



The Teke Speak

Epsilon-Omicron • Tau Kappa Epsilon • University of Houston

Spring 2021

Strengthening Our Teke Ties

Epsilon-Omicron Launches New Alumni Communications Program

Second only to **Bob Planck '67**, I think I am questioned the most about what is happening at Epsilon-Omicron. It seems throughout my years as an undergraduate I was asked that question the most. For more than half a century, TKE has played a major role in the development of young men at the University of Houston. Since our founding as Rho Beta almost 70 years ago and initiation as a TKE chapter on May 26, 1956, we have initiated nearly 1,200 men. We now have 70 undergraduate members, and many of our alumni would agree that TKE made a significant impact on their lives while at University of Houston.

I can't think of a time better than the present to celebrate our bond as brothers and the recent successes of the active Chapter. In the last two years, Epsilon-Omicron has won back-to-back Top TKE Chapter awards, which is something that hasn't been done since the 1990s. Epsilon-Omicron is doing very well.

Increasing Communication

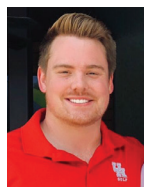
We've also decided to increase our alumni engagement. The TKE Alumni Association, TKE Board of Advisors, and the active Chapter have all committed to an equal investment into building a formal alumni engagement program. Our goal will be to produce a newsletter each semester going forward. We have enlisted Pennington & Company to help us with the newsletter and organize our alumni base; Pennington is a recognized leader in fraternity and sorority alumni organization assistance.

The Teke Speak newsletters will contain information on upcoming Epsilon-Omicron events, news on alumni, and updates from the undergraduate members and officers. This in tandem with the revival of the Tau Kappa Epsilon - University of Houston - EO Chapter Facebook group that has gained almost 400 new members this past year. This shows that Epsilon-Omicron Tekes are in a prime position to rebuild our strong alumni ties.

Update Your Information

Included in this newsletter is a records update form. I encourage you to update your contact information and return it to our communications team. This will allow us to better serve alumni and even feature you in future editions of this newsletter!

I welcome any feedback on this new plan and encourage you all to reconnect with the active Chapter. It is my hope that this investment will remind you that our experience with TKE didn't end upon graduation, but merely began.



Yours in the Bond,

Cole Conner '16

Tau Kappa Epsilon Alumni Association
Chair of Alumni Engagement
(956) 572-4580
cole@coleconner.com

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF EPSILON-OMICRON

OCTOBER 22-24, 2021

Friday, October 22

65th Reunion dinner at
UH Hilton grand ballroom

Saturday, October 23

Homecoming game TKE block vs. ECU
Open house at the fraternity house.

Sunday, October 24

Undergraduate vs. alumni
softball game

RSVP at **HoustonAlumni.com** and search TKE. Please send any questions to **John Cox '81** at **jwcoxiii@yahoo.com**.
For the hotel block at Hilton University of Houston Hotel, call 832-531-6325 with the group name
TKE 65 Anniversary Celebration and code TKE65.

A BETTER MAN BECAUSE OF RHO BETA

Gene Hammons '56 Cherishes His TKE Experience

Gene Hammons '56 didn't know what he was getting himself into when one of the Beta Rho brothers asked him to join a new fraternity on the University of Houston's campus, but he's so glad he did. Rho Beta gave Gene a sense of leadership that has remained with him ever since. Once UH allowed national fraternities on campus, Gene and his Rho Beta brothers were proud to officially be members of Tau Kappa Epsilon and its no-hazing tradition. Gene was the 13th member to be initiated into Epsilon-Omicron.

"We got to take charge and make things happen," Gene said. "We were invited to a lot of functions in the city. We went to the mayor's house and he would talk to us about his role. It showed me a side of life that I wouldn't have seen, socially, if I didn't join."

Gene served as treasurer of Rho Beta before being elected president. Between everything he learned while earning his general business administration degree and TKE, Gene had all the tools he needed to start a long and successful career in economics and finance. He went to work for a regional brokerage firm, became a partner, and stayed there for 23 years. He then started a company in the 1970s and taught people about asset allocation with pension and public plans. Gene ended his career in investment management services and retired at 86.

"If it hadn't been for UH and Rho Beta, my career wouldn't have reached the heights that it did," Gene said. "UH gave us the opportunity to go to college that we wouldn't have had otherwise. The Rho Beta



Gene Hammons '56 holds a photo of his composite.

experience was a huge plus."

Even with all the number crunching Gene did throughout his career, he still remembers some important monetary figures from shortly after Rho Beta's founding. Rho Beta had a big fraternity house that included a dining room, sunroom, breakfast porch, and bedrooms rented for just \$250 a month.

"We had \$1,300 in the bank and went to a furniture store to furnish the house," Gene said. "We ended up convincing the owner to give us a loan to pay for everything!"

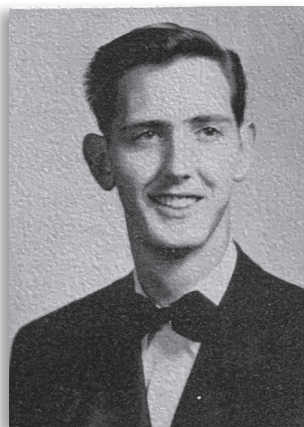
The fraternity house and Frontier Fiesta were among Gene's favorite memories from his time as an undergraduate. He's enjoyed reminiscing about those fun times recently with **Bob Planck '67** and **Cole Conner '16**

when they came to visit.

"I stay connected with University of Houston alumni through the Cougar Lunch bunch," Gene said. "I'm pleased to hear that TKE's existence has continued over the years."

Along with reflecting on Rho Beta's beginnings, Gene has enjoyed sharing about how successful his family has been with his TKE brothers. He has five sons, one daughter, 10 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

"I've done everything I've wanted to do in life," Gene said. "I've been a sailor, offshore fisherman, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather."



*Above: Rho Beta's yearbook page when Gene Hammons '56 was secretary in 1951.
Right: Gene with his family.*





Tanner Kincannon '20,
Alex Romero '20 and
Zach Schroeder '20 at
the Red Carnation Ball.



Looking Forward to a Fun-Filled Fall Semester

Active Fraters Excited to Build Upon Successful Spring



Austen Allnutt '19 and Zach
Duane '19 awarding the Top
Teke Recruiter Award to
Zach Schroeder '20 at the Red
Carnation Ball.

I am honored and thrilled to update our loyal alumni on the state of the active Chapter and Epsilon-Omicron's vision for the future in this inaugural issue of *The Teke Speak*. The upcoming fall semester marks a turning point for the undergraduate brothers. We got a glimpse of normalcy this spring and are excited for a fall semester that will feature seeing our families, Fraters, and other friends face to face and not through a computer screen. I'm excited to welcome Fraters back to campus for in-person meetings on Monday evenings at the Chapter house. No powerful, meaningful substitute exists to celebrate our accomplishments in the presence of each other.

Epsilon-Omicron is doing exceptionally well. We raised more than \$28,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and found new ways to give back during the pandemic. Recruitment became one of our biggest focuses this spring, as we initiated 20 new members. Our dedication to academics also paid off in the form of a 3.4 Chapter GPA. It was a great spring semester for Epsilon-Omicron.

A Bright Future

We are planning to build upon our success from the spring as we prepare for the fall semester. Interestingly enough, almost half of the Chapter hasn't seen or experienced Epsilon-Omicron operating in a pre-pandemic environment. This nuance may be

a challenge to those who aren't used to being all hands on deck. To maintain our pursuit toward excellence, we will be strongly encouraging all Fraters to actively participate in fun activities and the nitty gritty aspects that help our Chapter operate successfully as we work toward our common goals.

Alumni Support

One of the things I'm most excited about for this fall is the opportunity for increased interaction with alumni. I know I'm not alone in looking forward to seeing alumni at the Chapter house, Cougar football games, and other fun events this fall. As we aim to take TKE to new heights at the University of Houston, I encourage alumni to find ways to give back in tangible and intangible ways. As alumni, you can support the fraternity by giving your time through mentorship, socializing, and networking or by giving to scholarships that impact Fraters directly or indirectly by funding travel and registration to educational programs.

Thank you to those who support us. I'm excited to get to know more of Fraters so that together we can contribute to the impact TKE is making at University of Houston. I love my fraternity. And go, Cougs!

Yours in the Bond,
Zachary Duane '18
Prytanis
(713) 538-6722
tkeepresident@gmail.com

Spring 2021 Semester Stats



3.4 GPA



20 new members



70 active members



**\$28,000 raised for St. Jude
Children's Research Hospital**

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Histor (Historian)

John Guerrero '19

Hypophetes (Chaplain)

Daniel Vickers '18

Pylortes (Sergeant-at-Arms)

Santiago Perera '17

Hegemon (Educator)

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INFO UPDATE

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Monthly happy hours first Thursday at
7 p.m. each month starting in September.

Locations TBA on Facebook group
and via email.



TAU KAPPA EPSILON

University of Houston

P.O. Box 442100

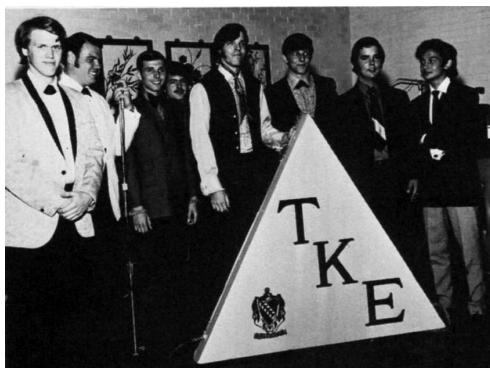
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The Teke Speak

FROM THE VAULT



*New members in 1970 present their
pledge project for the house.*



*The Epsilon-Omicron pledge class
of 1983 at the Chapter house.*

Stay Connected
to TKE Online



uhtke



Tau Kappa Epsilon - University
of Houston - EO Chapter