

GAMMA CHI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Officers

The Foundation Board comprises volunteer Alumni.

Tom Burton '84 (President)

John Hallock '15 (Treasurer)

John Boyle '75

Jeff Hines '81

Ben Keiser '97

Tom Parsons '93

Rob Pichard '11

Greg Schaub '82

Scott Werber '86

Graduating Seniors

Congrats to our Class of 2020!



Jake Schaechter
Pete Malizia
Bret Bello
Tanner Ferrara
Robert Rybski
Ray Rada
Brett Albee
Ben Friedland
Drew Tyler
Danny Yelsits
Chris Behrman
Dylan Jakob
Ryan Sumner
Logan Leonard
Matt Lavalette
Max Argentieri
James Milne
Aiden Ragno
Thomas Murphy
Max Palermo
Jack Colbert
Brad Banaszynski
Ryan Curran
Jared Cirulli
Darren Mata

CROSSROADS

A Publication of Gamma Chi Chapter of Sigma Chi, University of Maryland

June 2020

78 Years of Gamma Chi



May 16th marked the 78th Anniversary of our Chapter joining Sigma Chi, less than six months after Pearl Harbor.

Pictured is the front-page story from *The Diamondback* regarding Iota Sigma, an independent fraternity, joining Sigma Chi despite intense lobbying by Curley Byrd, the University President at the time, to join SAE.

Looking forward to celebrating our 80th Anniversary in better times in 2022.

DERBY DAYS 2019

Gamma Chi Raised \$60,320 for Children's National Hospital



We are amazed by the undergraduate leadership and how they continue to engage with the entire Greek community at the University of Maryland. Thank you for your incredible work!

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Brother Brian "Aztec" Kennedy '86



We are sorry to share the news that **Brian "Aztec" Kennedy '86** has joined his older brother **John Kennedy '82** in the Chapter Eternal. Our condolences to his brother **Chris Kennedy '85**, his nephew **Ryan Kennedy '11** and all of Aztec's friends and family.

This photo is from Homecoming 2019 and Aztec is in the center of the photo making a peace sign. He was, without a doubt, a legendary MD Sigma Chi.

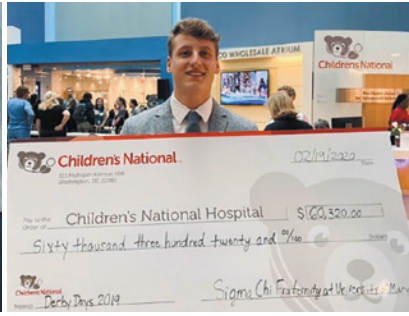
RECENT GRAD UPDATES

Brothers Navigate Transitioning from UMD into the World Mid-Pandemic

Three recent graduates shared their plans for post-grad life with us, what the transition away from UMD looked like for them, and how Gamma Chi has helped them prepare for the future. Good luck to Danny, Aidan, and Jack!



Aidan Ragno



Jack Colbert



Danny Yelsits

been the link between the University's newly enacted policies and the Fraternity, providing salient information the younger guys living in the house needed." – **Jack Colbert**

What are your plans for the Summer and post-graduate life? How has the pandemic affected your work or internship plans?

"I have accepted an offer to work at AlphaSights, an expert knowledge consulting firm in New York, following my graduation. I will be heading back to Long Island where I grew up to live at home and commute to New York City." –**Danny Yelsits**

"I will start work as an Operations Analyst in Baltimore for Morgan Stanley. It seems likely that the first few months will be virtual, but I am grateful that I was able to keep the position through the turbulence that has rocked the job market." –**Aidan Ragno**

Have you received any help or advice from Gamma Chi Alumni on how to deal with the

current issues as you enter graduate life?

"Absolutely. From when I first made a resume to when I was preparing for a final interview, I was constantly chatting with some of the alumni who I grew close with over my four years here. I am lucky to have built strong bonds with so many resourceful and successful people. I hope to be a resource myself to the younger members of the Gamma Chi Chapter." –**Danny Yelsits**

"I have been working at a Real Estate firm through a Gamma Chi Alumni. We speak very frequently, and he consistently reminds me that this period will pass over and life will return to normal." –**Aidan Ragno**

"Dennis O'Connell has been especially helpful and transparent during the pandemic. He has

Gamma Chi Chapter?

"Most of all, I miss having lunch in the basement every day. The entire chapter is in and out of the house basement over the course of a few hours. It is the best time to catch up with everyone, laugh at funny stories, and get to know each other better. I do not think people realize how close we all get from spending time in that basement. It is also a great spot to procrastinate. I also miss our chef Amalia." –**Danny Yelsits**

"I miss walking down to the basement of the Chapter house and seeing all my closest friends. That is a unique phenomenon that I will never experience again for the rest of my life." –**Jack Colbert**

PHOTO FLASHBACK: 1981

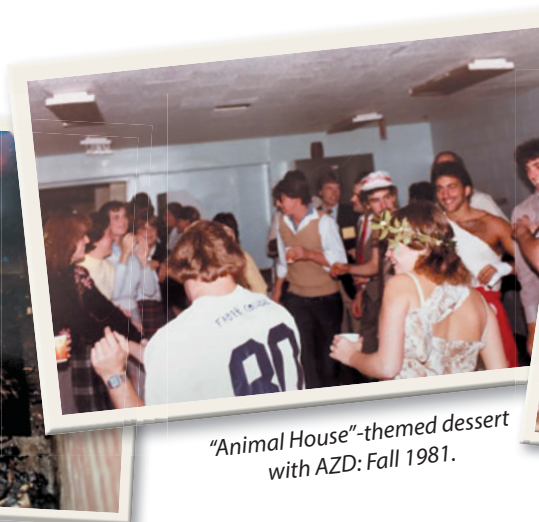
A Gamma Chi Photo's Worth a Thousand Words

We have a ton of amazing photos from over the decades up on the Gamma Chi alumni website. Check out your Brothers in their finest 80s attire, sporting their most stylish sideburns or...well, whatever's going on in these photos.

Find more photos at www.sigmachiumd.org by clicking on the "Photo Albums" tab and upload your best Sigma Phi photos for inclusion in our next newsletter or e-letter, or email them to alumninews@affinityconnection.com.



Tiger Pit: Fall '81.



"Animal House"-themed dessert with AZD: Fall 1981.



Post-dinner Jell-O races: Fall '81. No one could beat John Petey Mundo.

Gamma Chi Alum Chick Hernandez '86 answers our questions and shares his thoughts and memories from his days with Sigma Chi.

What is your best memory from your Sigma Chi days?

I was elected athletic chairman my junior year, and to this day Sigma Chi is the only fraternity that had two teams (EX Gold & EX Blue) face each other in the intramural finals. I played on one team and coached the other. I shaved EX into my head and revealed that on game night. It was a great night of Brotherhood and demonstrated our athletic dominance in the Greek system. My other favorite memory is of Greek week when my fellow Brothers **Brian Kennedy** and **Brian Wendell Morton** performed in a lip-sync contest that is still talked about 33 years later. We did it to the song "The Bird" by Morris Day & The Time.

How do you benefit from the fraternity experience as an Alum?

I was generally a shy guy even though I was a class clown. I had difficulty conversing with adults, I would almost stutter I talked so fast. When I was elected Athletic Chairman, I knew I had to have a plan and be able to communicate it, especially every Monday night at chapter meetings. I gained a tremendous amount of confidence during that time, enough to allow me to go up to the radio station on campus and audition for the position of Sports Director. I earned the position, and that would eventually turn into my career as a television sportscaster. I became the longest tenured sportscaster in the Washington DC market. It has allowed me to lead a blessed life and raise my kids right here where my wife and I grew up.

What is your advice for today's active Brothers?

It's quite simple, get involved in the house. Just hang out physically in the house and good things will happen. Build friendships and network for the future. We all look out for each other.

What do you think is more important when it comes to career success; being prepared or being willing to take risks?

Wow, great question. Well, I think being prepared is number one. You should never go into something without being prepared and being prepared can help you assess risk factors. I do think risk taking is necessary though to move forward and get to where you'd like to go.

Why did you join Sigma Chi? Share your reasons for pledging as an undergrad, and how your membership still has a positive impact on your life today.

I joined Sigma Chi because I was searching for something I didn't even know I wanted. I went to an intramural championship football game involving EX and I was hooked. I saw the entire Brotherhood



in action, which also involved a couple of my friends from high school, and the rest is history. The fraternity still impacts me today because I see we still have a strong bond. When one of our own faces tough times, we come together to lend our support without thinking about it. We act as Brothers there for each other and their families, as it should be.

What is your favorite/most memorable Sigma Chi tradition?

The most memorable, is the White Rose Ceremony during the funerals of our fallen Brothers. It's not my favorite, but it's certainly most memorable. It brings chills to all involved, and to those who are outside our circle when they realize what it means.

If you could go back to re-live any single moment from your fraternity days, what would it be and why?

I'd love to go back to Greek Week and perform "The Bird" one more time. That performance ended on such a high with the entire Greek System on-hand

watching and cheering afterwards. There was no doubt as to who won the competition and at nearly every party after that for the next year, we were asked to recreate it.

How would your life be different today if you had never joined Sigma Chi?

Boy, I'm glad I NEVER have to think about that. I have no earthly idea what would've happened. If I didn't gain confidence then maybe I wouldn't have gone to the college radio station, and who knows what would or wouldn't happen after that.

What did Sigma Chi teach you about leadership?

The house taught me to communicate, listen, and be open to ideas from all sides, even from Brothers you may or may not like the most. It taught me that you can't lead if you don't have the trust, so how do you gain that trust? Be honest and let them know where you stand.

Are you married? Kids? Any new or current career plans or goals?

I have been married for the last 23 years. I have three kids, one of whom is a senior at my Alma Mater. My career plan after a couple years of semi-retirement is to hit the ground running and do some things professionally that will challenge me. Primarily, I'd like to get back to my play-by-play routes in football and hoops.

What would you like to see more of from Sigma Chi as an alum?

I'd like to see a few more events at the house. We only get invited to major events, and it feels like there could be so many more opportunities to meet and hang out with the current Brothers.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Send in Your Updates!

Thanks to these brothers for sending in alumni updates! Visit our website at www.sigmachiumd.org to read more alumni updates. If you want to be featured in our next newsletter or e-letter publication to our alumni brothers, email your updates to alumninews@affinityconnection.com.

James “Jay” Savage ’70

It has been a very long time since I was at U of M and Sigma Chi, though I do have great memories. I spent part of a summer doing voluntary landscaping on the outside of the house and I think it really helped when we had pledge week. I also remember a trip to Roanoke College which reminds me of the Corona virus. A few of us got down there to Sigma Chi Roanoke and that weekend they had a flu epidemic and closed the school just as we left. I caught the flu and was sick as a dog for a week.

After leaving school I joined the Army, studied Japanese at DLI Monterey and spent couple of years in Japan. Then I went to Thunderbird Graduate School in Phoenix and started a career in International Business. I have been living in Manila in the Philippines for almost 43 years.

I got involved in rugby and was the Secretary of the Philippines Rugby Union for a number of years.

I have communicated with **Ken Shipp** and one or two others. I was back in D.C. in the fall of 2018 but my sister lives in Centerville, VA so I didn't make it to College Park. I hope I have time on my next trip to stop by the house.

Robert Blanco ’11

The most valuable part of my Sigma Chi

experience is the connections and friendships I've made. I have met so many people through Sigma Chi and have developed strong relationships, whether personal or professional, I feel like I always have someone I share Sigma Chi with, in all aspects of my life.

It also has provided another thing my dad and I can bond over. He was Gamma Chi in the '80s and encouraged me to rush and pledge Sigma Chi when I arrived at Maryland in Fall 2010. He pinned me at my initiation ceremony and we were able to share a lot of my undergrad memories together through Sigma Chi. And now we share a lot of alumni experiences together.

I cover the Washington Nationals and Baltimore Orioles for MASNsports.com, and am the host/producer of the MASN All Access Podcast: Nationals. I recently interviewed Nationals reliever Sean Doolittle for Star Wars Day.

I also have a side project: the “Put Me In, Coach” Podcast that I do with a group of friends about all things D.C. sports.

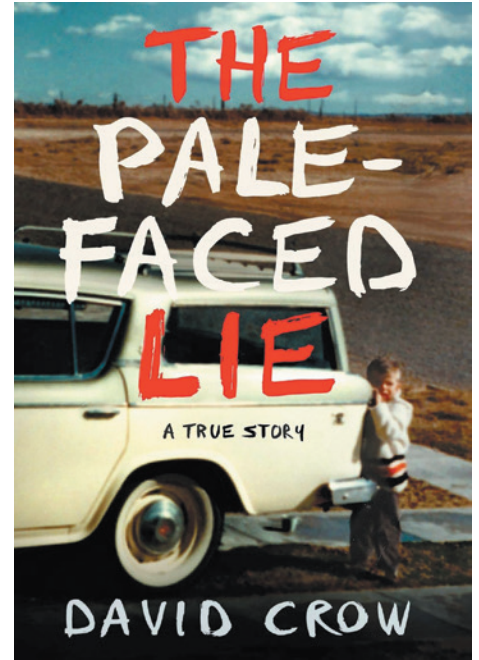
Fellow Gamma

Chi and D.C. sportscaster Chick Hernandez has been a guest and is a friend of the program.

My family is currently living at my parents' house in Silver Spring, Md. to get out of the city. My dad and I chat about Sigma Chi every once in a while. I sometimes hop on his Zoom calls with Brothers from his era and he stays in touch with Brothers from mine.

David Crow ’75

Because of the power of our Brotherhood, my Sigma Chi Brothers from the mid-'70s



particularly have kept close, because we have old ties.

I will always support Sigma Chi in action and money. My internship program has provided many opportunities for Brothers, and at my advanced age, the sons and daughters of Brothers. More than I can remember.

In a bad time, be it pandemic, a death in the family, a career setback or other woes, reach out to someone who cares, be good counsel, and be discreet.

What is abundantly clear, is the deep, personal experience of pledgship and Brotherhood create these bonds. We all believe the same things and in each other. Many times I will tell my family, or my clients, or the people who have read my memoir, “The Pale-Faced Lie”, that the Brotherhood of Sigma Chi got me through the worst times of my life and sustains me in the best times too.

I love alumni events, to see old Brothers, to swap stories, and to step back and forward into lives that I will always cherish.

You can't make old friends, you have to build them, and our Brotherhood is the best way I know.

As an author and lobbyist, I use every social media avenue, and so do the Brothers. I see their pictures on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter but my favorite is an old-fashioned phone call or a text. All of them are important and more so now as this pandemic creates global havoc that every one of us feels.



CHAPTER ADVISOR RECOGNIZED

Thank you Travis, and congratulations.



Congratulations to our Chapter Advisor Travis Roberts, who was recognized by the University, as “IFC Chapter Advisor of the Year”.

Travis has been an outstanding Chapter Advisor for us over the last three years, and it is a pleasure to know that the University recognizes it as well.