

# Thanks for the Memories: 50- & 75-Year Thetas

## 'Fifty years' isn't so long, is it?

Each December, small packages are mailed to hundreds of alumnae living around the world. Sent to those who've reached a special milestone – 50 or 75 years of membership in Kappa Alpha Theta – the small gifts enclosed are received with delight and surprise.

This custom evolved over time. Although many alumnae groups recognized their 50- and 75-year alumnae at Founders Day celebrations, it wasn't until 1954 that such recognition was adopted Fraternity-wide.

Mementos marking the occasions have varied throughout the years, from the first *Golden Link* certificate to a small pansy recognition pin and then a pansy stick pin. Many look forward to receiving this gift from the Fraternity. Others are taken aback – not realizing so many years have passed. It doesn't seem that long at all!



### Shocked – yet gratified ...

*1987... Dear Theta Sisters, I was amazed, surprised, delighted, and horrified to receive my 50-year Theta pansy pin. Delighted you remembered me, amazed it was 50 years! Horrified the years have passed so swiftly by and surprised I feel and am the same Theta who was so happily pledged at Cal in '37. I shall wear it with pride and great gratitude for the fun, friendships and high standards Theta has always meant.*

*Loyally,  
Polly Peters Hutchins  
Omega/UC Berkeley. 1938*



Betty Quarles and Jane Shelder with the cup they won for their chapter at a local horse show. Alpha Mu Missouri, ca 1920

### Taking Stock ...

*1971 ... Thanks for my pansy pin. I suppose it's fine to have a 50<sup>th</sup>, as they say. However, this rather crept up on me! ... Theta did make a tremendous difference in my college life, as I transferred and attended three universities. ... I felt as though I always had a place to hang my hat and the possibility of making friends without too much agony. A good many of the people I knew then I still know now and it's certainly been a basic plus. And it's still a good fraternity!*

*Elizabeth Garrett Haselton  
Beta Epsilon/Oregon State, 1921*



Between 1927 and 1947, Marjorie Child Husted, Upsilon/Minnesota, director of General Mills' Home Service Program, was Betty's Crocker's radio voice on the *Betty Crocker School of the Air*.

### I never failed to appreciate what Theta meant to me...

*1971 ...I am delighted to have the pansy pin so graciously awarded to a "loyal member of our fraternity for 50 years" and shall wear it proudly. I never failed to appreciate what Theta meant to me. It contributed greatly to my development during college years and has indeed given me stimulus and pleasure ever since.*

*Marjorie Child Husted  
Upsilon/Minnesota, 1909*

## Recognizing 75-Year Thetas ...

In 1963, the Alumnae Committee decided to honor those who had been members for 75 years or more (at that time, all initiated prior to 1888). Grand Council selected a pansy pin embellished with the coat of arms for this special recognition.

Once this tangible form of recognition for 75-year Thetas was determined, the Alumnae Committee replaced the 50-Year certificate with a pin as well. A small black enameled pansy pin became the new symbol for those reaching the half-century mark.



## So thoroughly Theta ...

**1984 ...** *The beautiful pin was such a delightful surprise! It is so thoroughly Theta with its graceful pansy as background to the shield. We old ones need to be reminded of the importance and the growth of Theta. To my mind it has always stood for the best in every way. I still wear the pin I received for fifty years in Theta. Now I shall proudly wear the lovely new one, too. Many, many thanks!*

Loyally,  
Marjorie Gideon Maguire  
Alpha Beta/Swarthmore, 1910

## Overwhelmed with memories ...

**1979 ...** *The precious little package has just been opened, and I am overwhelmed with memories at the sight of the beautiful pansy which reminds me of my initiation into Tau chapter in 1902....No girl was ever happier at being chosen, and down through the years the friendships have meant more and more. ... My thanks go to my beloved fraternity for their recognition of this coming anniversary, and for the mutual trust which began so long ago.*

Edith Brownell Harrison  
Tau/Northwestern, 1902

## Attached and connected ...

**2002 ...** *Nestled in among all my Christmas cards was your lovely and thoughtful gift... a fiftieth anniversary pin! This means so much to me.... My four years at UC Berkeley were such special years of growth and learning and friendship.... For 30 years I was a Foreign Service wife living in many different countries.... While living in 31 different houses, my Theta connection somehow kept me 'attached' and 'connected.' So I shall wear my pin with great dignity and pride.*

Virginia Steven Doyle  
Omega/UC Berkeley, 1951



Helen Havens,  
Kappa/Kansas,  
in fencing  
attire,  
1902

On verso:  
*"Oh my name is  
Helen Havens  
and I'm the  
Theta Spear. ...*

*My skirts are  
awful short.  
Every day I  
wear a shirt  
[but] change it  
for a ball.*

*Then I wear a  
yellow gown  
That has no  
waist at all."*

## What Do You Think?

- Collegians: Imagine yourself 50 years from now. What you will be doing?
- Alumnae: How do you think Theta 'made a difference' in your life?
- Visit with a 50- or 75-Year Theta. How has Theta membership evolved for her? How has her membership stayed the same?

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*The photographs and artifacts reproduced in this piece are from the Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity Archives. The Archives preserves the organization's history in order to share its heritage with members and the community at large. A grant from the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation helps fund these activities.*

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## Alums are wonderful ...

**1963 ...** *As a member of the Purdue chapter delegation to the 1963 Indiana State Day, ... the highlight of the program for me was the 50-year Theta awards. One thing that thrills me is the prospect of becoming a 50-year Theta myself. I think alums are wonderful!*

Carol Straley [Trimmer]  
Alpha Chi/Purdue, 1962