

## **Omega Psi Phi Initiation Ritual**

**No date**

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### **Formal Meetings of the Fraternity**

*At the annual or other emergency meeting of the Fraternity in Grand Conclave assembled the Grand Basileus shall be seated in the center of the platform occupying his desk. All Ex-Grand Basileus shall be seated immediately behind the Grand Basileus, while on his right shall be seated the Grand Keeper of Records and Seal and on his left shall be seated the Vice Grand Basileus and the Grand Keeper of Finances. The Grand Marshal shall occupy a seat near the Grand Basileus and shall carry out his requests quietly. The members shall be seated in the assembly hall, facing the Grand Basileus, and shall listen attentively to and take a part in, all questions that may arise and call for discussion.*

*They shall be expected to move about as little as possible, and quietness shall prevail during all deliberations of the Grand Conclave. The Custodian of the Peace who shall be appointed by the Grand Basileus at the beginning of the Conclave, shall be stationed at the door and shall admit only those persons who are members of the Fraternity and such other persons as have the permission of the Grand Conclave through the Grand Basileus.*

### **Formal Meetings of the Chapters**

*At the regular or special meetings of the Chapters the same dignity and quietness must be observed as in the meetings of the Grand Conclave.*

*Seating arrangements shall, when possible, conform to the seating arrangement of the Grand Conclave—the Basileus of the Chapter occupying the seat and desk in the center, all ex-Basileus seated behind him, while the Keeper of Records and Seal and the Keeper of Finances occupy seats at his right and left, respectively. The Keeper of the Peace shall be stationed at the door and shall admit only those persons who are members of the Fraternity, and such other persons as have the permission of the Chapter through the Basileus.*

*In all cases where persons other than those members of the Fraternity are permitted to enter meetings of the Fraternity, the table containing the lights of Omega and other ritualistic emblems shall be removed from sight.*

## **Election to Membership**

*The names of the candidates having been proposed they shall be presented to the Committee on Membership, which shall ascertain their moral and educational fitness, their ability to fraternize, and such other things as may be deemed advisable. Upon favorable recommendation of this committee the candidate shall be voted upon as provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fraternity.*

*The Candidate being duly elected and approved by the District Representative or Grand Basileus, the Basileus shall designate a brother and instruct him to approach the candidate and ascertain whether or not the candidate desires to become a member of the Fraternity.*

*If the candidate expresses such a desire the Fraternity pledge shall be given him for his signature and he shall be instructed to return the pledge duly executed and signed together with the initiation fee, not later than a certain hour of a day to be determined by the Chapter. This procedure effected, the candidate's name shall be formally recorded on the records of the Chapter by the Keeper of Records and Seal. The candidate now assumes the status of a Neophyte and shall be referred to as such. Without previous knowledge of their significance, he shall be given the twenty words corresponding to the twenty pearls on the Fraternity pin and commanded to commit them to memory.*

*Each Neophyte shall memorize the names of our Founders who are: Edgar A. Love, Minister; Oscar J. Cooper, Physician; Frank Coleman, Professor of Physics at Howard University and Ernest E. Just (deceased), Professor of Zoology at Howard University .*

*The Neophyte is also required to know in detail the life of two outstanding Negroes. He is not to know the significance of the requirements until after his initiation. In concluding this phase of the Neophyte's task he is to memorize the name of one outstanding Negro in each of five fields.*

## **Initiation**

*All initiations shall be held under the supervision, and control of the District Representative or a brother designated by said District Representative.*

*The initiatory ceremony shall be divided into an outdoor or preliminary ceremony, and an indoor or formal ceremony. If the conditions make it possible the outdoor ceremony, which should include the Neophytes mentioning the names of the Founders of the Fraternity and the detailed account of the lives of two eminent Negroes who may or may not be Omega men, this part of the ceremony may be given inside as a preliminary ceremony.*

*An officer to be known as the Neophyte Commandant shall he appointed by the Basileus to serve throughout the initiation for which he is appointed.*

*The Neophyte Commandant shall have complete charge of the arrangements and execution of the initiation, and shall be held to strict accountability to the Chapter for the details of the initiation. He shall appoint a competent number of members to assist in the successful performance of his duty and these assistants shall he referred to as Chamberlains.*

*The Chamberlains shall be in complete charge of the Neophyte during the initiation, at all times obeying the orders of the Neophyte Commandant. There shall be a Chamberlain for each Neophyte wherever this is possible. Each Chamberlain shall be inspected by the Neophyte Commandant to see that he has nothing that will injure the Neophyte; he shall be charged to this end, by the Neophyte Commandant before he assumes charge of his Neophyte.*

*The following names are suggested from which the Neophyte shall choose:*

*Otto L. Bonhanan of Omega—Poet, Baritone, Composer.*

*Geoffrey Lislet—Member of the French Academy during the 18th century.*

*Benjamin Banneker—Selected as a Surveyor to Help Lay Out Washington , D.C.*

*Carl Diton—Pianist, Eminent American Composer, Baritone, Organist, a Son of Omega.*

*Alexander Dumas—The Greatest Novelist of All Times.*

*Antar—Epic Poet of Arabia , General.*

*Moshoeshoe—A Nation Builder, who welded into one nation in Africa about sixty tribes that spoke sixty different languages, so that they became one people.*

*Terrance—Roman Playwright. .*

*Amenemhat I and III—Pharoahs of Egypt .*

*Simon the Canaanite—The Eleventh Disciple of Jesus.*

*John B. Russworm—The First Negro to Graduate from an American College .*

*George Washington Carver—Agricultural and Synthetic Chemist of Tusegee.*

*Alexander Pushkin—Epic Poet of Russia .*

*Paul Cuffee—Shipbuilder and Sea Trader; the First Actual Colonizer.*

*Bishop Richard Allen—Founder of the A.M.E. Church .*

*Bishop Daniel A. Payne—The Champion of an Educated Ministry for the A.M.E. Church and the Founder of Wilberforce University .*

*Hiram R. Revells—Our First Senator, from Mississippi .*

*David Walker—Author of "The Appeal," the most widely discussed book written by a Negro before the Civil War.*

*Mohammed Askie—Emperor of Timbuctu who welded together an empire more extensive than all Europe and ruled it successfully for thirty-six years.*

## **Preliminary or Outdoor Ceremony**

*It is expedient that the solemnity of the initiation ceremony should begin with the preliminary ceremony. Each step taken, each act done should be solemnly impressed upon the Neophyte. This is not meant to detract the least scintilla of amusement from the preliminary ceremony.*

*Each Neophyte shall be assigned a special place and time of meeting and shall be expected to report on time and await the summons from his Chamberlain. Whenever it is practicable the procedure outlined in the following paragraph shall be carried out at this point, otherwise as indicated below.*

*Neophytes must be absolutely quiet while being assembled and when the Neophytes have all been accounted for, at a signal from the Neophyte Commandant, each Neophyte shall be hoodwinked beyond recognition by his Chamberlain, who shall at the same time securely bind the Neophyte's hands behind his back and place upon him a number by which he shall be known to the members of the Chapter during the initiation ceremony. With great seriousness the Chamberlain shall now give to his Neophyte one of the twenty words of the pin and caution him that this is the sacred pass word. The Neophytes shall now be cautioned under penalty of losing one of the members of their body to preserve perfect silence, and not by word or sign or symbol or writing to disclose their identity one to another to communicate the sacred pass words which have been given them.*

*Preparations completed, upon signal from the Neophyte Commandant, each Chamberlain shall proceed with his Neophyte in a column or file marching around and about aimlessly in order that the Neophyte blindfolded and pinioned shall lose all sense of direction and location. During this procession the Neophyte Commandant shall recite the 90th Psalm, which sets forth God's providence, complain of human frailties, Divine chastisement, brevity of life, and prays for knowledge and sensible experience of God's providence. The procession halted, the Neophyte shall now be taken through the preliminary or outdoor ceremony which shall be left to the discretion of the Neophyte Commandant of the Chapter.*

## **Formal or Indoor Ceremony**

*The room of the Chapter House used for meetings should be set apart for the administering of the Oath and the Charge of the District Representative. Therein shall be placed a table covered with a white cloth, upon which table shall be placed four candles arranged in quadrangular form; within this quadrangle of light shall be placed the helmet, escutcheon,*

*crossed swords, and glove of mail as they appear on the seal of the Fraternity. All other furniture shall be removed, and this room kept in utter darkness except for such light as may be ordered by the District Representative for the performance of his duty. Absolute silence shall be observed within this room throughout any part of the ceremony carried out therein.*

*Whenever possible, the various tests of the indoor ceremony shall be carried out in separate rooms, and for these separate equipment shall be named as the tests are taken up. When uncontrollable circumstances restrict as to space, the tests may be carried out in one room—the brothers being on hand to assist in the thorough exemplification of one test then in preparing the room for the other tests in succession. Under no circumstances shall more than one test be under taken in the same room at the same time.*

*Neophytes shall be taken through the several test individually, and no Chamberlain shall leave his Neophyte unless excused by the Neophyte Commandant, who shall appoint another brother to assume charge of the Neophyte until the excused Chamberlain return to his post.*

*The outdoor or preliminary ceremony complete, the Neophytes are again marched around and about and finally taken to the Chapter House through a designated entrance, at which entrance shall be placed a sentinel who shall be charged with allowing none to pass or re-pass other than those who have permission of the Basileus. When the Neophytes have all been assembled at this designated entrance, the Neophyte Commandant shall approach the door and give four distinct and audible raps; these shall be answered by a like number of raps from within; this shall be followed by an additional rap from the Neophyte Commandant and a similar rap from the sentinel within, after he has given notice of the alarm at the door to the Basileus and brothers and the Basileus has summoned the brothers to accompany him in ascertaining the cause of the alarm. The Basileus and brothers having reached the entrance, the sentinel shall partially open the door and the following dialogue shall be carried on in low but nevertheless audible tone:*

*Sentinel: Who be ye that dareth to intrude upon the sanctity, peace, and quietude of Omega!*

*Neophyte Commandant: ... number of sincere admirers and friends of Omega who have long hoped for and sought for an opportunity of aligning themselves with the forces of Omega.*

*Sentinel: Is this of their own desire and uninfluenced by mercenary and ulterior motives!*

*Neophyte Commandant: It is.*

*Sentinel: Are they of good report?*

*Neophyte Commandant: They are.*

*Sentinel: Do they believe in the Negro!*

*Neophyte Commandant: They do.*

*Sentinel:* What further token have you of their sincerity?

*Neophyte Commandant:* Their implicit confidence in Omega as evidenced in the trust they have reposed in us, they having placed themselves in our hands this night as we wended our way on our mission for Omega.

*Sentinel:* Have you made clear to them the awful penalties awaiting those who enter the sacred fold of Omega and dare to look behind?

*Neophyte Commandant:* I have, they with one accord are ready and willing to prove by further tests their unwavering faith and belief in the tenets of Omega.

*Sentinel:* You will not await the pleasure of Omega before whom I shall lay your petition.

*After a moment's pause the Basileus shall distinctly say:* Swing ye open, O wondrous Gates of Omega: Admit these, our friends, but let them take heed upon what they enter; let them give listening ears, to all that may be said and done, and seal within their bosoms the sacredness of the Temple of Omega.

*The Neophytes shall now be admitted and assembled, still blindfolded and pinioned, into one room, the Preamble of the Fraternity Constitution shall be read to them and the list of members of the Chapter with whom they are to fraternize. The Basileus shall now ascertain from each Neophyte by number whether or not he is still desirous of becoming a member of the Fraternity. Upon receiving an answer in the affirmative, the Basileus shall thereupon summon the Chaplain to his side to lead in prayer to Elohim.*

*The office of prayer affected, the Basileus shall order the indoor ceremony begun, saying to the Chamberlains:* Brothers, take these friends, and in a manner peculiar to Omega find out beyond reasonable doubt whether they measure up to the ideals of our beloved Fraternity. When you are satisfied with their proficiency, and have sufficient proof of their fidelity you will bring them to me as pure gold from the crucible of trials that sorely beset their path. Friends, I commend to you courage and commit you to the trust and care of my brothers. Pass on ....

*The members shall now proceed to exemplify the tests, administering them to the Neophytes individually.*

*They are as follows:*

*1. Discretion. 2. Faith. 3. Obedience. 4. Endurance. 5. Courage.*

## **First Test**

*Discretion: The Chamberlain shall now escort his Neophyte into a room with due solemnity and dignity (The brothers in this room shall be furnished with a paper containing the pass words furnished each Neophyte by number.) On reaching the room the Neophyte shall be seated at a table and spoken to encouragingly by the members; he shall be asked to write*

*his name and other things the Neophyte Commandant might suggest. Having done this, the Neophyte shall be asked to write the fictitious pass word which was communicated to him. If he obeys, the moment .he finishes writing the last letter of the word the Chamberlain shall throw him to the floor, denouncing him, and expressing great surprise and indignation that the Neophyte has broken this, his very first obligation.*

*Threats of the actual bodily harm shall now come from the members while above all voices shall be heard that of the Neophyte Commandant who shall say in harsh tones: Brothers, we shall brand him so that every loyal Son of Omega may know him as a man bereft of honor!*

*A rush is now made for the Neophyte while one of the members shall make an earnest, prayerful and sincere plea for forgiveness of the Neophyte, whereupon the Neophyte Commandant shall give the following talk on the meaning of discretion and the Neophyte shall be forgiven and with caution passed on to the next test. Heat a piece of iron; hold it close to candidate's body, then slap on a piece of ice.*

My friend, you have been guilty of lack of discretion. To the uninitiated and to those who spend but superficial thought upon the significance of the meaning of the term "Discretion," it might imply something of timidity or lack of decision; it might seem a sign of lack of courage. To the expressions it implies nothing of timidity and denotes true courage and common sense.

The crux of the whole matter is that life itself should be a series of attempts to accomplish specific projects. If these projects are honorable, and no true Omega man will engage in any but all honourable project, the none may well devote the best that is in him of mind, soul and body to its final accomplishment.

Discretion requires that in the accomplishment of our project no innocent man, be he brother or not, shall be wronged by our activities.

Discretion implies a knowledge of and recognition of limitations as well as capabilities. Discretion demands that you keep constantly in mind those things which may help you, that you may practice them, and those which may hurt you in order that you may with honor avoid them.

You have failed to avoid that which would hurt you. You, in violation of your promise and of the instructions given you, have written the mystic word and deserve the penalty which our law provides.

But we as Sons of Omega, have learned to temper justice with mercy, and on condition that you commit no further indiscretion we forgive you.

Continue on and be discreet.

*If the Neophyte does not write as requested or demanded the Neophyte Commandant shall say the following: Friend, I must commend you, for in the midst of threats and bodily violence you have been discreet, you have kept your word, you have shown that with you*

promises are sacred and binding, you have passed the first test required of all Omega men. As an example of a man of discretion, which means saying the right thing in the right way, at the right time and place, I remind you of Booker Taliaferro Washington ; he could plead for the uplift of his people even in the presence of his enemies.

He showed them their weaknesses, yet they gave him a helping hand. He won the North and he won the South. As you may well know, Tuskegee Institute is the monument erected to his honor and glory.

Discretion, however, is but for the first step towards understanding the mysteries of Omega, so I must prepare you for the next unfoldments. Cling to me, I will be your guide.

*Commandant leads the Neophyte out.*

## **Second Test**

*Faith: Neophyte Commandant:* Friend, having gone thru the first test, you come to the second, which is a test of your faith.

The Scriptures say, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Without faith it is also impossible to please man. Business is built upon faith; schools are built upon faith; churches are built upon faith; homes are built upon faith.

The stories of David and Jonathan and of Damon and Pythias reveal the faith of friend in friend.

I shall now tell you a story of the Negro appearing in Brother Carter G. Woodson's History of the Negro Church, which sets forth the kind of faith you must show tonight and the kind of faith Omega expects of her sons to have in another.

In the year 1809 there lived in the South a Negro slave by the name of Burrows, who believed that he was called to preach. As he had the gift of eloquence and great spiritual powers, many encouraged him to exercise his gifts. He never gave his word unless he meant to keep it. In short, his word was his bond.

Two of his friends, free Negroes, who lived in the South had so much faith in his ability and in his promises that they went to Burrows' master and bound themselves over to him for a period of six months, in order that Burrows might go north and preach, and in so doing obtain funds with which to purchase their freedom.

Had Burrows not returned within six months, the two free Negroes were to be slaves forever or until they could by extra work accumulate funds with which to purchase their freedom. Burrows, however, returned before the expiration of the six months the two friends never were uneasy about Burrows' return. They believed that only death would keep him from coming back.

This is the kind of faith you are to have in your brothers and this is the kind of faith you are to



inspire them to have in you.

*Faith: The room shall be darkened, superfluous furniture removed, and the Neophyte conducted therein. Such questions are here asked him and answers exacted as shall give theoretical proof of his faith in those he calls friends. He shall hereup on be offered a pill (containing Methylene Blue) and told to swallow it. If he disobeys, the pill shall be forced down his throat under threat of severing his head from his body. This done, one of the members within hearing of the Neophyte shall exclaim: Alas brother, you have made a terrible mistake; the pill you gave our friend is from the box which contains poison. By this pill his career is cut short, and he is thereby ushered prematurely into eternity. Here all members shall go into a panic calling for help, doctor, and sending word to his relatives and arranging for details of his funeral and assuring him of their friendship even to the grave. He shall then be made to swallow quinine, being told that it is an antidote to the poison given him.*

### **Third Test**

*Obedience: Neophyte Commandant: Friend, you have passed the test of Discretion and the test of Faith but before you can become a brother, you must meet another test.*

The Negro who well exhibits how you must face this test is the late Colonel Charles Young, of the United States Army and a Son of Omega.

Colonel Young at the time of the World War was the best strategist in our army. For this reason he should have been chosen to lead the Ninety-Second Division; but with the South in the saddle, It seemed that America did not desire to have a Negro general; for such Colonel Young would have become had he been sent to France . To prove his physical fitness, he rode his favorite horse from his home town in Ohio , to Washington , D.C. However, he received orders to go to Africa, while Ballou, of Georgia , was put at the head of the Negro Division.

Colonel Young knew that he could not .a second time stand the hard environment of Africa; he could have lived in France , but America sent him to Africa .

Colonel Young made no reply. He went to Africa and died.

*The Neophyte shall be conducted in to a darkened room into which there shall previously be placed a couch, a dagger or knife, and a dummy breast.*

*The Neophyte is given the dagger to examine and hold in his right hand in a position for stabbing. A member shall lie up on the couch with his left breast bared of clothing, and the Neophyte shall be told to feel and interpret what is felt. He shall be made to realize what is felt is human flesh upon the region of the heart, and told to get his distance, for his is the duty of driving to the hilt, the dagger in his hand, into the breast he has just recognized.*

*The members shall then quietly step aside, and the dummy breast substituted. The Neophyte shall now be commanded to stab. If he fails to stab, the hand clutching the dagger shall be made to execute the command. Piercing groans and cries of murder shall be made by the members, while same shall improvise means of getting the murderer from the grasp of the law. Under this guise the Neophyte shall be conducted to the next test.*

#### **Fourth Test**

*Endurance Test: Let the Neophyte be stripped to the waist. Then have him stand so that his legs and outstretched arms will tend to form the letter X. While he holds this position, the brothers should tickle the Neophyte with a brush or a feather. Use anything that will cause a strange feeling. While this is going on the Neophyte must keep his hands and arms elevated. He must not change his position. While the Neophyte holds this position, paint on his breast with iodine the capital letters that begin the name of our Fraternity.*

*Also while he holds this position, tell him the story of Frederick Douglass as told by John W. Cromwell in his "The Negro in American History" or some other book that emphasizes the hardships of Douglass. Tell him how his mother walked twelve miles back, doing this for many days. Tell of his being beaten many times.*

*If the Neophyte lowers his hand, caution him to keep them up or take the consequences. At the end of the story the Neophyte Commander shall make the following statement: Friend, the Apostle Paul said to the young man he was training, Timothy, endure hardness as a good soldier. Several can be given this fourth test at the same time.*

#### **Fifth Test**

*Courage: Neophyte Commandant: Every Son of Omega shall be courageous. Though you have passed the tests of Discretion, Faith, Obedience, and Endurance, Omega cannot use you unless you are brave.*

*Bravery is characteristic of the Negro; the Negro has been a great soldier in all the wars of history in ancient times, in the Middle Ages, and today. Who can question the courage of Antar, the Epic Poet of Arabia, who won his bride saving Arabia with his sword? Who can doubt the bravery of Toussaint L'Ouverture who drove from Haiti the best troops of the Spanish, the French and the English? Who call doubt the bravery of Thomas Alexandre Dumas, the father of Alexandre Dumas, the novelist, and the soldier who drew the envy of Napoleon?*

*Neophyte Commandant: Are you brave?*

*Neophyte: I am .*

*Neophyte Commandant: Then we are ready for the test.*

*The Neophyte shall now be conducted in to a room in to which the member s have previously arranged themselves, guarding every avenue of escape, some carrying knives and conducting in apparent low tones, conservations of threats to the Neophyte for the blunders made and for every outcry given. A board eighteen inches by eleven inches shall be studded with six-penny nails so arranged that the nails will forform to the Greek letters, Omega Psi Phi, that shall be previously marked upon the board, the blindfold shall' be removed from the Neophyte, and he shall be given to feel and examine his clothing that both of his knees may be exposed, kneel in prayer, audible or silent, blind-folded again, and commanded to keel upon the board studded with nails. No force is to be used but by gentle persuasion he shall be encouraged to obey the command, this unavailing, he shall be forced to kneel by two members placed, one to his right and one to his left side while the Neophyte Commandant shall remove the board, as he attempts to kneel. The two attendants shall restrain him before he injures himself.*

*Each Neophyte having gone through the several tests, the Neophyte Commandant shall assemble all Neophytes in one room arrange them in order of their numbers, and shall, escort them in and stand them before the Basileus, when the following dialogue shall be carried on:*

*Basileus: Whence come ye, my friends clothed as ye be and accompanied by these my true and tried brothers?*

*Neophyte Commandant: From the outer chamber of darkness into the Shekinah of light of Omega.*

*Basileus: What come ye here to do?*

*Neophyte Commandant: To seek further knowledge of Omega, to learn traditions and to swear allegiance to her cause.*

*Basileus: Brothers, have you satisfied Omega beyond reasonable doubt that these friends have met her rigid requirements?*

*Neophyte Commandant: We have.*

*Basileus: What further have they to offer for this wonderful privilege now asked of Omega?*

*Neophyte Commandant: Their lives which they hereby dedicate to the service of Omega.*

*Basileus: Do they offer this voluntarily, uninfluenced by hope of self-aggrandizement or gain of any sort?*

*Neophyte Commandant: They do.*

*Basileus: Are they ready and willing to sacrifice time and effort, and to share their means if needs be to further the cause of Omega?*

*Neophyte Commandant: They are.*

*Basileus: Do they accept the Fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, and*

the sole aristocracy of the intellect?

*Neophyte Commandant:* They do.

*Bastieus:* Are they willing to share the joys and sorrows of Omega, to defend her principles and to maintain her standards?

*Neophyte Commandant:* They are.

*Basileus:* Seeing now, my friends, that you have been faithful in the little things, that in your state of darkness you have placed implicit confidence in these my brothers, that you crave the further mysteries of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity let us together invoke the aid of the supreme Basileus of the Universe. Come, magnify the Lord with me, with me exalt His name: Brother Chaplain, lead us in prayer.

*All shall devoutly kneel during the prayer. At the end of the prayer the members shall say in unison:* Amen, Thy will be done in all things.

*The District Representative, attired in cap and gown shall now call upon the*

*members:* Brothers, draw nigh without fear and assist me to stretch forth the strong arm of Omega in bringing these friends from the darkness of selfish and self-centered lives in to the light and fulness of life in Omega, whose standards are worthy of emulation, whose watchword is service and whose implied motto is: 'Lifting as we climb'.

*The members shall accompany the District Representative into the room in which the oath is to be administered, the Neophytes and Chamberlains remaining. The Oath Chamber reached, the District Representative approaches the Altar (table); the four candles shall now be lighted and the other emblems of the Fraternity so arranged as to be the immediate view.*

*Neophytes shall be escorted into the Oath Chamber, fully obligated and given fellowship in groups of convenient size. As they are obligated they shall remain in the Oath Chamber until the ceremony is over.*

*The first Neophyte having been brought into the Oath Chamber, the District Representative shall proceed to talk on the value, sacredness and significance of the oath. The District Representative recites:* My friends, we are now about to go through the most sacred part of the entire initiation; you are about to take upon yourself an oath which will bond you most intimately to every brother of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and enlist you in a cause with which you will at all times be expected to sympathize, whose principles you will uphold and defend, whose name you will honor, and to which you will give your full support, Think well of what you are doing; think of the responsibility you are taking upon yourself, and of your obligation to the Fraternity.

The taking of this oath is not a matter of mere formality, but a far more serious transaction. It is the centralizing of all the higher forces within one upon a great principle in the presence of Almighty God, the keeping of which immediately decides the man.

Are you willing to take upon yourself this obligation? *Answer yes or no.*

Now inasmuch as you have complied with all the necessary requisites up to this point, and inasmuch as you have concurred with the ideals upon which this organization was founded and have evidenced no spirit other than the highest manhood, I shall ask you to kneel upon both your knees, place your left hand upon the Holy Bible which I here give you, raise your right hand toward the heavens and repeat the oath after me.

I, ... *full name*, uninfluenced by mercenary motives and imbued with a desire to serve mankind, in the name and presence of Almighty God, and of all I hold sacred, and under the sacred seal of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear absolute allegiance to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity to uphold its name, preserve its honor, and guard zealously all that tends to promote its welfare. I further promise and swear that I shall always help a worthy distressed brother protect and help his family, warn him and them of any approaching danger, and hold his secrets when communicated to me as such, as sacred and inviolable in my breast as they were in his before communicated. I further promise and swear that I will support the Constitution of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, maintain its standards, and never prove traitor to any trust imposed in me by the Omega Psi Fraternity; binding myself under no less a penalty if I forsake thee, O Omega, than to have my right hand lose her cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. So help me God, and keep me faithful and steadfast to the end of life's journey.

*District Representative recites:* The moving finger writes, and having writ  
Moves on. Nor all youth piety nor wit,  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

*The District Representative shall proceed to explain and deliver the Fraternity grip to the obligated brothers still kneeling. The Chamberlains shall assist whenever this is necessary. When the District Representative is satisfied that the brothers have the grip he shall command them to rise, saying:* Arise, my brother(s), I greet you in the name of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and on behalf of ... Chapter, through whose influence you have entered Omega's sacred fold. The God of truth and love and peace go with you and sustain you through your life's journey.

*Each Neophyte shall be taken through this procedure and after the last Neophyte has been obligated, the hoodwinks are removed, their clothing adjusted, and the Ritual on Friendship recited to them.*

*The District Representative shall recite:* Doubtless you have often wondered for what those three Greek letters, of which we are so proud, stand. Those letters, Omega Psi Phi represent the Greek words, OPHELEMA PHILIA PSURKIS, meaning 'Friendship is essential to the soul.' This friendship of Omega would strive to unite us into a common bond. This friendship of Omega would strive to lift us from the plane of self, and give us vision of the fullness of joy there is in consecrated usefulness.

Workings as a unit, it teaches us to labor together, and to die together, realizing that there is no Fraternal death; the sun goes down from our gaze, to shine in but some fairer clime. This friendship of Omega would strive to remove the barriers of selfconceit, wealth , station, and class. It would link king and peasant, master and servant. It is likened to the love that existed between David and Jonathan wherein the life of one became part of the life of the other. It would teach us to go out of ourselves in order that a brother may be served. It would teach us to be willing to risk our lives in the effort of saving that of our brother, for it is the covenant made in the presence of Almighty God, whereby one brother becomes the custodian of the other.

To have a friend is to have one of the sweetest and dearest gifts that life can bring. To be a friend is to have a solemn and tender education of soul from day to day. A friend gives us confidence for life. A friend makes us go out of ourselves. A friend takes heed of our health, our work, our aims, our plans. A friend remembers us when we have forgotten ourselves. A friend may praise us, and we are not embarrassed; may rebuke us, and we are not angered. A friend may do that for us which we cannot gracefully do for ourselves. A friend may be silent, yet we understand.

It takes a great soul to be a friend, a large, steadfast, catholic and loving spirit. One to be a friend must forgive much , forget much, forbear much. It costs to be a friend. Nothing else in life costs so much except motherhood. It costs not only time, affection, patience and love, but sometimes a man must even lay down his life for his friend.

There is no true friendship without self-abnegation, self-sacrifice. One of the dearest thoughts of my life is this: That a real friend will never get away from me, nor try to, nor want. to. It is a great and solemn thing to ally to other human souls: 'In this one life we have to live, let us share all things temporal and spiritual. Your joys shall be my joys, your sorrows shall be my sorrows. Whither thou goest there will I go, thy people shall be my people, thy God shall be my God.'

*The District Representative shall now give the history of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, tell its principles and aims, shall deliver his lecture on the duty of brother to brother. He shall recite:* On November 17, 1911, at Howard University, Washington, D.C., the Omega Psi Fraternity

was founded by three men, Brother Edgar A. Love, Oscar J. Cooper , and Frank Coleman, in company with Professor E. E. Just. These three men having thoroughly gone over the situation, saw keenly the necessity of such a movement and decided to plant the first 'Mother' Chapter of a Greek letter Fraternity to be founded in a Negro Institution, at Howard University.

The principles upon which this Fraternity is based are set forth in the four words: Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift. This Fraternity aims to emphasize Christian manhood and scholarly attainments. There cannot be too much emphasis placed upon

manhood, for without this quality no organization can thrive; with it, every organization has the germ to become a powerful influence. Scholarship, although second to manhood, is still fundamental for with a good, strong, manly character, there is usually a tendency toward scholarship: that is to say, there is a concomitant relationship between manhood and scholarship. With these two qualities well developed there should be no fear of the other two—Perseverance and Uplift—for they will fall in all naturally as scholarship does to Manhood.

*The District Representative shall now proceed to discuss the unwritten laws of the Fraternity. These are:*

*The protection of womanhood.*

*The sacredness of the Fraternity badge.*

*The duties of one brother to the other.*

*The proper uses of the Fraternity's grip and signals.*

*The District Representative shall now recite:* You have perhaps wondered at the significance of the several tests through which you passed during your initiation in to the mysteries of Omega. These, my brother were not idle ceremonies; they were significant of the essentials that must characterize your usefulness in the rank of Omega. You were admitted into the Sacred Temple of Omega on four raps. These allude to the four cardinal principles of the Fraternity.

The first test taught you Discretion, which should characterize your every effort. Consider Omega as you pass, and talk and act with moderation and discretion.

The second test exemplified your faith in your brothers and this faith will cause you to receive from and entrust to your brothers such things as you yourself hold inviolable, The third test was to teach the lesson of obedience to the decree of Omega even though to obey would seem eminent death; for with the discretion of Omega, and the faith of your brothers, there needs be no fear of being led astray.

The fourth test was to signify that with the honor and insignia of the Fraternity goes the responsibility of sharing her hardships and misfortunes. The fifth test was to show you that your path as a Son of Omega is often strewn with thorns and your progress impeded by seemingly insurmountable barriers; that with courage you are to undertake all things for Omega, for even as your brothers rallied to you in this test, so that no harm came to you so shall you find the forces of Omega rallying to your rescue from distant and unexpected sources in your hour of trial and need.

On bringing you from the darkness of selfish and self-centered lives in to the fullness and light of life in Omega, you first beheld the escutcheon of Omega, the crossed swords, the glove of mail and the helmet, by the aid of four burning candles. The escutcheon of Omega, bearing thereon the three Greek letters, the significance of which has been communicated to you, the lamp, indicative of knowledge and scholarship, and the star

denoting high aspirations, should teach you to combine scholarship and high aspiration with friendship, which is essential to the soul. The crossed swords are to remind you of the protection to be gained by associating ourselves together. The mailed glove indicates fraternity and comradeship, the helmet, with its closed visor, shuts out all that is inconsistent with the ideals of Omega.

The four burning candles, as did the four raps, represent the four cardinal principles of the Fraternity. Again, I call your attention to these principles. They shall teach, that at no time in your natural life are they to be put out or placed under a bushel; rather are they to so shine that their rays may penetrate and enlighten some less fortunate life. The very effort on your part to keep them trimmed and burning will serve as a standard of your life and association among men.

The pin is your only outward sign of your inward grace. By it you are known to the members of the Fraternity as a brother, and to the world, as a man set apart for the consecrated service of Omega.

This my brother, you shall always wear with honor to yourself and credit to the Fraternity.

*The District Representative shall end this charge with these words:* Long live the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and the principles upon which it is founded.

God save the organization and preserve her ideals.

*Here endeth initiation into the mysteries of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.*

## **Record**

Each newly obligated member shall have a number, drawn by lot and corresponding to the number of men initiated thus: If four men are initiated, the numbers shall run from one to four, by which he shall be known in the Fraternity. With it shall go his college numeral, together with his Chapter designation. Example: 3-22-A, 3 representing the number drawn by lot; 22 representing the year the member finished college or equivalent training; "A" representing Alpha Chapter.

## **Pin**

This is the sacred symbol of Omega and the only evidence worn by the members to signify their fraternal affiliation. It shall be worn on the left breast immediately over the heart and displayed in such manner as to herald the world the wearer as a true and tried son of Omega. It shall be worn only by the member, his mother, sister, or his fiancée when traveling for the protection it accords. Under no circumstances or conditions shall a



member deliver his pin to the keeping or use of any other person or persons than those prescribed, unless he has permission to do so by the Supreme Council of the Fraternity.

### **Language of the Pin**

The official pin of the organization shall contain twenty stones four of which must be pearls and must be present on the pin when other stories are used. The four pearls shall be arranged around the upper corners of the Pin. Across the center of the Pin shall be inscribed the three Greek letters, Omega Psi Phi, above which there shall be a star and below which there shall be a Greek lamp. This pin speaks in a language peculiar to Omega the three Greek letters bespeak the linking of souls as evidenced by the friendship of David and Jonathan, The star tells of our high aspiration. The Greek lamp signifies our endeavors in dark places ever illuminated by the mystical light of Omega. The pearls reading from left to right make up the two sacred words, Fraternity and Friendship, as follows:

1. F-riendship
2. R-ight
3. A-spiration
4. T-ruth
5. E-ndeavor
6. R-espect
7. N-obility
8. I-ntelligence
9. T-hought
10. Y-outh
11. F-raternity
12. R-estraint
13. I-ndustry
14. E-nthusiasm
15. N-erve
16. D-uty
17. S-cholarship
18. H-elp
19. I-ngenuity
20. P-erseverance

### **Grip**

This is the means of recognition whereby we may know a brother in the darkness of midnight, It must be uniform and as simple, yet distinctive as possible. There should be no changes in the grip by the individual Chapters. The Fraternity grip may be described as follows: An ordinary grasp of the hand (right hand) in which all fingers are included, with the forefinger pressing upon the wrist at the junction of the hand and the wrist, two times.

### **Uses of the Fraternity Grip**

The Fraternity Grip is used as a sign of recognition by members on meeting strange brothers, or by brothers of the same Chapter on meeting after absence. It is not to be used promiscuously at every meeting of two brothers. If used on a brother in a gathering of any kind, the grip must be covered by the left hand of the one giving the grip.

### **Interrogation of Recognition**

Upon meeting a brother whose identity it is desired to establish, the following dialogue shall be conducted:

Question: Friend, are you a stranger?

Answer: I am.

Question: Have you friends with you?

Answer: Yes, twenty.

Question: Who is your third (any number up to twenty may be used here) friend?

Answer: Aspiration (or the appropriate word for the number given in the question above as given in the table of names of pearls in the Fraternity Ritual).

The questioning brother shall now say: Count me as your twenty-first: I am ... (the brother should here give his name, 3-16 Alpha or his proper Chapter designation) .

### **Distress Signal**

The distress sign is given by stroking the right eye-brow three times with the first and second finger of the right hand. The answer is given by pulling the lobe of the right ear with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand.

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[Home](#)