

The Past Shapes Our Future

One of the women in my congregation came back from California where she had attended a memorial service for her adult son. Her son was cremated, and now she was trying to make arrangements for his ashes to be placed in our congregation's Memorial Garden. She told me that her husband had been cremated when he died twenty years ago, and his ashes had been strewn at Little Round Top on the Gettysburg Battlefield. This piqued my interest, because I have given thought to that as my final resting place as well. You see, my great-great grandfather fought there with the 44th New York on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Although Frederick A. Mead is buried on Staten Island, I've been giving thought to connecting my history to his by having my ashes placed at Little Round Top, where he fought to defend the Union.

In many families, the past gets connected to the present in unique ways. Sometimes, when a child is born, that child will be named for a beloved member of the family. Sometimes, when a child is born, a Roman numeral is placed after the name to show the lineage and connectedness to the past. I met a man, whose background is Indian, so that, on the day he was born, he was promised in marriage to the recently born daughter of another family. They were married at the age of twenty-six (after a forty-five minute "engagement") and they have been married for the past seventeen years, with three sons of their own. As much as they like family tradition, they have assured me that their sons will be free to choose their own wives!

For many graduate Brothers of Alpha Chi Rho, our initiation day may seem like something that occurred in the very distant past. For others, it may have been a day with such significance that you recall every word that was spoken. Today, I invite you to remember that day. I invite you to think back on your initiation into the Fraternity of Alpha Chi Rho and take some time to reflect on what that day means to you today. By joining this Fraternity, how did it change your life? How are you a different person because of your affiliation with AXP? We say "Once a Crow, always a Crow!" but do we live that out each and every day of our lives? How has that event of your past impacted your present? How will it affect your future?

My oldest son (named after his paternal great-grandfather) joined a fraternity when he went to college. His campus did not have a chapter of AXP, but he did join another fraternity that offered him friendships and entertainment - at least for the four years he was on campus. Now, eight years away from his graduation, he has very little contact with any of his fraternity brothers. It was, as they say, "good while it lasted". Our goal at AXP is to help you understand that your life as a Crow is good - in an everlasting sense. The members of your National Council are looking for ways to increase Graduate Brother participation in events. We want the meaningfulness of the Bond to which you pledged yourself years ago to still have an impact on your life today, as well as your future.

If our Brothers think that the Alpha Chi Rho experience is just a four year commitment, we are doomed to have to re-invent the wheel every time we want to start a new Chapter or re-invigorate an older one. We have been blessed with an abundance of resources and talents in our Graduate Brothers, those men who joined in the past and still have AXP blood surging through their veins. When we say "Once a Crow, always a Crow!" it's about the Bond - the Bond of our past, which brought us into this marvelous Brotherhood, and the Bond of our present, which allows us to make a difference in the world because we are Crows. Best of all, the Bond guarantees our future as a Fraternity, a Fraternity that makes a difference in the lives of men and the lives of all with whom we come in contact.

From the day of our initiation until the day we take our final breath: "Once a Crow, always a Crow!"

Pastor David Jost
AXP National Chaplain
Eta Phi '75