

# HONORING OUR PAST 100 YEARS

## Beta Rho's Vision for 2025



### Sigma Chi's Centennial Celebration

#### An Unforgettable Weekend Celebrating 100 Years of Beta Rho

##### It was FUN!

Yes, everyone who attended the once-in-a-lifetime Beta Rho centennial celebration agrees that the three days were loaded with fun, old stories, and new adventures.

The organized weekend began Thursday afternoon with a welcome reception at the GranTree Inn. Refreshments and appetizers were served, and lots of brotherly grips, back slapping, hugs, and comments like, "I haven't seen you since..." were shared. Though the reception was billed to start at 4:30 p.m. and conclude four hours later, some eager brothers arrived at 4 p.m. and many stayed until well after 9. We managed to capture lots of group photos and individual pictures of the brothers who attended the reception.

Friday morning, some of the more adventurous brothers and guests went on a rafting adventure down the Madison River. By all reports, they had a great time, enjoyed beautiful weather, and saw some fabulous scenery as they floated along the river. Other attendees broke out their golf clubs and participated in a Beta Rho Scramble at Three Forks, where the confluence of the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers form the start of the Mighty Missouri. Still, other groups wandered the town to explore old haunts and make interesting discoveries or opted to take a guided tour of the MSU campus, where they were shown some of the stunning new buildings that were constructed since their last visits. The participants told your reporter that all of the activities were big hits.

Sigma Chi Grand Consul **Tommy Geddings**, South Carolina '85, Grand Pro Consul **Steve Schuyler**, Arizona '79, MSU President Waded Cruzado, several dignitaries, and 425 brothers and guests attended the main event Friday evening—the centennial banquet, hosted at the MSU Strand Union Building conference center. Over dinner, dignitaries spoke and famed cowboy poet and Significant Sig **Wallace McRae '58** recited a poem.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation narrated by two younger alumni who served as emcees. The duo chronicled key events in Beta Rho's 100-year history and recognized certain brothers who were a prominent part



*A group of Beta Rho brothers and their spouses are treated to a guided tour of the MSU campus on Friday of the centennial weekend.*



*Dillon Haskell '15 and Ryan Donahue '06 led us through key events in Beta Rho's 100-year history.*



*Significant Sigs and Order of Constantine at the banquet: Paul "Butch" Funk '61, Wally McRae '58, Dave Kem '67, Bill Johnstone '66, Curt Biller '87, and Ron Lewis '88.*

of our history. The presentation began with the year 1914 and detailed our predecessor and local fraternity roots, much of which was unbeknownst to many members. The organizing team of brothers dug up some great photos from the chapter archives and displayed them on two huge screens throughout the presentation. During the evening's festivities, we celebrated two members, **Dave Kem '66** and **Ron Lewis '88**, who were recognized as Significant Sigs by Sigma Chi International Fraternity. Dave's and Ron's honors give Beta Rho a total of nine Significant Sigs to date.

Significant Sig Lt. General **Paul "Butch" Funk '61 (Ret.)** spoke of the major role Beta Rho men had in the two World Wars, Vietnam, and the conflicts in the Middle East. At the end of the evening, Brothers Funk and Geddings presented each of the military veterans in attendance with the Sigma Chi Foundation's Military Service Recognition Pin. All brothers present who have been Sigma Chi brothers for more than 50 years received a 50-year pin from the International Fraternity. The veterans gathered for a group photo with actives and alumni, accompanied by the 2016 and 2017 Sweethearts of Sigma Chi.

Bright and early (or so it seemed) Saturday morning, over 100 brothers participated in the Sigma Chi Ritual performed by the active chapter, an important event for Beta Rho given the breadth of years represented by the members in attendance. Many attendees considered the event moving as they had not witnessed a Ritual in several years. The open house and come-and-go luncheon at 722 South Willson Avenue were next on the itinerary; active brothers had arranged for a large tent in the back lot that perfectly accommodated the unusually warm, sunshiny, Montana fall day. Attendees lingered for hours to enjoy discussions with classmates and to meet brothers from other years. The open house was followed by a monstrous tailgate of a couple hundred Sigma Chis at Bobcat Stadium, followed by a football game that our Bobcats could have won, but came up short in the final minutes.

The centennial celebration weekend was a fabulous event. We all left with renewed and intensely positive feelings for the future of Beta Rho Chapter.

#### Campaign Status At-a-Glance

Total Raised as of November 10, 2017:

\$1,469,245

Number of Contributors: 184

Number of Active Alumni: 1,268



# A CENTENNIAL GIFT TO REMEMBER

## Gerald “Gerry” Steinbrenner ’81 on Giving Back to Beta Rho

As the grandson of a Sigma Chi from the Beta Delta chapter, **Gerald “Gerry” Steinbrenner ’81** had a predestination that pulled him toward the fraternity. Both his mother and father were Greeks, and they encouraged him to get informed about the chapters at Montana State University and go through formal recruitment.

Sigma Chi stood out to Gerry because “its chapter house was a good source of camaraderie, brotherhood, and academic assistance,” he recalled. As an undergraduate, he always looked forward to Derby Days and cheering on the Cats.

Gerry found an outstanding mentor in his chapter advisor, **Ritchie Secor ’71**, and made friends of **Dean Stensland ’80** and **Thomas Farago ’79**—men he remains in touch with today. “Dean, Tom, and I had tailgate spots at the main entrance for nearly 25 years,” Gerry noted. “We still return to campus from Missoula for home games.”

The memories from Gerry’s active years and the friendships with his chapter brothers that have endured for decades are because of his membership in Sigma Chi. When Beta Rho announced their capital campaign, *Honoring Our Past 100 Years: Beta Rho’s Vision for 2025*, Gerry knew he had to help.



A capital campaign is an opportunity to express your commitment to, love for, and confidence in your fraternity, which Gerry believes is extremely important. “I revisited the chapter house at the 100th anniversary celebration,” he said. “It appeared to me that nothing had been updated since I entered college in 1977.” Seeing for himself that his beloved Beta Rho home was desperately in need of updating motivated Gerry to make a contribution to the chapter. Any size contribution is a huge help, and Gerry believes all Beta Rho brothers should consider giving to the campaign.

Following his graduation from MSU, Gerry enrolled in Gonzaga University’s law program, where he earned his juris doctor. He attended the University of Florida as well, earning his masters’ degree in tax law. “I now work in Missoula as a business attorney,” stated Gerry. “I have a mounted Bobcat in my office, which does not seem to adversely affect my business,” he joked.

Gerry is the father of adult daughters, Katie and Sydney, who both reside in California. When time permits, he likes to ski, fish, and travel. You can connect with him at [fishlaw@bigskylawyers.com](mailto:fishlaw@bigskylawyers.com).



Stan Klimas ’67 and Gary Richards ’68 enjoy the Friday night program during the banquet.



A welcome reception for alumni was hosted Thursday evening at the GranTree Inn.



Alumni flip through log books and recount memories during open house luncheon at the chapter house on Saturday.



Brothers enjoy floating down the Madison River on Friday morning.

## Sigs Recount Their Centennial Celebration Experiences

“Beta Rho Sigs, led by **Rick Dissly ’66**, **Bill Gum ’66**, and **Norm Achen ’66** (and their wives), put together a wonderful, fun-filled 100th year celebratory event at MSU. Scores of alumni of all ages returned for the event and it was as if we’d never left school! Conversations picked up right where they left off years ago. The active Sigs were amazing in the way they greeted and welcomed us back to the chapter house and campus. It felt great to be a Sigma Chi at MSU again! My hat goes off to a fine band of new brothers.” —**William “Bill” Breeden ’65**

“The centennial celebration of Beta Rho will hold special place in the collected memories of my life as a Sigma Chi. Ever since I first wore the White Cross, I counted down to this date with high hopes and expectations. I’m pleased to say those expectations were not only met, but exceeded! Having not revisited the MSU campus in over 20 years, it was a genuine thrill to see how much the old stomping grounds had changed, and in many ways, had not changed much at all. The celebration and ceremonies were well-planned and executed, and I offer my sincere thanks to **Rick Dissly ’66**, **Bill Gum ’66**, **Norm Achen ’66**, and all those involved on a job well done!

The greatest joy I received came from rekindling the bonds with those high-minded men and gentlemen I so proudly call my brothers. With each smiling face and firm handshake came a flood of fond memories tied to those spaces and places we all shared while at 722 S. Wilson—the sauna, brothers bar, bulls room, RC, SUB, Renne Library, intramural fields, Mount Baldy, the Pickle Barrel, and of course, the Rockin’ R Bar. I look forward to the next time I can return home again to ol’ Beta Rho of Sigma Chi!” —**Daniel Conway ’96**