

## **What Fraternity Means To Me, Derek Carey, Postulant ΔΣΦ**

*"Membership from among those who are prepared to realize in word and deed, the Brotherhood of all men."*

This first Landmark of Alpha Chi Rho is one of the first principles new Postulants of the fraternity study. It is arguably the last to be truly understood. Brotherhood means different things to different people. Some may say Brotherhood is about lifelong friendship and camaraderie. Others say Brotherhood is about sharing memories and experiences that can be fondly looked back on in old age. There is no wrong answer; however, all bonds of Brotherhood are supported by one fundamental principle, acceptance.

As Postulants, extended periods of time spent together and with the Brotherhood will reveal the flaws and imperfections of each individual. Many Brothers and Postulants may struggle academically, the result of anything from weakness in a subject to a general lack of focus. Some may have low self-confidence or simply suffer from a fear of the uncertain nature of the future. Much like Brothers of blood relations, Fraternity Brothers are willing to accept each other for who they are. Those endeavoring to become Brothers must study the landmarks and history of Alpha Chi Rho, give back to the community, learn house responsibilities, cooperate with fellow postulants, and show commitment in their pursuit towards Brotherhood. Only those with excellent moral character, determination to overcome their weaknesses, and willingness to accept the imperfections of others will complete this journey. Brothers do not dwell on what is missing from their fellows, instead focusing on the goodness and potential that exists in the hearts and minds of all men. They encourage others to better themselves and live up to the potential they possess, but never force unwanted change. While a seemingly simple concept, achieving true Brotherhood is never an easy task. Society too often shuns those who possess anything other than perfection. Overcoming this predisposition is perhaps the hardest task anyone can face.

The rewards of Brotherhood far outweigh the costs as the bonds of fraternity are lifelong. Neither age nor death is strong enough to break such a powerful bond. Alpha Chi Rho has suffered losses from the poor decisions of Brothers and other Fraternities. The misguided views and actions of those who fail to understand the meaning of Brotherhood continue to damage the reputation of the Fraternity system. Still, men from all parts of the world continue to join and expand fraternities such as Alpha Chi Rho. All are guided by a willingness to learn what Brotherhood truly means. All are guided by a willingness to live, work, and have fun amongst others who possess the same high degree of spirit, morality, and humanity.

While I cannot yet call myself a Brother, I have seen first-hand the happiness such a bond can bring. Each day brings new understanding and new appreciation of Brotherhood. It is this appreciation that has me at the house at any free opportunity. It is this appreciation that makes me work day and night with my fellow Postulants to become one step closer to initiation. It is this appreciation makes the world a better place to live in.