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AOII Meets UT Requirement of \$350K for New Sorority House *Introduces Room-Naming Program and Honors Distinguished Alumnae*

Knoxville, Tenn. – The Corporation of Alpha Omicron Pi’s 104-year-old Omicron Chapter at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville announced this week its attainment of a 10 percent – or \$350,000 – construction fund-raising deposit objective, as required by UT, for its planned sorority house, to be sited at UT’s recently announced “sorority village” site on a 21-acre area known as Morgan Hill.

The news of AOII’s success was announced at a special Sunday brunch for more than 100 alumnae, collegians, parents, donors and friends at UT’s University Club on Oct. 22, 2006. The brunch served as a capstone for an “AOII Alumnae Weekend Celebration,” which included the 46th Annual AOII Barbecue on October 21 at UT’s Circle Park, prior to the Alabama football game.

At the brunch, AOII alumnae – all of whom are UT-Knoxville graduates – were recognized for their donor and volunteer support, including the naming of special rooms or areas within the soon-to-be-built AOII House, in their honor:

- **Jane Hollingsworth “Holly” Watts** (Omicron ‘51) – The Jane Hollingsworth Watts Residential Room
- **Laura Lee Nichols Lipsomb** (Omicron ‘70) – The Laura Lee Nichols Lipscomb Residential Room
- **Sandy Kohlhase Bishop** (Omicron ‘63) – The Sandy Kohlhase Bishop Courtyard
- **Emily Mahan Faust** (Omicron ‘32) – The Emily Mahan Faust Chapter Room Stage
- **Anne Witt Allison** (Omicron ‘52) – The Anne Witt Allison Residential Room
- **Patricia Cosby** (Omicron ‘69) – The Patricia Cosby Chapter President’s Room
- **Mary Jane Bell Sharp** (Omicron ‘46) – The Mary Jane Bell Sharp Ritual Room



Omicron Collegiate Chapter President Lauren Zaller (right) presents Emily Mahan Faust – who pledged AOII at UT in 1932 – with roses and a certificate honoring Mrs. Faust’s support of the AOII House Building Campaign.

With a deposit deadline originally set by the UT Administration of November 1, 2006 – and just recently moved back to February 1, 2007 – the required 10 percent construction deposit represents a significant hurdle for all UT sororities in order to continue moving their respective building projects forward.

“We are delighted for AOII to have met its 10 percent deposit several weeks prior to the original UT deadline of November 1,” said AOII Building Campaign Chair Ann Wallace. “However, there is still a long road of fund-raising left to travel, and we sincerely hope our alumnae will continue their generosity toward this critical project. We also wish all other Panhellenic groups well in their fund-raising, as a strong Panhellenic system means that every sorority group can thrive and productively contribute to the University community.”

Also in attendance at the brunch were special guests Debbie Lillard Diddle – a UT AOII alumna who is now national president of the UT National Alumni Association, who served as the brunch’s keynote speaker – and Melanie Doyle, the Executive Director of AOII International.

AOII is one of 13 Panhellenic sororities at UT-Knoxville with plans to build individual houses on campus. The sorority houses will be located in a newly proposed Sorority Village on the west end of campus, and will replace the overcrowded UT Panhellenic Building facility, built in 1964, where all sorority groups have occupied non-residential meeting space for more than four decades.

Knoxville- based Cockrill Design & Planning has been selected to design AOII’s nearly 17,000 square foot residential house of 55 beds, projected to be built between 2007 and 2009. The UT-selected site of its “sorority village” development is located at the corner of Neyland Drive and Kingston Pike.

“AOII is grateful to Chancellor Loren Crabtree, Jeff Maples and other leaders within the UT Administration for their diligent efforts to select a very promising site for all UT sororities’ new home,” Wallace said. “We thank them for their continued cooperation and look forward to the future.”



UT National Alumni Association President Debbie Lillard Diddle – an AOII alumna – served as keynote speaker at the “AOII Weekend Celebration” Sunday Brunch Oct. 22. In background, AOII’s “Rosie The Riveter” campaign logo.

About AOII's Omicron Chapter:

Founded in 1902, Omicron Chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi Fraternity stands as the oldest existing chapter of AOII in the world. AOII is one of the largest sororities in the UT Panhellenic system with approximately 170 members and currently holds the second-highest grade point average (GPA) in Panhellenic, with 3.28 on a 4.0 scale (Spring 2006).

In addition, Omicron Chapter manages one of the longest-running philanthropic events supporting Arthritis Research in the country, the AOII Barbecue, which raises thousands of dollars annually and on Saturday, October 21, 2006, entered its 46th year. Omicron Chapter is supported strongly by its local Knoxville Alumnae Chapter, which includes some 575 members throughout the Greater Knoxville area.



AOII alumnae and collegiate attendees at the "AOII Weekend Celebration" brunch October 23, 2006, honoring current donors to the AOII Building Campaign at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, as well as alumnae for whom rooms within the house have been named.

About AOII International:

Headquartered in Brentwood, Tenn., AOII was founded in 1897 at Barnard College of Columbia University in New York City. AOII has more than 126,000 initiated members in 179 collegiate chapters and 250 alumnae chapters across the United States and Canada. Alpha Omicron Pi is an international women's fraternity promoting friendship for a lifetime, inspiring academic excellence and lifelong learning, and developing leadership skills through service to the fraternity and community.

About the UT Panhellenic System:

The University of Tennessee-Knoxville's Panhellenic Council is the largest women's organization on the UT campus and serves as the governing body for 17 sororities: 13 National Panhellenic Conference Chapters, three National Pan-Hellenic Council Chapters, and one chapter of the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations. Last year alone, Panhellenic sororities raised more than \$130,000 for charities in and around the Knoxville community and contributed more than 3,000 service hours. Panhellenic members constitute some 75 percent of leadership positions on the UT campus and hold an average GPA of 3.1/4.0.

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