

Remembering Mike Wilson: Theta Alpha's First "Big Man on Campus"

Walking around the Ball State campus with Mike Wilson (*Founder, 1972*) in the early 1970s, was quite the adventure. It seemed like Mike knew *everyone*. Or everyone knew Mike. Our walks would be repeatedly interrupted by students and faculty exchanging greetings, wanting to chat, or seeking advice. And Mike reveled in accommodating them all. It's a wonder he ever made it to class on time.

by Jeff DeWitt
Founder I, 1972

To say that Mike was involved in campus activities would be a gross understatement. Mike unselfishly devoted time and energy into a seemingly countless number of endeavors: Student Senate, Inter-Fraternity Council, Campus Chest philanthropy, BSU Marching and Symphony Bands, Homecoming Steering Committee and more. All this, of course, in addition to his founding, visionary leadership in Alpha Tau Omega. Mike's commitments were not about ego – but his *authentic* generosity. I don't think he ever truly realized the trust he engendered.

As an early member (1970) in the Spartan Social Club, Mike recruited several Brothers from the LaFollette Complex's Edwards Hall. When the SSC evolved into the Theta Alpha chapter of ATO, Mike was the first Worthy Keeper of the Annals. And a few months later, he was honored as the chapter's second Worthy Master.

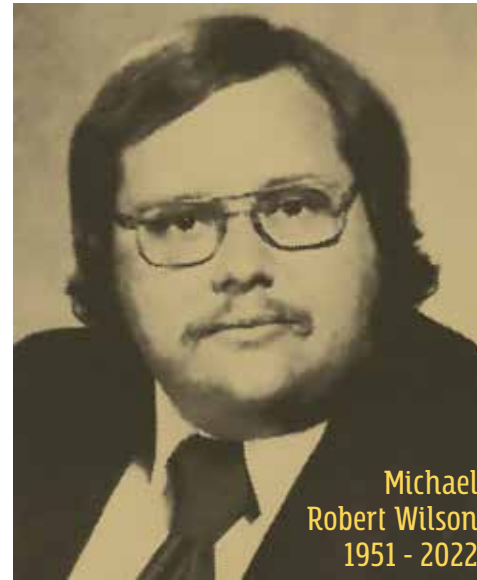
Like most early members of the Spartan Social Club, Mike's vision of "fraternity" extended well beyond that of a mere party organization. His fervent ability to share that vision in recruiting new members helped propel Theta Alpha in those critical early years and ensure it's successful development.

Though Mike's campus activities his senior year prevented involvement in some Theta Alpha events, his representation as the exemplary ATO ambassador to the entire BSU community more than redeemed his absence.

While Mike's vision of "fraternity" may seem quaintly altruistic to some, without his instrumental influence, many of us may never have become "ATO's for Life."

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Theta Alpha's first "big man on campus". His leadership must not be forgotten.

Rest in peace, my Brother. ✠



Michael
Robert Wilson
1951 - 2022

"I worked with Mike as a mentor after college. Always sporting a smile, he was willing to help anyone in need. Mike was one of the heart and souls of ATO from the very beginning."

Gary Zuzolo
Founder I, 1972



Mike (second from left) enjoys an adult beverage with the rest of 1974's Inter-Fraternity Council team at The Village's infamous Chug. Yes, most everyone seemed to smoke in those days.



Rare ATO Colony Shot, 1971

Born in 1951 in New Castle, Indiana, Mike was a 1969 graduate of Lincoln High School in Cambridge City. He received his Bachelors degree from BSU in 1974. Mike worked as the Director of Public Relations at Wernle Children's Home in Richmond. Following his passion for music, he worked for many years as a Brass Instructor and Show Designer at several high schools, including Winchester, Centerville, Hagerstown, Anderson and Angola. He was a member of First English Lutheran Church in Richmond. Mike is survived by his son, Brad Wilson; and brother David Wilson. He is interred at Riverside Cemetary in Cambridge City.

As your Treasurer for both the Theta Alpha Alumni Assoc. and Housing Corp. for the past 10 years, it's wonderful to see the new energy infused into these important organizations.

While I don't envision implementing some grand financial strategy, I'm happy to devote time and apply my expertise to help the chapter.



317.345.0927

Like you, I've been impressed with the spirit and initiative of the team responsible for organizing and promoting our 50th Anniversary Celebration to be held this October 28-30th.

In preparation for this event and the start of the 2022-23 school year, it's also been encouraging to see recent efforts to make much-needed repairs and give a thorough cleaning to our existing chapter house on Riverside.

There are many avenues to help Theta Alpha – from becoming a Board member, joining the Housing Corp., serving on one of the many working committees, or merely providing opinions and advice on the current path of the Chapter. If time prevents your contribution in any of these efforts, please consider donating to the chapter.

Brothers, let's all pitch in and keep this positive momentum going!

A Research Analyst for One America in Indpls., David McConaha graduated from BSU in 1998 with a degree in Finance. He completed his MBA at IUPUI in 2004. He lives in Carmel with his wife Laura (who bought his boxer shorts at his pledge class' charity auction for \$8!) and two children – Quinn, a senior at Westfield High School and Jenna, an eighth grader at Westfield Middle School. When not at his kid's activities, David can be found at iBeach playing volleyball or on a pickleball court. ✠

Honoring our Little Sisters of the Maltese Cross

As we are about to observe Theta Alpha's 50th Anniversary, our celebration would not be complete without honoring the instrumental contributions of a group of that played a huge role in our early success.

I'm speaking, of course, about our Little Sisters of the Maltese Cross. First, a little history. In the infancy of our chapter – the Fall of 1971 – Brother Tom Perkins (Founders I, 1972) was appointed to explore the development and recruitment of an auxiliary organization of young women to act as ambassadors for the chapter. And why not? All of BSU's fraternities had such a group at the time – not to mention that we needed help with recruiting quality pledges during those early, highly-competitive Rush seasons.

All the fraternities appropriately named these groups, "little sisters." So, off went Brother Perkins in search of Theta Alpha's own group. Turns out, Tom's job as Recruitment Chair wasn't as challenging as one might expect. *"We really didn't have any trouble generating interest. There were already a group of friends (and their friends) that came to our intramural games, supported our philanthropy events, and attended our parties – almost everything we did,"* Tom recalled.

To formalize his recruiting efforts, Tom convinced the Chapter to host an event to gauge genuine interest. Invitations to a wine tasting and dinner at a then-popular Muncie restaurant (The Carriage House) were distributed and very well received. Subsequently, each attendee was extended an invitation to join – and every invite was accepted. After Theta Alpha was chartered, the group became known as "The Little Sisters of the Maltese Cross" – and the numbers grew and grew.

Perhaps Brother Morey Cohen (Alpha, 1973) said it best:

"What I remember most about our Little Sisters was how faithfully involved and connected they were to our chapter and the Brothers. Other than Chapter meetings, they were literally a part of every activity and event – and truth be told, they made every event better, more enjoyable and successful." Cohen added, "As for my favorite Little Sis memory, nothing tops 1975's Little Sis Rush when lightning struck, and I saw my wife (Cindy Swayze) of 47 years for the first time across the living room at the house . . . it changed my life forever."

Brother Steve Clark (Beta, 1973) expressed a similar sentiment: *"My favorite Little Sis memory came at 1976's Halloween party at the house. I won the prize for best costume, but the bigger prize was meeting my wife of 45 years (Diane Frey)."*

A number of Brothers eventually became married to a Little Sis. Brothers Wes Olds (Epsilon, 1975) to Gail Smith, Brother Greg Clark (Founders I, 1972) to Mary Willis, and Brother Al Smith (Theta, 1976) to Glenda Jones, are a few that immediately come to mind. I'm so grateful to include myself in this group – with Diana (Turner) and I having just celebrated our 41st year of marriage.

By ATO National decree, our Little Sister program ended in the early 1980s – but the memories live on (see the next spread!).

Our 50th Anniversary pre-banquet reception at the BSU Alumni Center will honor both our Chapter Sweethearts through the years, and our Little Sisters of the Maltese Cross. They'll be the classy ladies wearing a white tea rose. **Please take the time to share a memory or two – and give your heartfelt thanks for their invaluable role in ensuring the success of Alpha Tau Omega at BSU.**

Steve Nall
President, Theta Alpha Alumni Association ✠



Hawaiian Luau Rush Party 1983



Parent's Day 1983
Chapter Sweetheart
Beth Clary serenades.



Tug-O-War 1975



Kathy Olivotto
Tom Perkins
(Founders I, '73)
1971



Beach Party
1977
Alice Mathena



Trike-A-Thon 1976:
Jan Johnson, Robin Barker, Angie McCrary and Glenda Jones.



Bruce Metsker and Sarah Buck at 1977's ATO Washington Street All-Campus Disco.



Deb Plotner 1976
Sigma Nu Softball Tournament



Pledge Class Hoe Down 1976
Valerie Fulton and Carol Schoelkopf



Little Sis Overnight 1978: Susie Hill & Cindy Elbert grab a brew and a cig.



ATO Watermelon Bust Queen 1975
Kathy Walters



Sigma Switch 1975
Linda Green, Angie McCrary, Sue Locke, Deb Robideau, Bev Lidolph.



Little Sister Pledge Class 1977
Sitting (l-r): Deb Robinson, Karen Lough, Tanner Michael, Patti Owen, Deb Silvers. Middle: Stef Lee, Valerie Fulton, Diana Turner, Alice Mathena, Mary Ann Sutton, Sue Rehlander. Back: Linda Harig, Jan Brinkerhoff, Shari Funkhouser, Tyani Compton, Kelly Boyles, Paula Eisele.



Activation Night 1978:
Rusty Bruce with Debbie Eads



Summer Bash 1977
Emma Dodds
Char Payne
Linda Fox



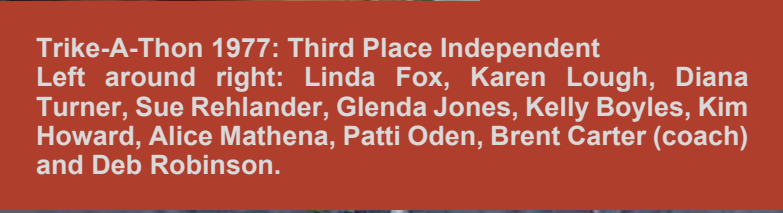
Kelly Cummins reacting to ATO's 1980 Bike-A-Thon Results



Naughty Little Sisses Tyani Compton & cohort Linda Wilson looking guilty after they are caught red-handed spiking the punch at 1978's Valentine's Day House Party.



Meeting 1976



Trike-A-Thon 1977: Third Place Independent
Left around right: Linda Fox, Karen Lough, Diana Turner, Sue Rehlander, Glenda Jones, Kelly Boyles, Kim Howard, Alice Mathena, Patti Oden, Brent Carter (coach) and Deb Robinson.



5th Anniversary, 1977:
Al Smith (Theta, 1976) and Glenda Jones.



Window seat fun 1978: Teresa Heiny, Linda Wilson, Gary VanCleave (Mu, 1976), and Jane Fehsenfeld.



Soft Porn at University Hall, 1978
The gang of voyeurs ready to watch "Flesh Gordon"



Sheri Funkhouser gets funky at 1977's Tug-O-War

Thanks for the Memories!

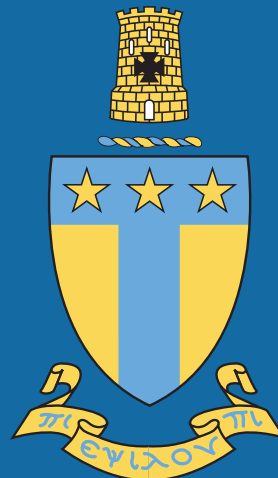
How alumni can help with pledge recruitment

With the 2022-23 school year already in full swing at Ball State, our undergraduate Brothers are getting everything ready for Fall Rush which starts Monday, August 29th.

Here is Theta Alpha's schedule of planned events for the first week:

RUSH ALPHA TAU OMEGA

Monday	08.29	Meet the Brothers	Chapter House
Tuesday	08.30	Dodgeball	Chapter House
Wednesday	08.31	Water Olympics	Chapter House
Thursday	09.01	Dinner at Buffalo Wild Wings (aka BDUBS) BSU vs Tennessee	838 East McGalliard Rd.
Friday	09.02	Stoagies & Hoagies	Chapter House



All events are from 6-8:00 p.m.

Rush contacts:

Lucas Limpin: 708.522.4199 or Reece Guderjan: 815.557.7693

So, how can alumni help with recruitment?

- 01. Legacy student(s).** Are you aware of any parents (including yourself) who were members of Alpha Tau Omega (*at any university*) that have a son who has enrolled at Ball State?
- 02. Referrals.** Do you know of any high school students from your geographic area that have enrolled at Ball State and that you deem a good candidate to rush?
- 03. Attend a rush event.** Connect with one of the rush contacts above to see if you are welcome to attend, or may help with an event in another manner (organizing, messaging, logistics, etc.)
- 04. Sponsor/underwrite an event.** This can be done in a number of ways – as an individual, your company or organization, or perhaps pooling contributions from your pledge class. Recognition of your sponsorship can be handled in a number of ways – t-shirts, giveaways, signage for the house or any approved method to upgrade an event to make it more inviting or special for attendees.
- 05. Donations.** Rush events can be costly and if Theta Alpha wants to be competitive with other fraternities (and they must), your financial contribution (even a modest donation) will go a long way in offsetting expenses for rush events. To make a donation, contact Lucas Limpin at llumpin@bsu.edu.

When and where appropriate, please use or circulate the interest form at right.

Alpha Tau Omega was founded to do good in the world. Recruit year round to find and secure passionate men of high character who will eagerly continue this legacy.



ALPHA TAU OMEGA

Interested in joining Alpha Tau Omega?

Are you enrolled or planning to enroll at Ball State University – and looking to join a fraternity? If so, we highly recommend looking at the Theta Alpha Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega. If you're still reading this, and have interest, please fill out this form to tell us a little about yourself. We look forward to meeting you and introducing you to ATO!

Your name* _____

Where are you from?* _____

I'm going to be a:* Freshman Junior Sophomore

High School Attended* _____

High School Activities* _____

Outside school involvements _____

Are you a "legacy" ATO? Yes Unsure No
(have a relative who was an ATO in the past)

Email* _____
Phone* _____

Anything else you want us to know about you? _____

Thank you for your interest in Alpha Tau Omega at Ball State University!
Please submit this completed form to: Lucas Limpin, Membership Recruitment Chairman, llumpin@bsu.edu

Attention all alumni: welcome to the new world of risk mitigation

by Steve Nall (Theta, '76)
President, Theta Alpha
Alumni Association

Since Theta Alpha's recolonization in 2009, our undergraduates have been living with strict management rules. So if you plan to attend our 50th Anniversary Celebration in October, you too will have to abide by these rules. Anything less puts our Chapter at risk – and the repercussions are severe.

Let me phrase that more clearly. If you're anticipating a raucous weekend with the beer flowing and the customary antics that typically follow, well, prepare to be disappointed.

We all need to understand this new world of Greek life. I know this sounds like I'm "throwing cold water on the party," but I have no choice (and you all know I love a good party). If you think my delivery is acerbic, well, sorry – it was critical to command your full attention in order for you to grasp the significance of current realities.

Whether we like it or not, we live in a different world now. It's called "risk mitigation," and it's serious business:

"Any interest group formed after October 1, 1998 shall be alcohol free and shall remain alcohol free throughout its life as an interest group, colony, or chartered chapter. Alcohol-free means there will be no alcohol in the chapter house or on chapter property. This includes individual rooms in the chapter house and prohibits any individual (member or non-member, undergraduate or alumnus) from bringing in, using, or storing any quantity of alcohol into the chapter house."

This rule is now a mandated policy by the ATO National Fraternity, according to Brian Murray, Director of Health and Safety at ATO Headquarters. The same goes for drugs of any kind and firearms of any kind.

In addition, the expectations of Ball State University are far different than when most of us were on campus. These are outlined in Ball State's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities found here:

<https://ballstate.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=2732&public=true>

The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities outlines behaviors expected and methods used to fairly judge student behavior according to these standards. These standards of conduct apply to students while on campus or off campus, when attending University-sponsored events or activities, or when such conduct involves the security or integrity of the University community.

Why all the severe restrictions? **L-I-A-B-I-L-I-T-Y**. Rising litigation pressures. Crippling insurance rates. What was once a slap on the wrist in our fraternity days is now considered a serious breach of conduct. How serious? Get caught or get reported and expect to be suspended – temporarily or permanently (if multiple or extraordinarily serious offenses have occurred). And if Ball State doesn't step in, our National Fraternity will – potentially revoking charters and temporarily or permanently banning the chapter from campus – again, depending upon the nature of the offense.

We have worked hard to build a relationship of trust with Ball State – demonstrating that we not only understand and fully comply with BSU's expectations in today's fraternity environment – but elevating Theta Alpha as a leading example of compliance.

While developing on-campus activities for our 50th Anniversary Celebration, we engaged Zach Brumfield, BSU's Associate Director of the Office of Student Life. Zach gave us a good perspective of the University's expectations with events like the 50th Anniversary. How University policy will affect our initial 50th Anniversary plans is described at right.

So, consider yourself informed and sufficiently warned. There is no margin of error here. We must comply fully with this "new world" of risk mitigation.

Help us ensure that Theta Alpha continues to be a leading example of compliance.

The consequences of even a single misstep are far-reaching and very serious. ☒

How these restrictions impact our 50th Anniversary

We planned on kicking off the weekend with a cash-bar reception at the chapter house. We will still have an opening reception, but now at Roots Burger Bar, 1700 W. University Ave., from 7-10:00 p.m.

The cash-bar reception (beer and wine only, 5-6:30 p.m.) in honor of our Chapter Sweethearts and Little Sisters of the Maltese Cross at the BSU Alumni Center, has been approved by Ball State's Risk Management Department.

Although an Alumni event, the optics change when an event includes undergraduates. Had undergraduates initiated the request, it would have been denied. Fortunately, we have been approved.

To amplify what has led universities and fraternities across the country to institute strict bans on alcohol, Brother Gary Voreis (Epsilon, 1975) has completed extensive research on hazing – much of which is related to alcohol abuse. Gary's research will be presented in an upcoming issue of The Binder.



University restrictions will not diminish the spirit of our ATO Brotherhood as we convene for our 50th Anniversary Gala. Nor will they deter our opportunity for regaling our past, reuniting with our Brothers known, and unknown, and contemplating the exciting future of Theta Alpha at Ball State University.

Leadership, programming and brotherhood activities filled three days at 85th Congress

Theta Alpha President, Danny Curran came away from his first ATO Congress with a memorable impression and motivation to eagerly apply his experience to his current leadership role. “Being able to bounce ideas off of fellow Brothers across the nation is something that I will cherish for the rest of my tenure as President,” he asserted. “I’ve gained more knowledge on how to leave the Theta Alpha chapter in a better state.”

Brother Curran takes the helm of Theta Alpha in a critical, but exciting period in its 50-year history. Suffice it to say, Theta Alpha’s 700-plus alumni will be watching with keen anticipation as he effectuates newly-acquired leadership skills, tactics and ideas.

Theta Alpha Vice President, Brad Spurlock was equally impressed with his first ATO Congress. “For me, the experience was very constructive. I was able to bond and learn from Brothers from many different Chapters in diverse stages of their histories,” he maintained.

The two undergraduates were among five Brothers representing Theta Alpha (shown at right). Nearly 400 attended the 85th Congress – including 273 undergraduates and 100 alumni representing 138 ATO Chapters across the country.

As former National Headquarters Staff Members, Brothers Towle and Evans enjoyed the opportunity to connect with former and current ATO National Officers, Board Members, and Staff Members. More importantly, John and Bill were able to spend time getting to know Danny and Brad – introducing them to current and former National Officers.

Of special note, Theta Alpha alumnus John Millspaugh was honored with another term as ATO National Vice President. It is with great pride that on behalf of all Theta Alpha Brothers, I offer our congratulations and gratitude for your leadership, your dedication, and ongoing support of Alpha Tau Omega. John has been a unique ambassador for Theta Alpha and has elevated our recognition immeasurably.

Also in attendance were five former Worthy Grand Chiefs: Brian Ruyle, Bruce O’Donoghue, Miles McCall, Tim Clipson, and Jeff Busch. Howe Wallace joined the ranks of former Worthy Grand Chiefs, as the gavel was passed to newly-elected Worthy Grand Chief, Jeff Miles.

Florida Supreme Court Justice, Alan Lawson was inducted as 2022’s Honor Initiate.



by Bill Evans, *Theta Alpha Board of Trustees*



Attending Theta Alpha Brothers (l-r): Brad Spurlock (Class, 2021), John Towle (Founders II, 2011), Bill Evans (Alpha Phi, 1992), John Millspaugh (Alpha Omicron, 1990), Danny Curran (Class, 2019).

Strong representation once again

An impressive contingent of nearly 400 undergraduate and alumni Brothers representing 138 ATO Chapters from across the country enjoyed the beautiful facilities offered at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Lakes resort in Orlando, Florida.

The next ATO Congress location in 2024 has yet to be announced.

Let’s ensure Theta Alpha is well-represented once again!

2022 True Merit Award Winners

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Univ. of Alabama-Huntsville | Huntsville, AL |
| University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa, AL |
| Auburn University | Auburn, AL |
| Baylor University | Waco, TX |
| Bowling Green State Univ. | Bowling Green, OH |
| Clemson University | Clemson, SC |
| University of Florida | Gainesville, FL |
| Georgia College & State Univ. | Milledgeville, GA |
| Georgia Tech University | Atlanta, GA |
| Georgia State University | Atlanta, GA |
| Iowa State University | Ames, IA |
| University of Kansas | Lawrence, KS |
| Louisiana State University | Baton Rouge, LA |
| Mercer University | Macon, GA |
| Middle Tennessee State Univ. | Murfreesboro, TN |
| Murray State University | Murray, KY |
| University of New Hampshire | Durham, NH |
| University of North Alabama | Florence, AL |
| Oregon State University | Corvallis, OR |
| Penn State University | University Park, PA |
| Purdue University | West Lafayette, IN |
| Samford University | Birmingham, AL |
| University of South Alabama | Mobile, AL |
| Troy University | Troy, AL |
| Virginia Tech University | Blacksburgh, VA |
| University of West Florida | Ferry Pass, FL |
| West Chester University | West Chester, PA |
| William and Mary University | Williamsburgh, VA |



ATO National CEO Wynn R. Smiley (Illinois, 1983) addresses the Congress audience.



Coble Caperton, ATO National General Counsel (Rhodes, 1971), greets Shuler Griffin, ATO Foundation Director of Development (Mississippi, 1978).

True Merit Award fast facts: what’s missing?

Of the 28 winning university chapters listed above, an overwhelming number are from the South (18, or 64%); five from the Midwest; four from the East; and only one from the West. Alabama has seven schools represented and Georgia four.

Why is this? It is strangely curious. One has to ponder, just what is in the water down there?

So what’s missing from this year’s list of winners? Ball State University is missing!

Alas, Theta Alpha was not recognized as a True Merit Chapter this year – breaking a string of remarkable accomplishments over several years. However, the Chapter did earn an Excellent Award for Recruitment. Great achievement, guys!

Brothers Curran and Spurlock are eager to challenge, motivate, and lead the Chapter in acknowledging deficiencies, clearly identifying areas for improvement, and executing an achievable strategic plan.

Not earning True Merit status should not be viewed as a failure. But we must own up to the fact there is work to be done. So, let’s get busy.

Alumni *must* be actively involved in this process. The active chapter needs to feel like they have a true partner in Theta Alpha alumni. The school year will have already started by the time you read this issue of *The Binder*, so there’s very little time to waste.

While we have our hands full with plans for our 50th Anniversary Celebration, alumni need to be ready to help execute a plan immediately thereafter.

While we convene in Muncie, I hope this is a topic of discussion between attending alumni and undergraduates.

Watch upcoming issues of *The Binder* for ways you can help as an alumnus. Let’s ensure that the True Merit Award Bowl will once again reside at Theta Alpha! ✨

Housing Corporation collaboration unveils early concepts for Theta Alpha's potential new home



by Rudy Holt (Theta, '76)
President, Theta Alpha
Housing Corporation

In preparation for Theta Alpha's Capital Campaign Feasibility Study to be conducted by the Pennington Group (as described in my *Binder* column in the June issue), a dedicated group of volunteer Brothers have been hard at work the last month researching, designing and finalizing the plans presented herein.

Foremost in our efforts was a full-day brainstorming session at BSU's College of Architecture and Planning to evaluate chapter needs, affordable construction methods, durable materials and flexible expansion plans to accommodate future growth. The collective result was the development of conceptual floor plans and elevation renderings depicting a "lodge style" chapter house as shown.

It's important to note that these are by no means final considerations or designs and should be viewed in that context – just initial concepts. Final plans will be developed collaboratively once the Capital Campaign Feasibility Study is complete – when the Housing Corporation has more definitive fundraising goals and has received input from our entire brotherhood.

This is where you come in. As previously reported, Nick LeMay and Kyle Yawarsky of the Pennington Group will be reaching out to a number of Alumni to conduct individual interviews in the coming weeks to determine whether there is sufficient alumni financial support for a new Chapter House and to determine a realistic goal for the Capital Campaign.

Pennington will also be disseminating electronic questionnaires to the remaining balance of alumni to secure *everyone's* input. Our goal is to provide Pennington's final report to the Housing Corporation in time for the Corporation's annual meeting on October 29th – during the Chapter's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Brothers, please invest the time to work with Nick and Kyle on this Feasibility Study to document your critical input. Your opinions and support will ensure the Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign will be a great success.

Kudos to the team of Brothers who volunteered to produce these concepts

Many thanks go to Housing Corporation Vice President Rusty Bruce (Lambda, 1978) for organizing the brainstorming session and for getting nine Brothers who are licensed architects and undergraduate architecture students to spend an entire Saturday to come up with multiple concepts and then carefully narrow them down to the Chapter House design above.

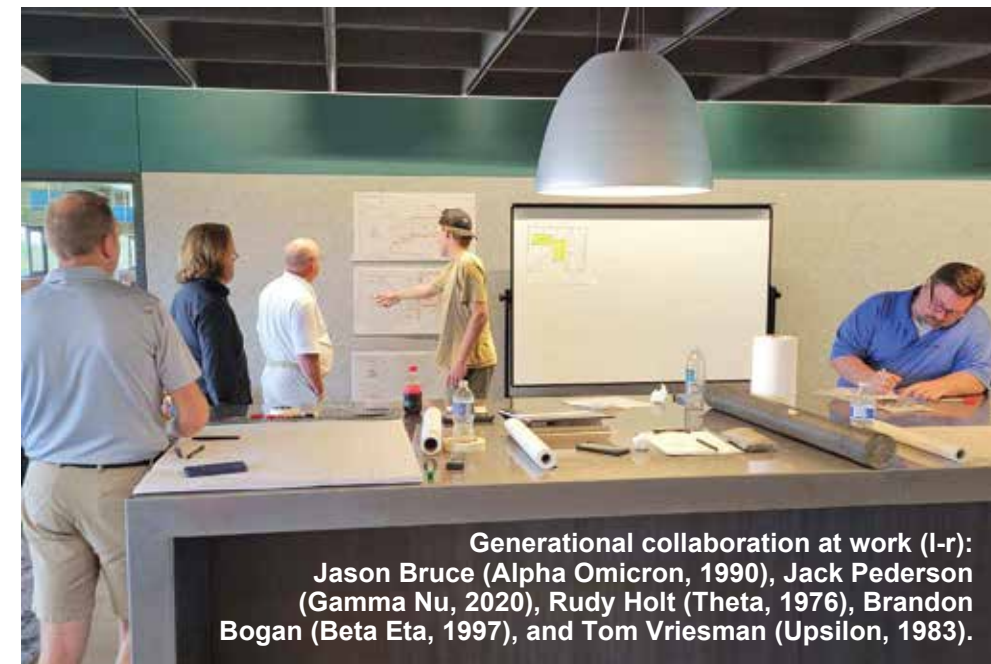
Theta Alpha owes a debt of gratitude to these volunteers:

Alumni:

- Keith Rector (*Founder I*, 1972)
- Tom Vriesman (*Upsilon*, 1983)
- Paul Puzzello (*Alpha Nu*, 1989)
- Jason Bruce (*Alpha Omicron*, 1990)
- Brandon Bogan (*Beta Eta*, 1997)
- Barry Knechtel (*Beta Theta*, 1998)
- David Tremblay (*Alpha Chi*, 1993)

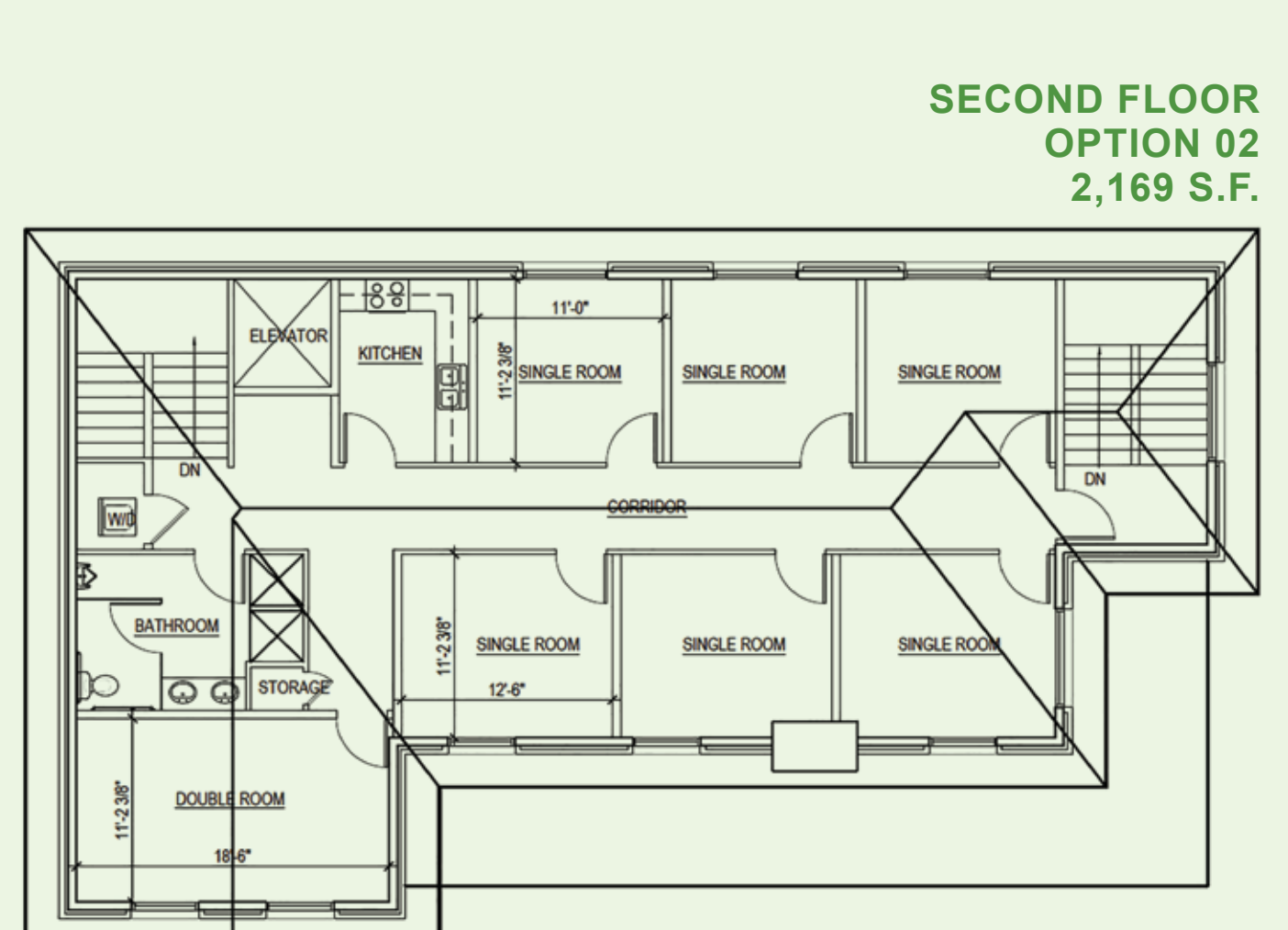
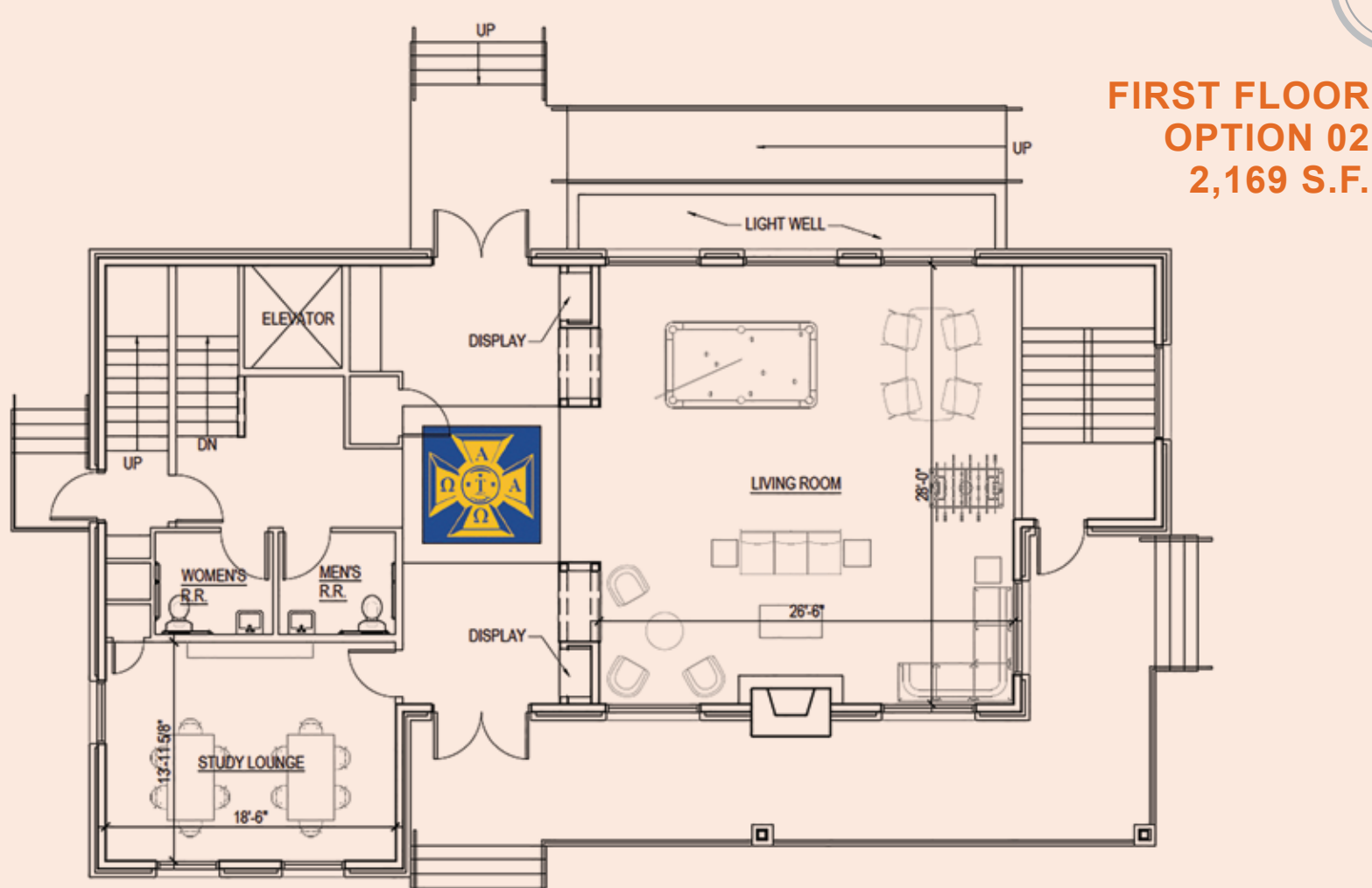
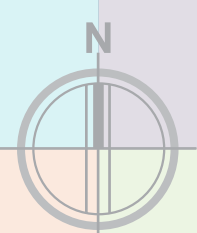
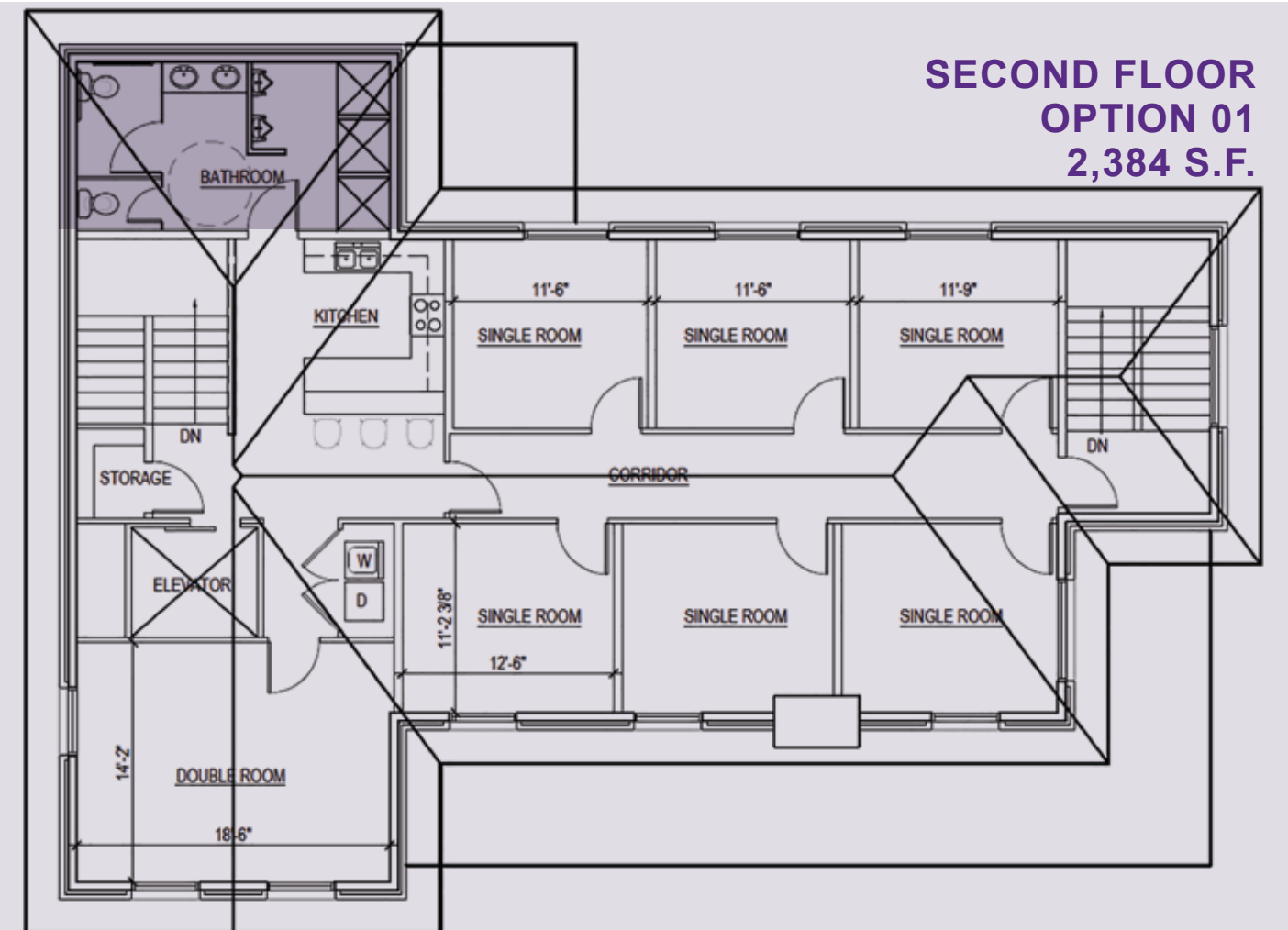
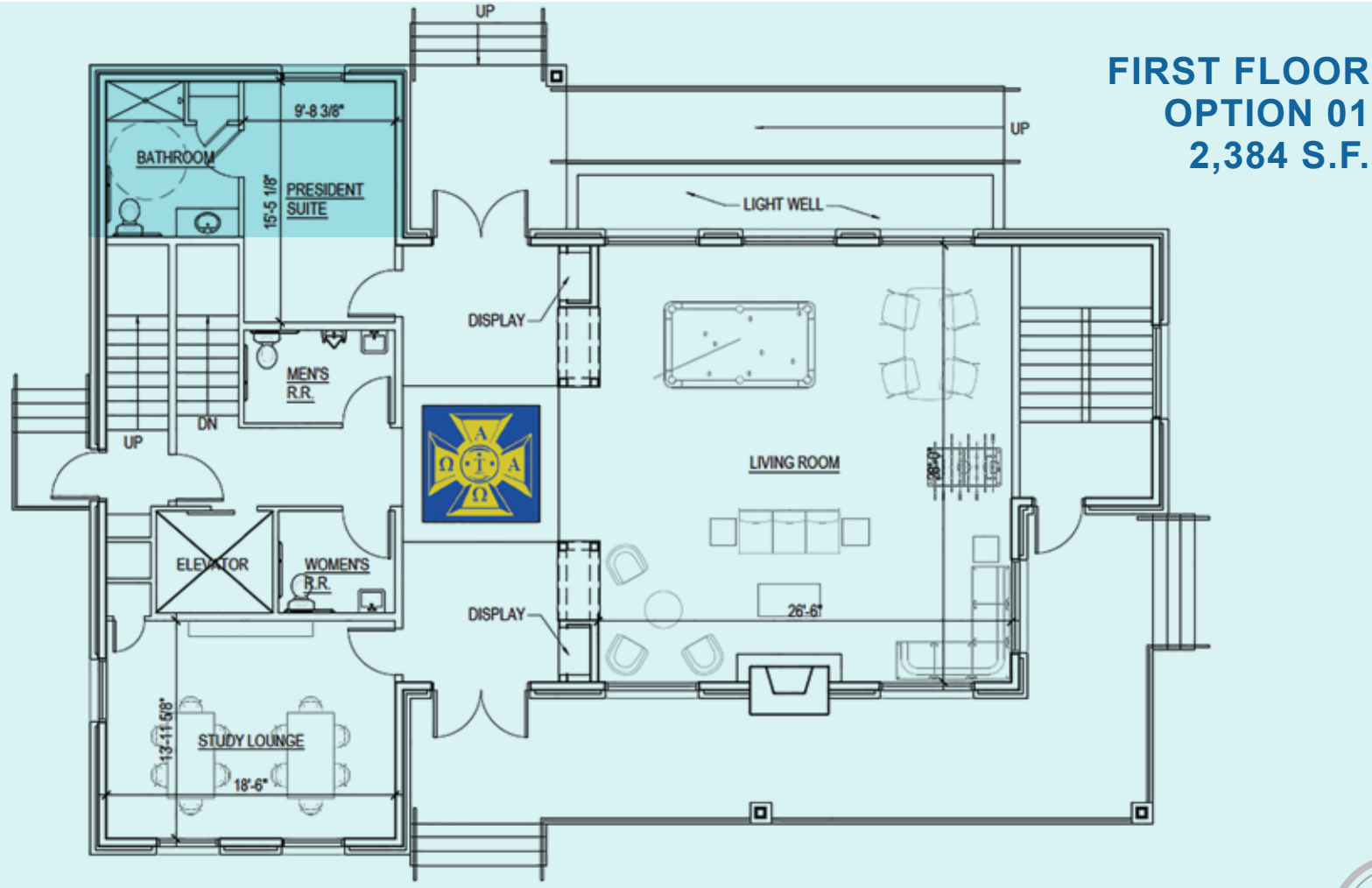
Undergraduates:

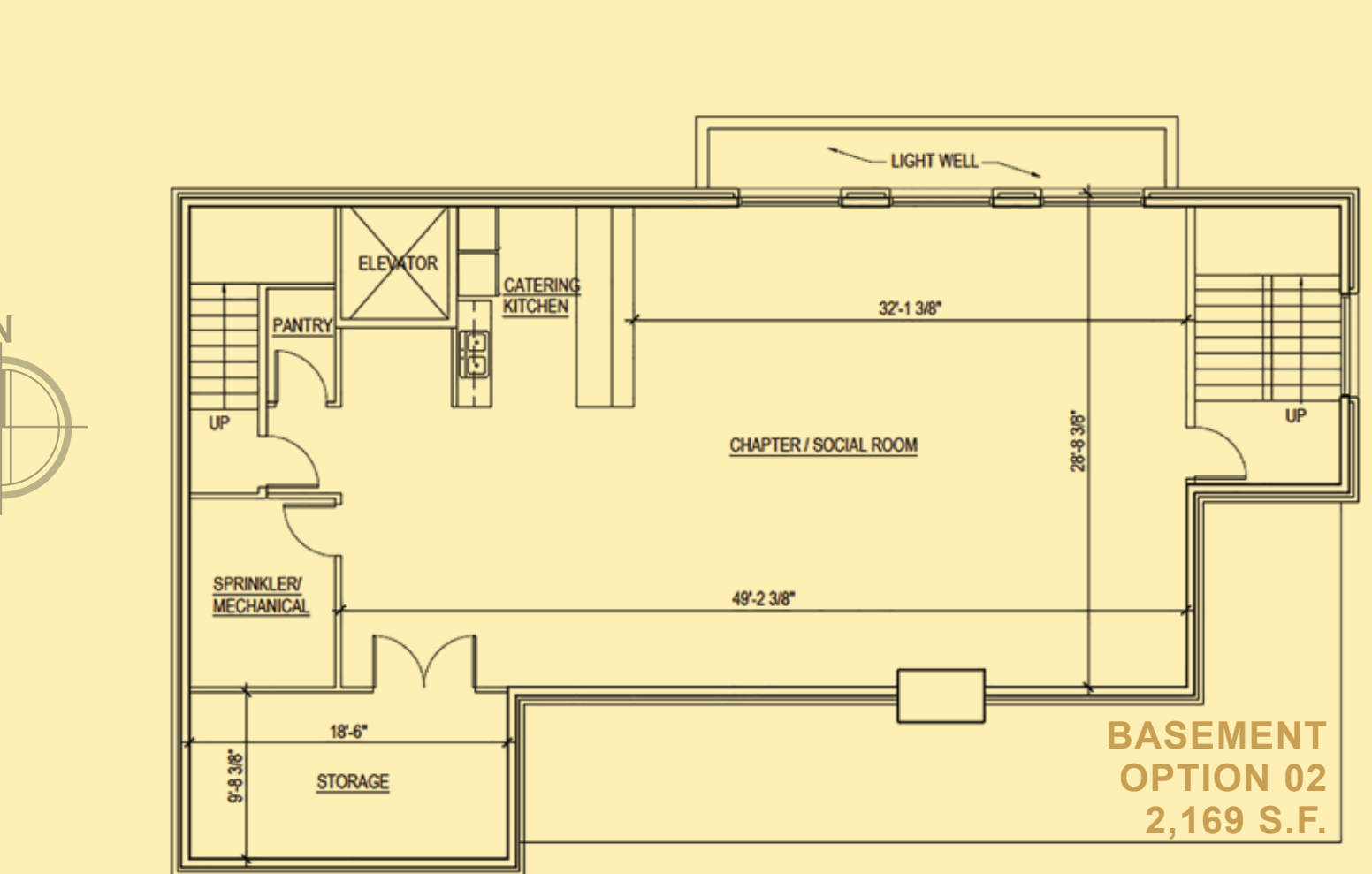
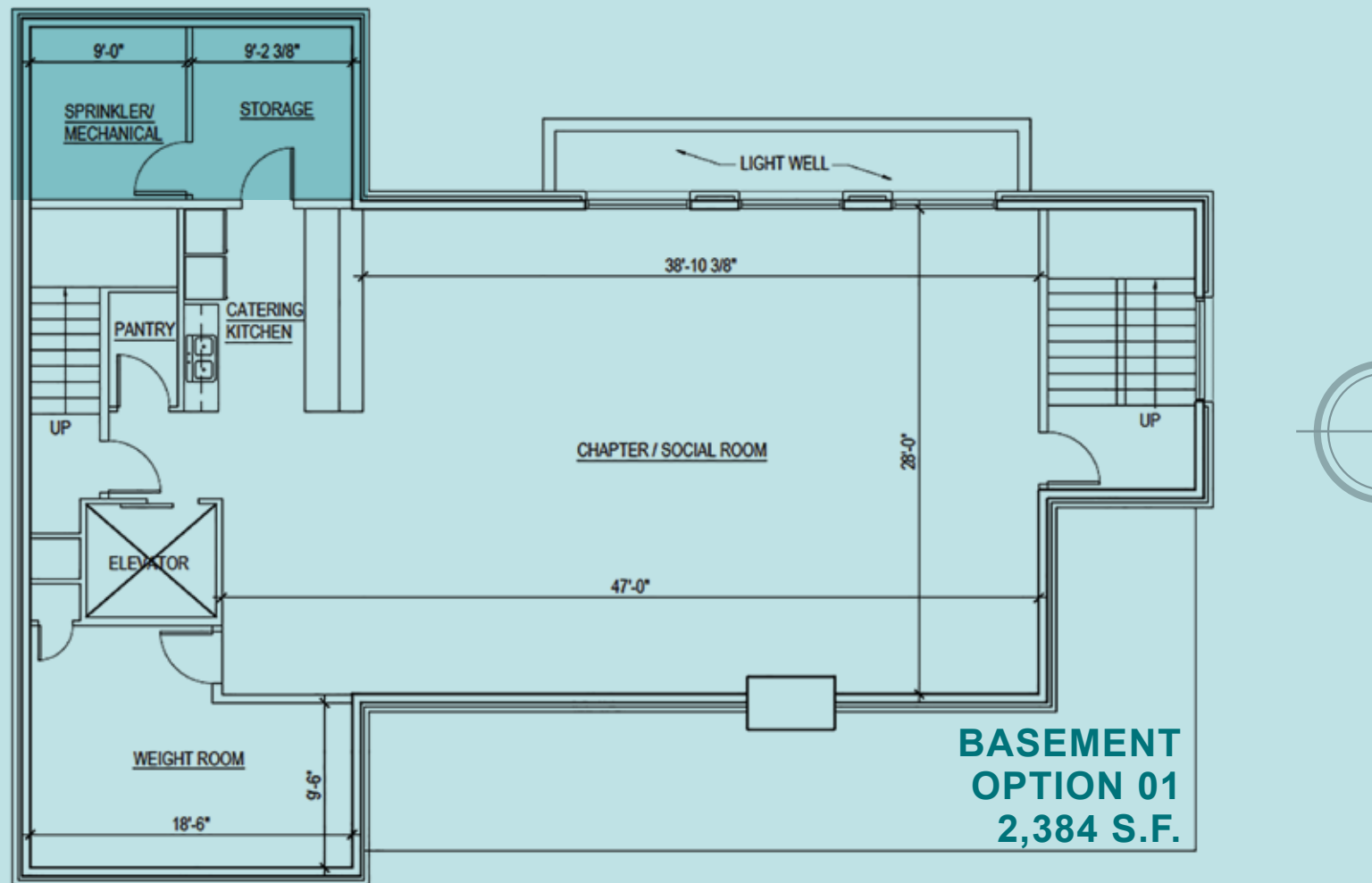
- Jack Pederson (*Gamma Nu*, 2020)
- Ethan Ayers (*Gamma Nu*, 2020)



Generational collaboration at work (l-r):
Jason Bruce (Alpha Omicron, 1990), Jack Pederson
(Gamma Nu, 2020), Rudy Holt (Theta, 1976), Brandon
Bogan (Beta Eta, 1997), and Tom Vriesman (Upsilon, 1983).

Special thanks to Barry Knechtel for taking the session concepts and turning them into the beautiful, dimensional renderings above – all within a week.





It's very important to note: what "lodge style" means for a chapter house

If you're like me, when you hear the term "lodge style" it conjers up a rustic edifice – with huge log beams, an oversize moss rock fireplace, and a Yukon moose head mounted on a knotty-pine-paneled wall.

If that was your line of thinking here, you would be wrong.

Now a fairly-common practice within the Greek community, a "lodge-style" chapter house is specifically built to accommodate a pre-determined number of Brothers for things like:

- meetings
- ceremonies
- rush events
- alumni events
- group meals
- studying/tutoring/lectures
- fundraising events
- playing pool, foosball, ping pong, basketball, pickleball, volleyball
- social events of all types

In other words, a "lodge-style" house is meant to be more of a *gathering space*, than a *living space*.

So why are "lodge-style" fraternity chapter houses gaining popularity? In a word, cost. Initially building huge chapter houses to accommodate 35-50 Brothers is now cost-prohibitive for most Greek organizations. So instead, you build a facility that will serve the group/gathering/entertainment needs of the entire chapter, but with far less square footage.

Even without the huge expense of living space for 35-50 Brothers, the chapter house becomes the spiritual center for the group, their home, and a great source of ongoing pride.

This "lodge-style" chapter house is the strategy you see adopt-



ed in the concepts presented herein. For Theta Alpha, the "lodge-style" chapter house makes perfect sense for this stage in our evolution.

Our plan is to be on sound financial footing from day one.

You will notice that our initial, conceptual plans include all the prerequisite space needed for chapter activities, **and** private/semi-private housing for 8-10 active Brothers (officers?).

Our intent is to add additional sleeping quarters (TBD) as funds become available through rents paid by active Brothers living in the House – and through additional capital fundraising from Alumni and friends of Alpha Tau Omega.

The final plans for the House will be flexibly designed to be aesthetically enlarged as funds become available.

In this manner, we avoid the risk of borrowing the funds at high interest rates and the unnecessary burden of large debt. 🏠



Ethan Ayers (*Gamma Nu*, 2020), Keith Rector (*Founder I*, 1972), Paul Puzzello (*Alpha Nu*, 1989), and Barry Knechtel (*Beta Theta*, 1998), kept the creative juices flowing in an all-day brainstorming and design session.

Here's a look at chapter house styles for every True Merit Award winner in 2022

While we're reporting on 2022's ATO National Congress and discussing concepts for a potential new Theta Alpha home, I thought it would be interesting to take a look at the chapter houses for each 2022 True Merit Award winner (though their chapter house had little or nothing to do with this recognition).

Please note that it appears Baylor University, University of New Hampshire, Samford University, University of South Alabama, University of West Florida, and Westchester University either do not currently have chapter houses, or a suitable photo was unavailable.

The houses display a wide range of architectural styles – often showing commonality by region. Neo Classical and Colonial Revival styles are more common with southern universities with Tudor Revival more popular in northern and midwest universities.

On the surface, they also seem to indicate the age of the chapter and its corresponding wealth, but not in all cases. But logic would dictate that older chapters are funded from a far larger, far more mature pool of alumni donors. That is best illustrated by the huge, extravagant chapter houses of these universities (with their dates of establishment): Alabama (1885), Georgia Tech (1888), Kansas (1901), LSU (1940), Penn State (1924), Purdue (1904), and Oregon State (1882). Some of these schools have alumni bases approaching half a million. While, of course, many are no longer alive, some endowments are likely still in play.

One can only imagine the upkeep on these aging mansions, many of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Place.

What are your favorites?



Clemson University



Georgia Tech University



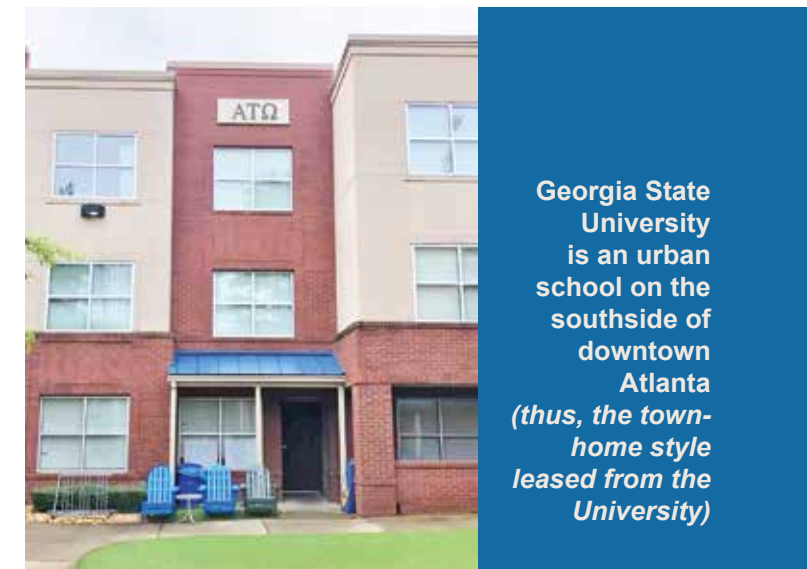
University of Alabama-Huntsville



Auburn University



University of Florida



Georgia State University is an urban school on the southside of downtown Atlanta (thus, the town-home style leased from the University)



University of Alabama



Bowling Green State University



Georgia College & State University



Iowa State University

Here's a look at chapter house styles for every True Merit Award winner in 2022



University of Kansas



Middle Tennessee State University



Oregon State University



Troy University



Louisiana State University



Murray State University



Penn State University



Virginia Tech University



Mercer University



University of North Alabama



Purdue University



William and Mary University