



Epsilon Iota Chapter Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

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Founders:

Bishop Edgar A. Love
1891-1974

Dr. Oscar J. Cooper
1888-1972

Dr. Frank Coleman
1890-1967

Dr. Ernest E. Just
1883-1941

WHY WAS THE OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY CREATED

There was an expressed reason and an underlying reason the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was created. The expressed reason was to monitor and challenge the United States Constitution as it applies to the unequal treatment codified in governing documents that relate to this country's oppressive system. The underlying reason was to fill a void of scholarly Negro men and bond them together as life-- long friends, no matter what the pigmentation of their non-white skin may be.

As a method to lessen the gravity to acts of discrimination, a counter-weight was created by this fraternity to develop Cardinal Principles, Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift, for its members to use as a code of conduct and as a tool to mentor others. It also searched for young collegiate men with high scholastic qualities whom the fraternity could support to be among the best professionals in their chosen educational endeavors.



Black Americans have always been anxious for the day when they would no longer have to feel the burden of institutional racism and racial oppression as a component to their daily lives. When serious-minded students organize themselves with the goal to uplift an oppressive society, their expressed and underlying purposes to achieve their goals should be very clear. Therefore, those who believe these precepts have merit should have no doubt that those hypotheses could be considered to be very pragmatic. This makes it very plausible that the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was created for a specific purpose.

Now let's assume there is an expressed purpose and an underlying purpose to explain the subject to every resolution. The resolution in question that is studied in this document is the creation of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. The expressed purpose for the creation of this Fraternity could be grounded in finding men with excellent scholastic achievements. The underlying purpose could be to recognize the talents found in students with dark complexions who were routinely overlooked because of the color of their skin.

If we can create a model government in theory with acceptable democratic principles, it may not be necessary to have social clubs or fraternity type organizations to enforce its governing



documents. Therefore, it should not be hard for anyone to believe that the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was created to monitor, document, and/or to mitigate the systemic forces of discrimination.

The need to have social clubs, whether they were used to advance society or used in a nefarious manner, can be strengthened when the expressed reasons and the underlying reasons for their creations have been determined to be congruent. Strong convictions about the need to establish a social club becomes clearer when an expressed purpose is compared to an underlying purpose. If you notice the syntax in the four statements below, only one statement (the first one) should describe a broad purpose for creating the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

1) When creating the ΩΨΦ Fraternity,
there was an expressed purpose
and
there was an underlying purpose.

2) When creating the ΩΨΦ Fraternity,
there was an expressed purpose
yet
there was **no** underlying purpose

3) When creating the ΩΨΦ Fraternity,
there was **no** expressed purpose
yet
there was an underlying purpose.

4) When creating the ΩΨΦ Fraternity,
there was **no** expressed purpose
and
there was **no** underlying purpose.





Ever since Greek-letter fraternities were established on American college campuses, students who joined them had a particular affection for members who were in the same fraternities they chose to join. The comradery that was planted in each member was designed to be reciprocal.

For a period after the Civil War up until the advent of the 20th Century, the operations of fraternities grew closer to the operations of social clubs with scholastic, academic background, culture and athletic contests superficially separating one fraternity from another. In 1909, on the campus of Howard University, three freshmen students bonded together as students with high scholastic interests and two out of those three students were sought after by the newly formed Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Those two students, Oscar Cooper and Edgar Love, declined the offer to join that established fraternity because one of their best friends, Frank Coleman, was not invited to join.

The reason for that fraternity not selecting Frank Coleman was because he did not pass the paper bag test. The paper bag test was a litmus test that arbitrarily matched a person's skin color with the color of a paper bag. It should also be noted that when the officers of the Freshman Class were voted on by the student body, Frank Coleman was elected to be the Class President.



By 1911, when the Administration at Howard University questioned the students who wished to form a new fraternity, it wanted to know if their request was granted, what would make this new organization any different from the other that students on Howard's campus could readily join. The response that the students gave led them to state publicly their underlying purpose to form a new fraternity.

A discussion with the Administration revealed that some students considered it repulsive and socially disgraceful to have African-American students studying to be professionals on a black campus and possibly discriminating against some of the best and brightest students who possibly embodied the Cardinal Principles that this new fraternity wished to promote. It was further believed that the "caste system" that was routinely practiced on college campuses had nothing to do with academics or with developing life-long friends.

In its Articles of Incorporation, it was stated that the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was created to enrich the social and intellectual aspects of college life. There was also an implicit understanding that this fraternity would assume the social responsibility to mentor the underserved, especially students with a strong proclivity to a quality education.





Black college and university Administration officials were skeptical to allowing black fraternities to be established on their campuses because it was believed militant groups could be the ultimate outgrowth to fraternity membership. Regardless, it was important to note that some students at Howard University sincerely believed that a Black fraternity should initially be created on a Black college campus.

The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was founded on November 17, 1911. To demonstrate its urgency to prove its net worth, its members participated in community and civic organized ventures that were favorable to the University's Administration. This priority caused students to immerse themselves in scholarship preparations, fair housing issues, equal employment opportunities, and voting rights. They also added their voices to the growing opposition to other segregation practices.

As the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity grew in numbers, the creation of the Chapters of Omega Psi Phi also grew in a strategic manner because the type of men that it wanted to attract was very specific. It was also promised to Howard's Administration that the men of Omega would only select students with similar scholastic goals.

They also stated that all new members to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity will embody in their lives its Cardinal Principles. It was also agreed upon that the Administration could expell this new fraternity from campus if it violated the agreements it made with the Administration.

Dr. Albert Einstein made a visit to Lincoln University May 3, 1946 from an invitation by the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

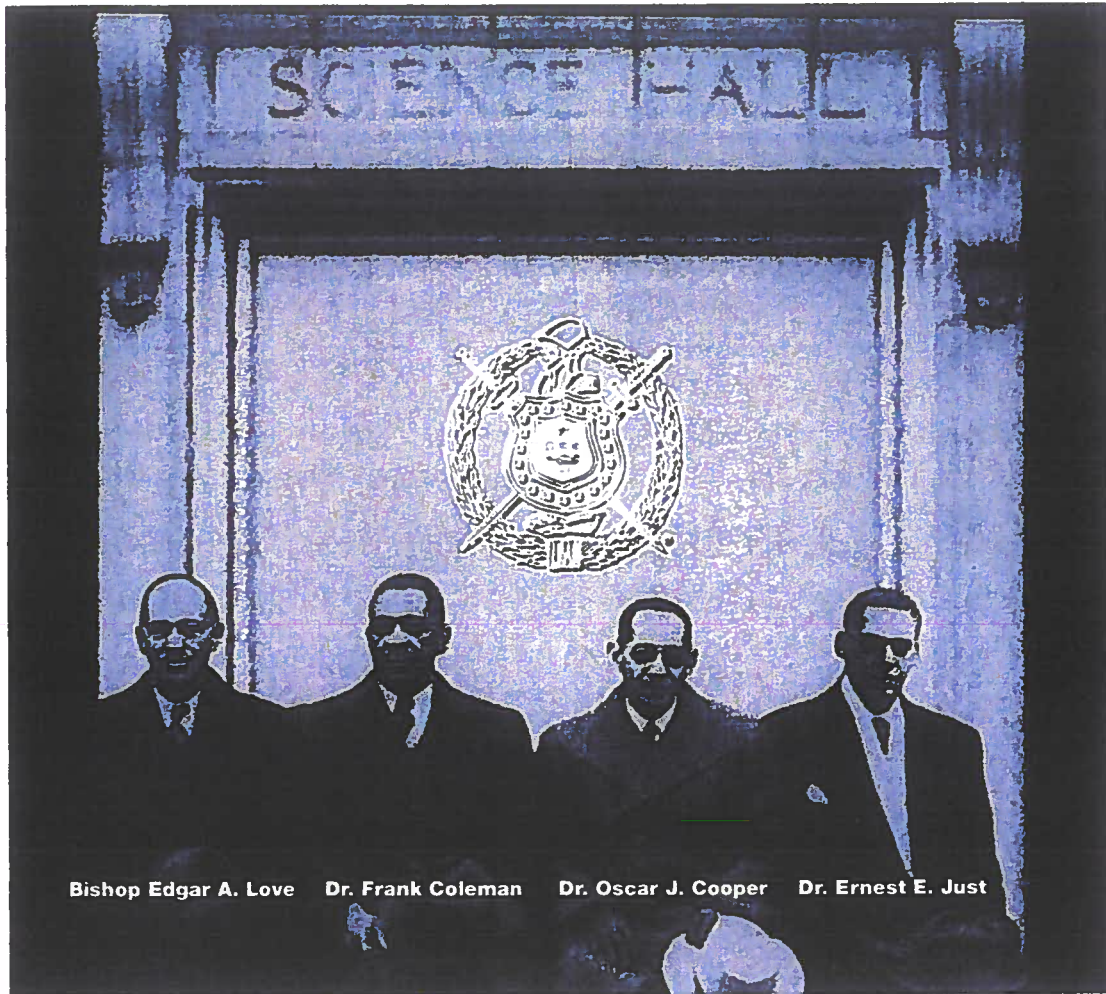




Howard University (Omega's Alpha Chapter) was considered to be the African-American mecca of higher education to many who studied there. Lincoln University, near Oxford, Pennsylvania, was recognized as the first college degree granting HBCU in the country, and it was honored as such by being selected as Omega's Beta Chapter. Omega's Gamma Chapter was created for students enrolled in college in the surrounding Boston, Massachusetts area. Those schools were Boston College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Brown University, Dartmouth, Princeton University and Harvard University.

Students who wished to join the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity began to align themselves with educational goals similar to those the Founders of this fraternity had. Therefore, it attracted students from the debate clubs, science clubs, social studies and students interested in obtaining a business or law degree to live up to the promise it made to the Administration.

During the first Administration of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Brother Edgar Love was voted to be its first Grand Basileus from 1911 to 1912 and simultaneously elected to be the Basileus of Alpha Chapter. Professor Ernest Everett Just became the fraternity's first honorary member and one of its four Founders.



In 1912, Brother Oscar Cooper became the fraternity's second Grand Basileus. Brother Edgar Love became the fraternity's third and was re-elected as the fraternity's fourth Grand Basileus. It was during this Administration that the District of Columbia incorporated this fraternity on October 28, 1914.

By 1917, African-American soldiers and military members of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity were anxious to get involved in military




exercises because some Black soldiers were looking at full citizenship status as the reward for their military engagement. It was also during that time that the German government deliberately sank an American ship. This incident also sparked the Omega Psi Phi's involvement in World War I.

As Omega men prepared themselves for battle, a delegation was created and demanded an audience with President Woodrow Wilson when it became clear that the War Department was making no serious effort for the training of Negro officers. The SATC program (Student Army Training Corps) was a special training program established in 1918 for college students.


Another significant achievement during that period was the publication of the first issue of *The Oracle* in the Spring of 1919. Soon afterwards, the *Oracle* became the official historical publication for the fraternity. The chronology of events stated above not only categorically stated how deep racial discrimination has been up to this point, it also implied a bond the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was creating with its members and minority communities throughout this Nation.

It was in Nashville in 1924 that Carter G. Woodson delivered an eloquent and inspiring speech about the need to disseminate


accurate knowledge about Negro life and history. That speech encouraged the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity to devote a week each year to a campaign for the study and publication of Negro literature and history.



In the 1950's, Omega men across the Nation were actively participating in "sit-ins", "marches", and "protests" to cause attention to the plight of minorities in America ever since they first stepped on its shores. The Cardinal Principles that the Omega men held dear became more meaningful as the influence of Omega men traveled from the boundaries of this country to the shores of foreign lands. The Golden Anniversary was celebrated in Washington, D.C. with a great amount of attention given to Omega men and their service to our country.



It should be apparent that the expressed purpose of creating the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity is still aligned to the fulfillment of the promises given to all United States citizens. Through all of the actions mentioned above, this also meant the underlying reasons for this creation was to fight discrimination in the Courts, in our communities and in our professional lives. The concepts that gave rise to the primary reasons for the creation for the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity also grew out of the latin phrase – "*Ophelima Philia Phukis*". This motto means "*Friendship Is Essential To Life*" and it has been translated freely to mean "*Friendship Is Essential To The Soul*".



The promises written in the United States Constitution were meant to ensure the rights to all citizens will be protected and that employment opportunities will be distributed fairly. How that assurance was meant to be enforcement has always been a political question and the answer to that question has always favored the privileged, the majority, and the wealthy. Therefore, the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity must continue to monitor the operations of our government until citizens who were selected as government officials honors all of its promises made to United States citizens.

One of the founders of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the Honorable Brother Edgar A. Love said in a 1973 interview “he hoped every Omega man was an activist, but this organization was not (meant to be) an activist organization”. Considering all of the activities mentioned above, it is apparent that Omega men have fulfilled the expressed goal to monitor and challenge the United States Constitution as it applies to their unequal treatment codified in its governing documents. Over the years the fraternity brotherhood has succeeded in its underlying reasons to fill a void of scholarly minority men and upheld its inclusion of all men of color.

By Brother Wesley Jarmon
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