

The Founders of Alpha Chi Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

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We celebrate the 87th birthday of Alpha Chi Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. Alpha Chi chapter was organized on March 10, 1934 by Dr. Annie Webb Blanton following a luncheon at the Driskill Hotel in Austin, Texas. Twelve charter members formed the chapter with headquarters in Burnet, Texas. They are the following:

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Mrs. Lula Blasienz, Calvert
Mrs. Georgia Carver, Pontotoc
Miss Sallie Churchill, Burnet
Mrs. Velma Elliott, Burnet
Mrs. Christine Grace, Austin
Mrs. Lorena Hughes, Pontotoc
Mrs. Gail Kolberg, Eagle Lake
Mrs. Valree Nanney, Marble Falls
Mrs. Marion Stevens, Comfort
Mrs. Jessie Theis, Boerne
Mrs. Leona Ulbricht Senter, Burnet
Mrs. Zuma Wier, Blanco

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Officers 1934-36

President: Velma Elliott
1st Vice President: Lorena Hughes
2nd Vice President: Zuma Wier
Recording Secretary: Georgia Carver
Corresponding Secretary: Sallie Churchill
Record Keeper: Marion Stevens
Treasurer: Leona Ulbricht Senter
Parliamentarian: Valree Nanney

We honor the Founders of Alpha Chi

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Mrs. Lula Eunice McKinney Blasienz was born July 27, 1897 in Milam County, Texas. She married Jerry Blasienz in 1933 and passed away on July 29, 1987 at the age of 90.

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Mrs. Georgia Ellen Templeton Carver was born August 24, 1905. She was married to Julian Rice Carver, and they had a son, James Lucian. Georgia passed away on February 20, 2002 at the age of 96 and was buried in Board Branch Cemetery, Lone Grove, Llano County.

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Sarah Elizabeth (Sallie) Churchill was born July 11, 1890. Her parents were J. S. and Margaret Rebecca Churchill. Her father and his brother Henry moved to Burnet in 1883 and opened Churchill Bros. Hardware Store, the first such store in Burnet. Sallie was never married and was a school teacher, a

member of the Presbyterian Church, and a missionary to Cuba. She taught at the O.K. School in western Burnet County near the Colorado River in 1932-33 and the Spanish Oak School in the same area in 1934. She passed away July 3, 1956 in Burnet and was buried in Odd Fellows' Cemetery.

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Velma McFarlin Elliott was born January 21, 1903. She was married to Sanford H. "Pete" Elliott. They had no children. Velma was the first president of Alpha Chi and was an active member for many years. She taught at Prairie Point School northeast of Bertram in 1920 and at the Fairland School in 1921. Later she was an English teacher at Burnet High School and then at Burnet Junior High. Velma passed away on March 28, 1988 at the age of 85. On April 11, 1988 after Velma's death, the chapter named the Grant-in-Aid to honor her.

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Christine Lane Hawkins Grace was born February 17, 1889 in Greenville, Hunt County, Texas. In 1910, she married Oscar Earl Hawkins, and they had one child, Oscar Earl Hawkins. Her husband passed away in 1918. In 1924, she married Henry Barney Grace, and they had one child, Doris Christine Grace. Christine passed away November 12, 1978 in Waco at the age of 87.

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Lorena Draper Hughes was born December 24, 1904 in Llano County. She was married to Allie Thomas Hughes, and they had one child Michael Thomas who passed away as an infant. As a child, she attended the Field Creek School. In 1930-31, she taught at Hickory Grove School and at Pontotoc in 1932-33. In 1936, Lorena was 1st Vice President of Alpha Chi and assumed the duties of president when Leona Senter moved away. Lorena passed away on December 6, 1998 in San Angelo at the age of 93 .

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Gail Brown Kolberg was born on November 7, 1885 in Glyndon, Clay County, Minnesota. In 1913, she married Olaf Gustav Kolberg. They had two children, Donald and Winifred. Gail taught seventh and eighth grade in the Eagle Lake public schools. Her outstanding instructional programs and colorful promotion exercises will be remembered by many. She passed away in her home in Austin, Texas on January 20, 1968 at the age of 82.

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Laura Valree Bible Nanney was born May 4, 1901. In 1926, she married Dr. Audie Leslie Nanney. They had two children, a daughter Betty Jean and a son Carroll. She taught in several of the small schools in the county: The Hill School west of Oatmeal (1921), Tobey School (1922-23 & 1929), and Mormon Mill School (1931, 33-34). Valree was president of Alpha Chi during the 1937-39 biennium. After that, she and her family moved to Austin where she joined Alpha Chapter. She passed away on August 16, 1993 at the age of 92 and was buried in Marble Falls.

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Leona Ward Ulbricht Senter was born March 7, 1902. Leona was Alpha Chi president from 1935-36. She married Fred Senter and moved to El Paso. Leona was a founding member of Faith Presbyterian Church in El Paso at its charter in 1955. In 1991, she was named Outstanding Churchwoman of El Paso. She had a daughter named Janel. Leona passed away April 16, 1993 at the age of 90.

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Marion Smith Stevens of Comfort, Texas. No information found.

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Jessie Dell McCrocklin Theis was born June 8, 1888. She was married twice, once to Adolph Phillip Theis who passed away in 1923 and then to August J. Theis who passed away in 1946. Jessie passed away July 16, 1984 at the age of 96 and was buried in Boerne.

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Zuma Annie McNatt Wier was born December 16, 1882 in Blanco County. She was married to Luther Armon Wier, and they had one child Landis Larry. Zuma taught at the Spicewood School (1926) and Hickory Creek School (1942-43) which later became Smithwick School and then consolidated with Marble Falls in 1945. Zuma passed away on June 23, 1964 at the age of 81 and was buried in Johnson City.

We remember our founders for the courage it took to shoulder the burdens of the early stages of the Alpha Chi organization. By the 1980's only Velma Elliott of the original founders remained in the chapter. Scattered membership was the main handicap, but the good fellowship that was experienced helped to overcome obstacles and inconveniences in order not to miss a meeting. Each member felt a challenging pioneer spirit and made plans for the chapter's growth. This spirit has continued on into the 21st century.

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Although she was not a founder, we must remember Alleen Myrle Yett. She was born June 7, 1911 in Marble Falls. Alleen never married. She was initiated into Alpha Chi in 1937 and became president in 1943 and also served on a state committee. Alleen taught at LaVista School west of Marble Falls towards Kingsland in 1934-35 and later at Lampasas High School. She earned BA & MA degrees and retired as principal of the Kate S. Schenck School in San Antonio in 1975. She passed away on September 5, 1984 at the age of 73 and is buried in Marble Falls. Her estate contributed to Alpha Chi, and the Yett Seminar was founded. It was her desire that the chapter use these funds to participate in educational enrichment programs. The seminars were held in the fall of odd-numbered years. The first one was held September 19, 1987 at the Post Oak Inn in Burnet. Over the years, these seminars have evolved into educational field trips.

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We also remember Patsy Ann McDonald, an innovative teacher in the Marble Falls Independent School District for 28 years, teaching mathematics and physics. Born August 4, 1948, Patsy was the only child of Rev. John and Era Cleota McDonald. After working at MFISD, Patsy went on to work with the development and implementation of the UT QUEST program. Patsy passed away on September 1, 2012 and is buried in Art, Texas. She left her teacher retirement fund to Alpha Chi, and Patsy's Legacy was established to honor her. The funds are used for grants, scholarships, classroom grants, convention attendance, and personal growth of members. Patsy would enjoy knowing that she continues to be a part of educating children and adults through these grants and scholarships.

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These ladies represent our past. Let us strive to continue forward moving ever in the spirit of sisterhood of our founders. Thank you to all who have contributed over the years to keep our chapter strong and

growing and to keep our history alive. A special thanks to Pam Hance and the Friday Research Group of the Burnet County Genealogical Society for the hours they spent gathering information.

Happy 87th Birthday Alpha Chi!

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Resources:

Alpha Chi Archives and members

Burnet County History, A Pioneer History 1847- Volumes I & II by Darrell Debo

Find a Grave Website

Llano County Family Album, A History

Mason County Schools by Julius E. DeVos

Rural Schools & History of Llano County From 1854 to 1948