

Gamma Phi Beta

TRUE AND CONSTANT

MEET THE GAMMA PHI BETA INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL: DR. JUDY E. GRAHAM (OKLAHOMA)

November 2, 2020

Centennial, Colorado – On June 27, 2020, Gamma Phi Beta made history by hosting our 79th Convention on a virtual platform due to COVID-19. During this time, we elected a new International Council (IC) for 2020-22. Collectively, this IC has 142 years of Gamma Phi Beta volunteer service at local, regional and international levels. They are all active community members and accomplished in their fields. Professionally, these leaders demonstrate deep experience in finance, education, social services, technology, marketing and counseling. Together, they will lead our organization through the next biennium's challenges and opportunities and continue to strengthen Gamma Phi Beta.

We asked each member of IC to answer a few questions about what they hope to accomplish in this biennium, as it relates to [the 2021-24 Strategic Plan](#). Meet Dr. Judy E. Graham (Oklahoma). Dr. Graham is currently serving her first term as a Vice President on IC. To learn more about Judy, check out her bio on [the International Council page on our website](#).



A key aspect of financial discipline is smart decisions. What will you consider before making financial choices on behalf of our Sorority?

The pandemic has had a negative financial impact on Gamma Phi Beta and her members. As a result, financial responsibility is even more important now. My response to this situation is influenced by the work of Greg McKeown and his book "Essentialism." Boiled down, "Essentialism" is about being laser focused on doing what is essential for success. It is about doing the right things in the right way at the right time. In the simplest terms: Define success. Eliminate everything else.

How will you ensure the membership experience is accessible and encourages lifetime engagement?

To address engagement, we must ask ourselves what makes the Sorority important to our members? Most may answer, "It is the relationships I have with my sisters." Times of transition and crisis are opportunities for the Sorority to step up and step in for one another. When I first got out of school, I moved to a city where I did not know anyone. The Greater Kansas City Chapter became my home away from home. My fears about striking out on my own faded as they embraced me. Fast-forward 40 years, and I had breast cancer. The Dallas Alumnae Chapter and Psi Chapter (Oklahoma) sisters supported me through that experience. These are my True and Constant relationships. But that is not the case for all our members. We must do a better job of maintaining our connection with members in life transitions. When a sister faces a challenge, I want one of her first thoughts to be: "Gamma Phi Beta can help me with this." Our members are our best assets. We have so much to offer one another. The capacity for us to connect those members



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to sisters who can guide and support one another is the key. COVID-19 has accelerated our learning about new ways to connect with our membership. But I would like us to enhance our skills and resources to provide connections across our entire membership. Our job is to create a robust network that facilitates that connection. If we do that, our sisters will take it from there and go places beyond imagining.

What will you bring to the table regarding belonging, inclusion, equity and diversity?

We are at an inflection point in history. It is time for Gamma Phi Beta to examine our history of exclusion and decide what type of sisterhood we want to be moving forward. To say to our sisters who represent different backgrounds, "I understand," is disrespectful and minimizes their pain. We need compassion, education and action. I can't help but think about what Maya Angelou said, "When you know better, you do better." As we examine; our Core Values of Love, Labor, Learning and Loyalty provide me guidance.

I understand advancing inclusion and diversity is an ongoing process. Each sister starts from a different place. On paper, I represent the historic National Panhellenic Conference sorority woman: white, middle class, Christian and cis-gendered. To understand where I am in my journey you should know this: two distinct careers broadened my worldview and changed my perspective. For 25 years, I worked as a clinical social worker and nonprofit manager. For another 17 years as an account manager for an international company. These experiences gave me insight and respect for people different from me culturally, ethnically, economically, religiously and in gender identity. My life has been enriched by these relationships and made me a better person. I will bring Learning from others who are different from me to this process.

As a leader in Gamma Phi Beta I will seek first to understand. With deeper knowledge, I can enhance my ability to support others and make informed decisions. We must embrace our sisters as they make this journey. We must Love her as she learns and deepens her understanding. I reject cancel culture movements of walking away and disengaging with others/groups with whom I disagree. I will not walk away from our Sorority. I will stay and do the hard work to move us forward. That is how I demonstrate Labor and Loyalty.

We must create recruitment practices that enhance our outreach to Black, Indigenous, Women of Color, and those who identify as women and first-generation college women. Once a woman is a member, leadership pipelines need to exist to provide these new members with additional skills and ongoing opportunities to ensure our success. These are all things we are currently evaluating and developing. Finally, our four Founders sought to make a place for women in the mostly exclusive male world of higher education. It is now our job to make a place for diverse women within Gamma Phi Beta.

ABOUT

Gamma Phi Beta was founded on November 11, 1874, at Syracuse University by four bold and courageous women. The Sorority's mission is to build confident women of character who celebrate sisterhood and make a difference in the world around them. Headquartered in Centennial, Colorado, the Sorority has chartered 190 collegiate chapters across the United States and Canada and has more than 231,000 collegiate and alumnae members worldwide.



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