

Interview of President Victor Ramos, PE

For those of you not present at Convention this past July in Pittsburgh, PA, you missed an opportunity to meet many of the newly elected Council members of the National Fraternity. Since not everyone could attend, I will be interviewing all members of Council over the next few issues for your benefit. For this issue I decided to start out with a few familiar faces or new ones depending on your exposure to National Fraternity events and gatherings over the past few years.

In this first interview we will be going over some background, goals and expectations of Brother President Victor Ramos, PE, a graduate Brother from the Pi Lambda Chapter at The Pennsylvania State University. Brother Ramos graduated from Penn State in 1991 with a major in Engineering. He works today as mechanical and structural engineer and is a licensed professional engineer. Brother Ramos is the owner of J. Blanco Associates, Inc., a professional engineering and consulting company.

Vic grew up in Queens, New York City. Growing up in "The Big Apple" helped mold Brother Ramos into the person he became today. "Growing up in the city and the playgrounds taught me street smarts. I learned to be independent from my environment and family. My environment helped me be pragmatic," Brother Ramos continued. He says he often refers to the old adage, "If you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere." President Ramos also lived in Columbia for the 5th grade with his parents who are Colombian. He credits that experience for helping him gain a perspective on how other people live outside of the United States. It also helped him gain the understanding of what it really is to be poor. This is something he feels not everyone in this country truly understands. "That sometimes gets me into trouble," Brother Ramos confessed.

Brother Ramos was motivated and inspired by a many as a young man, namely his mother and two teachers, Mr. Hobdy in 8th grade and Mr. Smith during his junior year in high school. Brother Ramos added, "They gave me the work ethic I have now and helped me with my temperament." Vic also had a mentor when he first started working named Al Schroeder. Al taught him things such as "it is never eaten as hot as it is served", which means things are not as bad as they initially appear to be. Mr. Schroeder also helped Brother Ramos moderate his youthful exuberance and be more restrained to recognize there is a solution to everything. When describing his motivation now, Brother Ramos said, "Now my motivation is selfishness for things to be the way I want them to be. Whether it is my family, community, life or Fraternity, I want things to be the best they can be. I give back because I am selfish in a way because I want the Fraternity to be a certain way, a first class organization."

"I have always had an interest in building things, but when I took Physics during my junior year of high school, I saw the world in a different light. I knew from that point forward I was going to be an engineer," Brother Ramos reflected. He sees a table for its strength and not its beauty. When asked what traits and skills of his profession translate and are useful as President of Alpha Chi Rho, President Ramos responded, "Being a business owner and being able to delegate help. Being able to define an action plan, measure it and execute it. The fact that I look at things more analytically than any other fashion also helps. I look at things more for their utilitarianism than their beauty."

When asked why he wanted to join Alpha Chi Rho, Brother Ramos replied, "I originally didn't want to join any fraternity. With some reluctance I followed my friends from the dorms to a few houses, and it boiled down to I met a few good men at Alpha Chi Rho." The Brothers of the Phi Lambda

Chapter sent out an invite to play softball the next day to Vic, and from there they started building bonds as friends. "The people drew me in," Brother Ramos summarized.

Brother Ramos became involved with the Phi Lambda Chapter years after graduating with the Chapter house purchase. He said the next step was becoming involved on the National level because they asked him to, and he saw that as a chance to lend himself to better the Fraternity and himself. We then moved to discuss expectations of President Ramos, the Council and the Fraternity during his term as President. Brother Ramos added, "If I can leave my term with the relationships with the Chapters, be it a resident or graduate Chapter, being that we are all in it together [Instead of an "Us vs. Them" perception of the fraternity] then I will have considered my term a success." His personal goal is to lay the foundation for improving the finances, communication and fostering new leaders to follow behind him to lead Alpha Chi Rho.

There is a lot of importance to President Ramos regarding the social interaction between Council members and the Brotherhood as a whole. Brother Ramos concluded the interview with, "This whole notion of "National vs. Chapters" is not what I want. I don't think it should exist, and I think the only way to resolve this is for the resident and alumni Brothers to know who the Council members are, and for us, the Council, to know them. It is important for all of us to know we are all Brothers in the Bond. "

I would like to thank Brother Ramos for taking time out of his busy schedule to be interviewed and wish him well with his new role as Fraternity President.

David Luckenbill
Omega Phi, '05

