

The University of Toledo Archives  
Manuscript Collection

Finding Aid

➤ Pi Kappa Alpha Records, 1915 to 1990 ◀  
UM 74

**Size:** 1.25 linear feet

**Provenance:** Pi Kappa Alpha; 3-25-92; 10-12-96; 1-6-98; 2-1-98

**Access:** Open

**Related Collections:**

**Processing Note:**

**Condition:** Good

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**Location:** R 2/S C

**Completed by:** Barbara Floyd, March 18th, 1998

### **Biographical/Historical Sketch**

In 1915, University of Toledo Students J. Howard Kramar, William H. Tucker, Jr., and Leonard R. Christman wanted to start an organization to “bring men of similar tastes and interests into a closer contact with one another”. The men recruited others whom they felt fit with the ideals of the organization, and started what became known as the Cresset Fraternity. This was the first fraternal organization at UT, although it was a secret organization in its early years. The goal of the fraternity was to “foster the spirit of Friendship, Unity, and Study among its members; to keep open minds about all subjects; to forward all just causes and to work with the best interests of the Fraternity and the University”. Among its early accomplishments was to help found the first student council at the University. It sponsored a Freshman/Sophomore Contest, which became an annual event and held its first annual banquet in 1918.

Dr. Howard H. M. Bowman, chair of the Department of Biology, became faculty advisor to the group in 1919 in a position he held until 1958. The fraternity changed its name to Phi Kappa Chi, and was incorporated under the laws of Ohio. In October 1922, the group built the first fraternity house on the university’s campus, which was then located at Parkside and Nebraska on the site of the current Community and Technical College. The building was constructed entirely by the fraternity members and was used for social events and as housing for out-of-town members. Several fires, including one in 1924 and 1930, forced the group to relocate several times. An alumni chapter was formed in 1924, and in 1926, the fraternity organized a homecoming reunion for its alumni, which continued as a tradition for many years.

In 1955, Phi Kappa Chi affiliated with the national fraternity Pi Kappa Alpha, and became the Epsilon-Epsilon Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha. The alumni chapter changed its name to the Pi Kappa Alpha Alumni Association. The fraternity moved several more times- in 1966 to a duplex at 1795 W. Brancroft, and in 1975 to 2955 Dorr St. This property was called the “Bowman Estate” in honor of Dr. Bowman. The group resided here until 1991, when it moved to McComas Village. The land on Dorr St. was sold as the site for the new Corpus Christi Parish.

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**Scope and Content Note**

This collection documents the history of the Epsilon-Epsilon chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha and its predecessors, the Cresset Fraternity and Phi Kappa Chi. Included is the original minute book of the Cresset Fraternity dating 1915-1920, and a typescript copy. Also of notes is a pledge ritual book of Phi Kappa Chi and a printed history of Pi Kappa Alpha. Several scrapbooks that appear to have been compiled by member Elmer Lang document the early years of Phi Kappa Chi. For related material on Lang, see the Helen and Elmer Lang Collection, UM 89.

Also included is a microfilm copy of the contents of the cornerstone of the fraternity's house on Dorr St. that was demolished in 1997.

The collection is arranged alphabetically and chronologically within each folder. The collection also includes two artifacts, a sweatshirt and active pin, which have been added to the artifact collection as ARF-106 and AFR-107.

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**Folder List**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
1	1	Alumni Roster 1983
1	2	Cornerstone Collection (microfilm) 1939
1	3	Cresset Fraternity, constitution and bylaws 1917
1	4	Cresset Fraternity, minute book 1915-1920
1	5	Cresset Fraternity, minutes book (typescript) 1915-1920
1	6	Guest Book, H.H.M. Bowman retirement party 1957
1	7	Legal and real estate papers 1932-1956
1	8	Ledger, 1922-1923
1	9	Miscellaneous 1950s-1970
1	10	Phi Kappa Chi Alumni Chapter banquet photos, ca. 1980s
1	11	Phi Kappa Chi becomes Pi Kappa Alpha 1955
1	12	Phi Kappa Chi constitution, bylaws, history 1921-1947
1	13	Phi Kappa Chi history of mothers and wives club
1	14	Phi Kappa Chi Homecoming 1925-1936
2	1	Phi Kappa Chi minutes and reports 1931-1944
2	2	Phi Kappa Chi News 1923-1948
2	3	Phi Kappa Chi pledge ritual book
2	4	Phi Kappa Chi Scrapbook 1924-1936
3	1	Phi Kappa Chi Scrapbook 1926-1965
3	2	Phi Kappa Chi Scrapbook 1927-1935
3	3	Pi Kappa Alpha preamble and history 1990
3	4	Publications 1930-1975