitol to advance their united agenda. The marchers, all members of the Pan Hellenic Council, sent a "powerful message" to the outgoing administration and a declaration to the next U.S. president about important issues of their constituencies.

Among the lawmakers who addressed the assemblage were House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus and AKA members Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson, Sheila Jackson Lee and Diane E. Watson.

The "Divine Nine" represent a membership in excess of two million, and the service initiatives each performs was noted. The organizations represented were:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

Also, gracing the podium was Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women.

President McKinzie noted in her fiery speech that "across all fraternal and sisterhood organizations, associations and groups...on this day, July 17th in the year of our Lord, 2008, we are joined as one to address the critical issues of our time."

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi made a special appearance and was presented the Unity Day Resolution by the leadership. The areas of concern that were addressed in the Resolution included health, education, the environment, economics and politics. Each organization has incorporated these critical areas into their respective programs. Leaders of each organization agree that the current state of affairs in each area demands an urgent response that a combined march symbolizes.