

A TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDERS

By Margaret Fowler, Phi State Organization, Kansas

They were Texans, one and all (ten by birth and two by choice)
who had a dream and heard the call.
They could all be described as having leadership, dedication, and zeal.
But most of all, everyone would attest, they were very real.
Let me tell you about those women whom we honor on this day
who were part of that first initiation ____ years ago in May.
Listen now as I call the roll of those
whose legacy we have from many years ago.
A leader, a role model, a woman with expertise and appeal,
Is the first one we honor today with appreciative zeal.
By 1941, because of her, Delta Kappa Gamma had 80 chapters in 35 states.
Yes, she was the one to open the gates – Dr. Annie Webb Blanton.
When we think of the Founders, how do we remember them?
This lady was buoyant, beautiful, and a true friend.
She, too, was a leader, always elected to one more term.
Dr. Blanton chose her, because she stood firm.
She initiated the birthday luncheon and songs to add color to our lives.
And because of her, the Delta Kappa Gamma songs we sing still survive – the lady is Mamie Sue Bastian.
The next lady radiated cheer, courage, and good will.
Because of her ambition, she was the next one to fit the bill.
Although she had a slight condition of the heart,
it did not stop her from being a leader from the start – the lady is Ruby Cole.
Then in Denton, Dr Blanton had a student who learned very well,
and her impact on education time would tell.
As she served in education for 40 years,
the reasons for her being chosen were made very clear – this was Mabel Grizzard.
There was never a doubt in her mind when she chose her career
and left Maryland to find a place in Texas where she could teach and lead.
Anna Hiss was another good one indeed.
Then there were sisters who became part of the group;
to have two from one family was a real coup.
They both loved to travel and go to school.
To have them as Founders was Dr. Blanton's real tool.
Sue was older, just by a bit.
Little did she know that her sis would be such a hit.
They worked hard in their chosen careers
and looked to the future with very little fear – these were the Kings, Ray and Sue.
She made great strides in the field of mental health.
Her work was always for the profession, and not for great wealth.
She came to Texas in the year 1922.
She excelled in the area of mental health, a field rather new – so Dr. Helen Koch was added to the group.
A teacher of Latin and serving as dean at East Texas State,
little did she know what the future would bring to her plate.
Her intellectual acumen, creativity, and steadfastness of purpose made her a key
in choosing officers and founding the Delta Kappa Gamma society.
And she remained a guide until the year 1933 – this was Ruby Terrill Lomax.
The youngest of eight and happily married for one year,

she decided as a widow, to go to school to plan for a teaching career.
When Dr. Blanton met her, she would play a key role
as the constitution, initiation ritual, and program of work began to unfold.
In Texas she is credited with the installation of four chapters including Beta Tau.
There are so many credits, so much leadership, we must remain in awe – this is Cora Merriman Martin.
Remember when married ladies could not teach?
This Founder refused to accept such fate and, in fact,
became one of the first married women in Texas to receive a regular contract.
Because of her educational activities and work, Dr. Blanton saw that she had a good point of view
Imagine junior high teaching, and banishing discrimination against women to name just two.
As long-time friends, Dr. Blanton and Lalla McClatchy Odom installed Alpha Chapter in June of 1929
within a month of the founding the Society, and that was just fine.
Forty-five years in the Dallas School system she taught.
Higher wages and meeting needs of children and teachers were the fights she fought.
The first classroom teacher elected president of the Texas State Teachers Association,
She, the second woman in the position, proudly accepted her station--
following Dr. Annie Webb Blanton, who was the first woman president elected in 1918.
Of course they worked together, and became quite a team.
As Lela Lee Williams was described at the graveside ceremony, and as all of our Founders could be
described:

*She was one who walked humbly, one who kept the common touch when we would have gladly
made her royalty, and she lifted people up to see their own potential of service and touched our
lives in meaningful ways. To live in the hearts of others is not to die.*

And so on this Founders Day – “Women teachers to the calling, let us rally never falling.”
Let us carry on the messages and the work that these women proudly began.