



THE of Psi Upsilon REVIEW

Prayson Pate Encourages Psi U Brothers to “Seize the Day”

Fall 2013

For the better part of the last 25 years, **Prayson Pate, Chi Delta ‘84 (Duke)** admits he’s had very little contact with Psi U or his chapter brothers. The 51-year-old telecommunications executive remembers “seeing the guys around for the first few years after graduation, and then for me I guess it kind of faded away.”



Prayson Pate, Chi Delta ‘84 (Duke University)

“Suddenly I’m a lot more involved,” Pate says. “And this was a great moment to reconnect – there were people I hadn’t seen in a long time, and I got to contribute from a personal aspect, which is so important.”

During the Convention, Prayson shared stories from his own life to demonstrate lessons and values that have helped him both personally and professionally. Over the past decade, Pate has built a legacy of extraordinary success at Overture Networks, a telecommunications equipment firm he co-founded in 2000 and whose clients include the most prestigious names in the industry.

“I told our brothers that I was going to remind them of some things they already knew,” Pate recalls. “These are some ‘simple but hard’ principles, like *carpe diem* – seize the day, the wisdom of being contrarian, and the value of asking for what you want.”

Pate sees his own return to active engagement with Psi U as a fitting example of seizing the day. “As I’ve found out, it’s never too late to come back and make a difference.”

During his talk, he illustrated that same principle with a poignant family story. “A few years ago my wife’s Aunt Phyllis came to us for help and support. After more than 60 years she had been contacted by a son she had given up for adoption when she was in her twenties. The announcement came as shocking news. My wife and I offered to arrange to host their first meeting at our house, so we could be there to support Aunt Phyllis. It was amazing to see how much alike they looked and acted! Well, they picked up from there and were fortunate to enjoy some very happy times together for the last few years of Aunt Phyllis’ life. And the point for Psi U brothers is, if you’re willing to reach out and take the initiative or accept someone else’s overture, it’s never too late to reconnect.”

At both the chapter level as well as internationally, Prayson also believes that Psi Upsilon Fraternity successfully demonstrates the wisdom of being contrarian. “We’re still the only international fraternity with several co-ed chapters, and I think that says a lot about our willingness to take a risk, to go against the grain or the conventional wisdom.”

A lesson Pate says he was especially grateful to learn at Psi Upsilon was the value of asking for what you want. “I went to a Psi U mixer and one of the guys in my chapter who always had a lot of girls around him told me, ‘If you see some girl you like, just ask her to lunch.’ Well, because of what he said, I did just that. Thanks to him and Psi U, I met my wife that day and asked her out to lunch.” The couple lives in Durham, NC, and has three children, ages 20, 18, and 16.

Prayson Pate is Chief Technologist for Overture Networks, the firm he co-founded in September 2000. He holds nine patents. Pate received a Psi Upsilon Foundation scholarship in 1983 and graduated from Duke University the following year with a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering and computer science. He earned his master’s degree in electrical and computer engineering from North Carolina State University.

New Executive Council Alumni Term Members



Greg Rupp, Phi '81 (University of Michigan) and Matt Eckenrode, Epsilon '04 (Michigan State) were elected to the Executive Council at the Convention in June.

The newest additions to the Executive Council got to Psi Upsilon Fraternity by decidedly different paths.

When **Greg Rupp, Phi '81** (*Michigan*) first stepped on the University of Michigan campus he had no intention of joining a fraternity. **Matt Eckenrode, Epsilon Nu '04** (*Michigan State*) had every intention of joining a fraternity and Psi Upsilon in particular.

A woman Greg was dating at the time who was going through recruitment influenced his decision. Through her he learned that Psi Upsilon was the best fraternity on campus but that bids were very hard to come by.

Greg's UM degree is from the Ross School of Business. He then attended dental school at Northwestern University. Greg now practices dentistry in Shallotte, NC where his treatment rooms face a tidal river.

Greg and his wife Debbie married in 1990 and have two children, Nick and Micah. Nick, a University of North Carolina Wilmington student, won the 2013 National Collegiate Surfing Championship. Debbie and Greg adopted Micah twelve years ago when she was two.

An avid fly fisherman, Greg recently reengaged with the Phi chapter. He was part of the alumni leadership that made the difficult decision to close the chapter because it wasn't meeting the expectations of Phi alumni and the International Fraternity.

Greg is honored to follow William Ducker, Phi '44, the last Phi Executive Council term member who served from 1973-85. Says Greg, "Psi Upsilon is a great organization that promotes values that will continue to enrich the lives of

all who are members and elect to be involved."

Matt Eckenrode's grandfather, John Eckenrode, Epsilon Nu '50 had been archon during the 1949-50 term and he wrote to the chapter letting it know that his grandson had enrolled at Michigan State University. The day Matt moved into the dorm he was contacted by several Epsilon Nu brothers. Matt had no reason to look anywhere else.

After graduation from MSU with a major in international studies, Matt returned home to Traverse City where he worked with Morgan Stanley. After spending time in Chicago in the financial services arena, he again returned to Traverse City where he is a financial advisor for Merrill Lynch.

As an undergraduate Matt served as archon and two terms as recruitment chair, along with other positions. He is most proud that during his term as archon Psi Upsilon won Greek Week, in spite of being one of the smaller fraternities on campus.

"When I was archon, my grandparents visited at homecoming. My grandmother, an Alpha Phi, had not been in the house since 1970 and had never seen anything above the first floor as was the tradition prior to the 70's. They were impressed which made me happy."

"There hasn't been an Epsilon Nu on the Executive Council since Allan Wechsler, Epsilon Nu '68 served in the 1980's, so I'm proud to be able to represent our chapter at the International level," said Matt. "I would consider my service a success when we engage more alumni from chapters not currently represented at the International level. And I look forward to helping with the successful reactivation of the Phi."

Molded by Hammers and Gavel

Spotlight on Scholarship: Aegir Olsen, Theta Theta '14 (University of Washington)

"I pay for every dollar of my school, and my room and board," says **Aegir Olsen Theta Theta '14** (*University of Washington*). "So when I found out I was granted the Michael D. Oberg Theta Theta '88 Award, it was a great privilege. This scholarship is going to help tremendously."

It's been a whirlwind journey for this chapter president who says he arrived at the University of Washington "having never heard of a fraternity before." But when some Theta Thetas took him on a tour of their magnificent house on campus, Olsen was immediately intrigued.

"I'd worked in the construction and remodeling industry during high school. So when they started showing me all these themed bedrooms and telling me I could move in and do whatever I wanted to improve the rooms, I just thought that was the coolest thing! I knew in the dorms, you can't even put a picture up on the wall, and that wasn't my kind of living."

During his first two years at the chapter, Olsen became involved in numerous campus activities while serving as the Theta Theta's Dance Chairman. He was a pole vaulter on UW's track team and became involved in both the Sales Club and the AMA Marketing Club on campus. He and his big brother Hans Larson, Theta Theta '13, went into the construction business together as 50-50 partners, with plans to buy, remodel, and resell area properties.

Aegir decided to run for archon because he said the Theta Theta was a great chapter that he believed had a lot of potential to be even better. Shortly after his election Olsen attended the Archons' Academy at the International Office in Indianapolis. "It was a three-day training event where all the presidents got to meet, network, and take part in leadership training. It was shocking to meet people you've never met before and yet you already feel close to them because of your similar experiences. It was a crazy paradox because every chapter and every president could be so different, but you still hold the same traditions and values."

His leadership skills are paying off in numerous ways for the chapter as its ramped up recruitment efforts are making for a very robust fall season. "We're already way ahead of where some much larger fraternities are this year." With the financial backing from a couple of alumni, Olsen renovated the billiard room and repaired the chapter's oft-vandalized outdoor basketball court. "I organized building a fence around it, too, so it's safer. Now the ball can't go into the street and it's more private. It's these kinds of improvements that really bring the brothers together."

Aegir Olsen says when he thinks about where he was as an incoming freshman and where he is today, his Psi Upsilon experience has defined who he is. "Being in this chapter probably determined my career. And in fact, I don't think I would have fit in here at UW if it weren't for Psi U. I gained confidence and I had the chance and the confidence to try this business venture with Hans."



Aegir Olsen, Theta Theta '14 (University of Washington)

Olsen says he is particularly grateful to alumni whose generosity has made it all possible. "Saying thank you is good, but I know our alumni aren't doing it to be recognized. They need to see that Psi U is going in the right direction; that we're the kind of people they want to support because we're making them proud. So I think we owe it to them to keep our GPA up, not get into trouble, and keep being good people."

Aegir is eager for his post-graduate involvement with Psi U. "It's cool to see the reaction of our brothers when an alumnus comes back and shows he cares. That's what I want to contribute. I see future Psi U's being my employees in years to come, or I'll just come back and paint a room or help out however I can."



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1

THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

an annual program held in conjunction with the Convention is made possible by Annual Fund contributions from you and others.



2

TWENTY-THREE UNDERGRADUATES

received scholarship grants totaling \$34,000 for the 2013-14 academic year, also made possible by gifts from you and others to the Annual Fund.



3

THE FOUNDERS' SOCIETY

recognizes donors who give \$250 or more to the Annual Fund in a calendar year. So far this year, that includes 126 brothers.



4

PSI UPSILON FOUNDATION DIRECTORS

and Executive Council members serve at their own expense for travel and lodging to events and meetings.



5

UNDERGRADUATE MEMBERSHIP

grew by 5% last year to 1,321 brothers on 27 campuses.

6

THE AVERAGE GIFT

to the Annual Fund is \$205, although gifts of any amount help Psi U build a strong fraternity.

