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9-14-2009

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Fraternities' scholarship gifts benefit current and future students

Summary: Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi alumni are energized by the opportunity to support current students who like themselves embrace “giving back” as a way of life.

(September 14, 2009)-Community is a key word to University of Minnesota, Morris alumni who are lifelong members of the Beta Sigma Psi and Chi Phi fraternities. As Morris students in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, they promised to always support each other and to “give back” to the campus and community in which they made their home during their college careers. Years later, they continue to do so through the Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi Alumni Scholarship.

Mark Kraft '79 remembers that the fraternity house played an important role in building community: “Living together, joint meals, study sessions, parties, etc. helped build the camaraderie.” In the house, the campus and community servant leaders planned dance marathons for fellow students, Muscular Dystrophy Association fundraisers to help those in need, Halloween haunted houses for community children, and Sunday school lessons for service in area churches.

The fraternities sold their house a number of years ago, but it continues to strengthen bonds between longtime friends through the Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi Alumni Scholarship, funded through sales proceeds and earnings from the sale.

In 1994, coordinated by Scott Nelson '84, Rick Reed '80, Tom Larson '80, and Kraft, the fraternities' alumni association established an annual scholarship for Morris students. Recently, the fraternities' alumni association decided to create an endowed scholarship fund. By doing so, they can tap into the President's Promise of Tomorrow Scholarship Match. In the future, the University of Minnesota will match the scholarship amount awarded from their new fund. Says Kraft: “The matching funds made our decision easier—an easy way to double the impact of our gift.”

The new Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi Alumni Scholarship will be awarded to Morris students based on academic achievement, financial need, and community involvement. Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi alumni are energized by the opportunity to support current students who like themselves embrace “giving back” as a way of life.

Photo below: Beta Sigma Psi/Chi Phi alumni gather for an annual Cannon Falls golf outing organized by Randy Nelson '79.

Front row from left: Dave Peterson '74, Nile Fellows '75, Randy Nelson '79, Steve Heiskary '75, Keith Johnson '81
Back row from left: Krieg Ofstad '73, Eric Larson '82, National Beta Sigma Psi Alumni President Chad Pfister, Mark Kraft '79, Mick Thorsland '70, Tom Larson '80, National Beta Sigma Psi Alumni Executive Vice President Kevin Stinn, Steve Schmeichel '72, Dan Vikstrom '81, John Habedank '79

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.