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H. G. "GIG" WRIGHT 1893 - 1980





"Gig" attended his last national convention when the 28th Grand Chapter Congress convened in 1971 at Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania.

# We Say Goodbye To H. G. "Gig" Wright

Grand President 1920-22, 1922-24  
Grand Secretary-Treasurer  
1924-55

We stood there on that sunny, brisk November day in the beautiful Mt. Emblem Cemetery to say farewell to a man we had known, respected, and loved. We were a small group—Daughter Barbara and her husband, Son Bob and his wife and children, and some Deltasigs representing the fraternity and our own personal feelings for the man. From an earlier, larger service at Hallowell and James Mortuary in La Grange, Illinois, we had come to this final resting place for "Gig" beside his wife, Alice. Since we were few, we felt an intimacy, and had an opportunity to participate in the service. "Love, affection, caring for family," were comments of his children. "He was a Giant of a man," said it all for his achievements as a professional and for the fraternity.

Born on December 22, 1893, H. G. "Gig" Wright died on November 18, 1980, in La Grange, Illinois, which was his home. He had served the fraternity in countless ways. He was a man of vision, a man of character, a man of ideals, and had a steadfast devotion to Delta Sigma Pi, earning him the highest respect of all who knew him.

Henry Gilbert Wright was the 156th initiate of the fraternity having been a charter member of Beta Chapter when it was installed on February 7, 1914, at Northwestern University in Chicago. With the installation of Beta Chapter, Delta Sigma Pi became a "national" with two chapters and on his initiation "Gig" began an association with Delta Sigma Pi that was to become his lifetime career. He served his chapter as treasurer and president and served the Beta Chapter House Corporation for 30 years. He was active in establishing the Chicago Alumni Club and as a student had won the Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key.

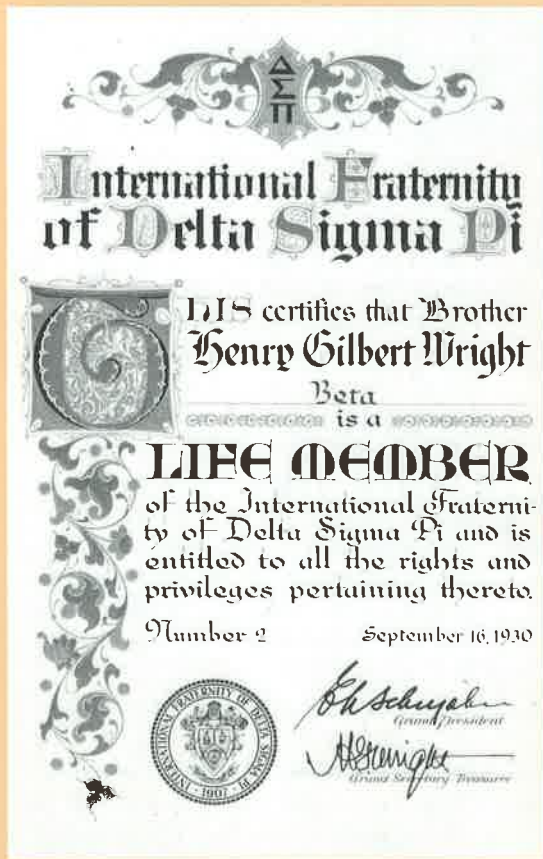
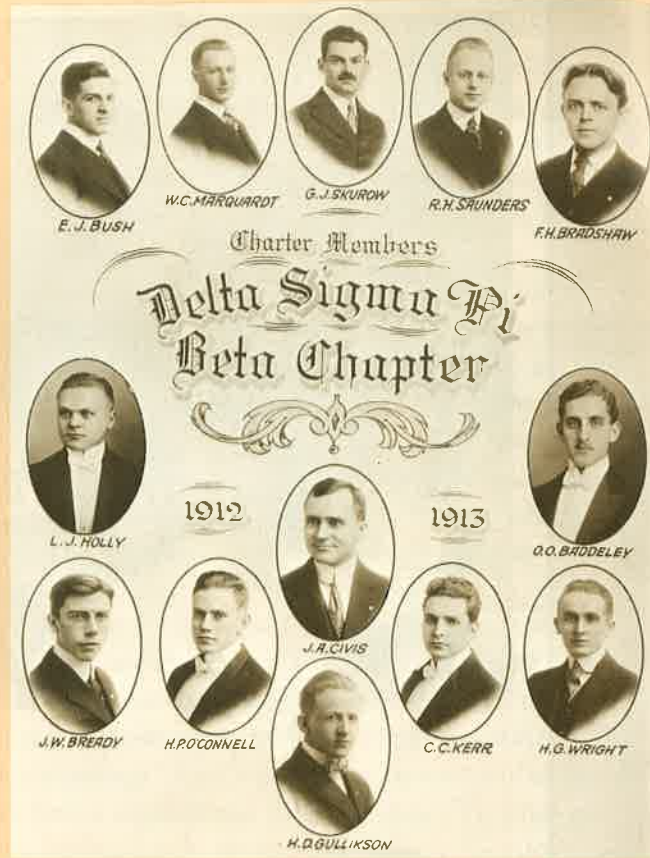
He attended his first Grand Chapter Congress in 1915 and in 1917 he was the official delegate of Beta Chapter to the convention with a total registration of six. He attended nearly every other national conven-

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In 1955 at the 20th Grand Chapter Congress in Detroit, the fraternity recognized "Gig" for 35 years of service to the fraternity at a Testimonial Dinner where the dedication of the new Central Office in Oxford was announced and the portrait of "Gig" along with the dedication plaque were unveiled.

Among the charter members of Beta Chapter at Northwestern-Chicago was H. G. "Gig" Wright pictured at bottom right.



Life Membership Number 2 went to "Gig."



"Gig" at his desk at The Central Office when it was located at 222 West Adams Street in Chicago.





When The Central Office in Oxford was expanded, "Gig," at far left, attended the dedication ceremonies in 1970 along with other Grand Presidents, from left to right, John L. McKewen, Robert G. Busse, Jr., J. Harry Feltham, M. John Marko, and Warren E. Armstrong.



"Gig" in the early days of his service as Grand Secretary-Treasurer, at bottom right, in a photo taken at the 8th Grand Chapter Congress in 1926 in Madison, Wisconsin.



The Grand President J. Harry Feltham, left, congratulates "Gig" at the 1956 dedication ceremonies in Oxford.



"Gig" and his wife Alice attended their last Grand Chapter Congress together in 1967 at the 26th convention in Biloxi, Mississippi.



**Grand Secretary-Treasurer H. G. Wright, right, with Grand President (1930-36) Edwin L. Schujahn at the 12th Grand Chapter Congress in 1936 in Atlanta.**

tion until 1973 when poor health would not permit him to be in New Hampshire.

At the 1920 Grand Chapter Congress in New York, the delegates elected "Gig" to the office of Grand President. At that time there were three chapters—Alpha at New York, Beta at Northwestern, and Gamma at Boston University.

During this same period of time "Gig" had established his own business in Chicago and his fraternity work was a hobby. But, because of his intense interest, he devoted more and more time to Delta Sigma Pi. At the 1924 convention in New York, after he had served two terms as Grand President, he was elected Grand Secretary-Treasurer (now Executive Director) and legislation approved at the convention established The Central Office. "Gig" provided space in his own business office at 222 West Adams Street in Chicago to conduct the affairs of the fraternity which by now had grown to 35 chapters.

"Gig" had sensed the possibilities of service to men in schools of commerce and to men in business, inherent in the ideals of our fraternity, and saw that Delta Sigma Pi could be the realization of these possibilities. More and more of his time

was devoted to the development of Delta Sigma Pi. He established the standard accounting system and uniform rituals, regalia and insignia appropriate to the growing organization. New chapters were installed. The first Biennial Survey of Business Schools was published (the 27th edition will be published during the 1980-81 year).

In 1928 the Grand Council (now Board of Directors) asked "Gig" to serve the fraternity on a full time basis which meant closing his own business. For most of the remaining years of his career he devoted his entire time and effort to the fraternity and a loving effort it was. "Gig" enjoyed his work, was happy in it, and found rich compensation in the many friends he made through his nationwide contacts and in service to a growing organization bound together in Brotherhood.

He was a leader among those working for fraternities and in 1928 he was asked to represent Delta Sigma Pi as one of the founders of the Professional Interfraternity Conference (now the Professional Fraternity Association). He served the PIC for 12 years as Secretary-Treasurer and for two years as President, attending every meeting of this organization until his retirement.

At the 1930 Grand Chapter Congress in Detroit, the delegates approved the office of Grand Secretary-Treasurer as appointive by the Grand Council rather than by election, with "Gig" immediately being appointed to the position. By then there were 51 chapters and about 7,000 members. At that same convention the Life Membership program was instituted, after being proposed by "Gig," with Life Member #1 going to Grand President Edwin L. Schujahn and #2 going to "Gig" (Gig insisting that the first number go to the elected president). Today there are nearly 13,000 Life Members. The resulting National Endowment Fund has grown to nearly \$700,000.00, and has been of invaluable financial assistance to the fraternity and to individual members needing assistance to complete their education.

Under "Gig's" direction, publications continued to improve, the regional organization structure gradually evolved, services to the chapters and clubs increased, and the fraternity became the smoothly running organization as befits a business fraternity.

"Gig" instituted the Chapter Efficiency Contest (now Chapter Efficiency Index) and developed an Alumni Placement Service which helped many members find new or better positions. (The Alumni Placement Service was discontinued as personnel managers and recruiting departments developed.) He attended meetings of the American Association (now Assembly) of Collegiate Schools of Business and was recognized by the Deans as one who had an untold wealth of information about what was happening on campuses from coast to coast and border to border.

It was in these years of the early thirties that Delta Sigma Pi was put to a severe test when the Great Depression forced some chapters to suspend operations. There were times when the future looked dim but "Gig" never lost sight of the fraternity's goals and worked on new



ideas to be implemented when action could be taken. By 1936, the worst of the depression was over, but by the time of the 1939 convention in Philadelphia, Hitler was marching in Europe and the fraternity faced the war years of World War II. In 1939, there were 57 chapters and over 10,000 initiates. During the war over 4,000 Deltasigs went into service, new initiates dropped to 129 in 1944, and only 11 chapters remained on the active roster. Income to the fraternity was almost completely eliminated, and the fraternity faced possible extinction, but "Gig" never lost sight of our goals.

He envisioned the fraternity resuming activities at the end of the war. With the support of the Grand Council, he engaged in other work, preserving the resources of the fraternity and planning for the post-war rebuilding of the fraternity.

In 1945 at the end of World War II, "Gig" had been serving the fraternity for 25 years and that year was recognized as his "silver anniversary." Due to proposed growth of the fraternity an Assistant Grand Secretary-Treasurer was authorized and James D. Thomson was hired for this position, eventually to succeed "Gig" at his retirement. By 1950 the fraternity had rebounded from the war and had 60 active chapters.

In 1955, "Gig" laid aside the responsibilities he discharged so successfully for 35 years. The fraternity stood at 92 chapters and over 34,000 members, with "Gig" having helped install all but 12 of those chapters. At the 1955 Grand Chapter Congress in Detroit, "Gig" officially announced his retirement.

At a special Testimonial Banquet during that convention it was announced that the new Central Office building to be built in Oxford, Ohio, was to be dedicated to him. A bronze plaque commemorating this dedication was to be placed in the entrance foyer of the building. The special designation "Grand Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus" was approved



In 1966 "Gig" received one of the first awards of The Order of the Golden Helmet shortly after his recognition for 50 years of active, continuing participation in the fraternity was approved. Presenting the award was then Grand President M. John Marko.

by the Board for "Gig."

After his retirement, "Gig" continued his other business affairs and participated in his "club" in Chicago. He attended chapter installations and other fraternity functions whenever possible and as many Grand Chapter Congresses as he could until 1973.

Always at his side as she had been during the 35 years of his service to the fraternity was his wife Alice who preceded him in death in 1969. His children grew up amid fraternity activities. His daughter, Barbara, married a Deltasig from Chi Chapter at Johns Hopkins University, Robert L. Stipsak, and now lives in Baltimore. (They were introduced to each other at a Grand Chapter Congress by the wife of a Grand President.) His son, Robert D. Wright, attended Northwestern University in Evanston where he was initiated by Zeta Chapter. He and his family live in Western Springs, Illinois.

For so many years "Gig" carried the torch that the Founders lighted. With the help of outstanding presidents and other national officers serving on the Board through the years, "Gig" was the steady and

continuing force behind the development of Delta Sigma Pi as a truly international fraternity known and respected as The Business Fraternity. "Gig," we thank you for all your years of loyal and loving service. To so many who knew you, you will always be "Mr. Deltasig." We salute you and we thank you. □

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"Gig's" family has requested that any memorial gifts being considered be made to the International Fraternity of Delta Sigma Pi.

The National Executive Committee has designated the previously approved redesign of the entry to The Central Office grounds and building in Oxford as a lasting memorial to "Gig" since the original building was dedicated to him. Contributions may be sent to The Central Office, Delta Sigma Pi, 330 South Campus Avenue, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

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*Your editor gratefully acknowledges those Grand Presidents whose remarks at the 1955 Testimonial Dinner for "Gig" are recorded in the fraternity's archives for much of the background information for this article. □*