



THE CREST

An ePublication for the Brothers and Friends of Acacia Fraternity

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Greetings!



This issue of the Crest features an exciting look at the next Colorado Chapter house, salutes Brother Robert Travnicek for his outstanding community service, introduces the Undergraduate Cornerstones Task Force, and touches on the notion of "Acacia Exceptionalism". We hope you enjoy this Crest, and we'd love to hear your reactions. [Send us an email.](#)

Fraternally,

Keith M. Bushey
Executive Director
Acacia Fraternity

Colorado Chapter forges ahead with groundbreaking new housing model

With an eye towards the future, the Colorado Chapter has broken ground on an ambitious new chapter housing project that keenly reflects current trends in collegiate housing. Nearly two years ago, alumni serving on the chapter's housing corporation board envisioned a new model of fraternity living that will see the active chapter move from its 72-year old chapter house into a completely new apartment-style complex augmented by a state-of-the-art fraternity space.



After conducting an exhaustive diligence process, the housing corporation board elected to work with experienced Boulder developers Michael Boyers & Brinkman Construction to develop the new complex. Consisting of two large residential buildings designed for modern student living, the facility is designed to be larger in scope than Acacia alone will occupy. Our brothers are granted rights of first refusal for all units, providing the chapter with as much space as necessary as the chapter grows. Through a joint venture, the entire complex is still under full ownership by the housing corporation board, and is operated under the terms of a "ground lease." The Plaza on Broadway is the first fraternity redevelopment in Boulder in over fifteen years.

The main chapter building includes 3,100 sq ft devoted to the *exclusive use* of Acacia brothers, including exceptional study facilities and social space. The impeccable space is designed to accommodate prominent guest speakers, hold educational seminars, and provide members with a supportive space for their academic pursuits. A large kitchen and dining area will provide members and guests with a central hub for dining and conversation, while the basement affords the chapter a place to watch sports, movies, and hold social functions. Additionally, the chapter has allocated space for a live-in residential advisor.

Adjacent residential units are commonly composed of four bedrooms and four baths, reflecting a "suite-style" living arrangement that colleges and universities are adopting nationwide. Each unit is afforded breathtaking views of the Flatiron mountains with a substantial balcony, a communal living room, and a kitchen outfitted with modern appliances.

To make way for the new facility, demolition of the old Acacia house at 955 Broadway took place on May 14, 2012, while alumni and actives witnessed the dramatic scene. The wrecking crew made short work of the art-deco style building that Acacians called home since 1940, and in a matter of only three hours, the facility was a pile of bricks and broken timber. With the site cleared and prepped, the official groundbreaking ceremony took place on June 14, and new construction followed suit at a fast and furious pace. The development is on track for an August 2013 opening, just in time for the fall semester at the University of Colorado.

The Colorado Chapter was re-chartered and named Best Young Chapter at the 56th Biennial Conclave in August 2010. The chapter was also awarded for Best Alumni Programming/Advisory at the 57th Biennial Conclave in 2012, in no small part due to the leadership of the housing corporation board during this redevelopment initiative.

This groundbreaking new housing project simultaneously reflects the Colorado Chapter's progress since its 2008 re-founding and represents a great challenge and responsibility for its sustained success. For more information, visit the Colorado Chapter website at <http://acaciacolorado.org> and the alumni website at <http://colacacia.org>.



Dr. Robert G. Travnicek, *Kansas* '59, recognized for human service

Recognizing Brother (Dr.) Robert G. Travnicek, *Kansas* '59, for his "legendary service and dedication to public health" in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi State Medical Association recently presented Brother Travnicek with its Physician Award for Community Service. His extensive study and practice of both medicine and public health helped him not only survive but lead public health emergency preparedness and response to Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf

Coast. This recognition honors both active practice of medicine and community service above-and-beyond the call of duty.



Katrina slammed into Hancock County, Mississippi, early on a hot August morning in 2005, the worst natural disaster ever to strike the United States. The killer storm came as the costliest hurricane of the season and one of the five deadliest in U.S. history. Among recorded hurricanes, she's the sixth strongest to have emerged from the Atlantic.

Katrina aimed directly at the six counties Travnicek oversees as director of the Coastal Plains Public Health District, a post he's held since 1990. According to disaster response plans, he went early to the Harrison County Emergency Operations Center; he all but lived there for the next 60 days.

The fellow physician who proposed the award called the recognition overdue in light of Katrina but apt for "a long and illustrious medical career which has spanned nearly five decades. He is a man of highest character and deserves recognition of this prestigious award."

In crediting others, Travnicek personified the strengths of his public health career: team-building and cheerleading.

Accepting the award, he said, "This gives me a chance for the first time to publicly recognize at least three of the hundreds with whom I was teamed." He lauded George Schloegel, then president of Hancock Bank and now Mayor of the City of Gulfport, Gary Marchand, CEO of Gulfport Memorial Hospital, and "finally and particularly, my long-suffering wife who as a staff nurse was in a lockdown situation at Garden Park Hospital during the storm and for two days after."

Brother Travnicek's selfless acts not only call to mind Acacia's motto of Human Service, but also the

words of our Preamble which remind us "to take a more active part and to have a greater influence in the affairs of the community in which we reside."

We salute Brother Travnicek for exemplifying what it means to be an Acacian.

Undergraduate volunteers spearhead new Cornerstones initiative

By Brandon Brunner, *Kansas State Á'09*

At the 54th Biennial Conclave in 2006, Acacia Fraternity adopted a new Membership Development Program to advance its membership education and development programming. Cornerstones, as the program was later named, is already at the forefront of membership education in the interfraternity community, and even greater things are yet to come.

To that end, the Undergraduate Cornerstones Task Force (UCTF) was created to provide an undergraduate perspective and real contribution to the program. The UCTF is charged with assisting the International Council and headquarters staff in the development of the program and serves under the leadership of the Director of Membership Development, Patrick McGovern, *Indiana Á'99*.



CORNERSTONES

The UCTF's primary responsibility is to generate Cornerstones educational material. This material ranges from a wide variety of options, and could include chapter meeting activities, personal development packets, or officer training programs. The UCTF has already put out five modules that any member can use to guide them on their personal development journey. Next semester, the UCTF will be focusing on a module to develop members to better execute chapter operations. The seven members of the UCTF meet monthly to give updates on their progress and plan the future of Cornerstones.

If you're interested in learning more about Cornerstones and the UCTF, please email us at uctf@acacia.org.

Acacia Exceptionalism

November will mark my ninth opportunity to cast a vote for the president of the United States. Whether you hail from a "blue state" or "red state," the upcoming election promises to be one the most contentious and closest electoral races in the history of the republic.

Can Americans agree on anything? I heard the phrase American Exceptionalism bantered about at both conventions last month. Whereas I generally understood the definition, I visited the Internet and of course found two opposing views.

American exceptionalism is the idea that the United States holds a special place in the world. With that definition came a dissenters claim, American exceptionalism is little more than crude propaganda that is inherently chauvinistic and jingoistic in nature.

It can be a dangerous proposition to write and speak of politics in a fraternal forum such as this Crest eNewsletter. I have visited several Acacia alumni list-serves and realize our brotherhood has diverse opinions, which can lead to spirited debate.

I do, however, unequivocally support the notion of **Acacia Exceptionalism**. Do I believe Acacia is better than other fraternities? I defer that answer to verbiage found our *Pythagoras* - Acacia's Membership Manual. "Acacia Fraternity does not claim to be the best fraternity, but does maintain that there is none better."

Five reasons to believe in Acacia Exceptionalism:



The Name – I have encountered Acacians over the years that felt our name needed to be more Greek - which is code for "we need letters." We do have letters – six of them. It makes perfectly logical sense to name a fraternity after a word. After all, we've all heard "Acacians can spell, the other can't," and "Acacia is three to four letters better than the rest."

The Ritual – Uniquely Acacia. As 49,978 brothers can attest, the *Ritual* of Acacia has remained relatively unchanged since our inception in 1904. Our *Ritual* constitutes an inheritance from Freemasonry that no other fraternal organization possesses. Our ritual is unique in that you are challenged – some might even call it a test - to gain admittance.

Our Mentor – Interwoven throughout our educational materials is our mentor – *Pythagoras*. Well documented, Pythagoras' journey for knowledge is a most appropriate guidepost for all, especially a college student. Whereas the concept of a mentor is not uniquely Acacia, I was surprised to learn how many Greek organizations don't have this custom.

Membership Education – The idea that a fraternity education should be more than a pledge period in length or a four-year proposition is not unique to Acacia. However, the creation and development of *Cornerstones* does place Acacia in a leadership position in the Interfraternity world with this evolutionary concept. Acacia is historically known as a fraternity that recruits men with academic integrity and individuals who involve themselves in campus and community activities.

History and Heraldry – There are older and larger fraternities to be sure. However, when one reviews the entire epic of Acacia; our age-old and unique relationship with Freemasonry, our tenets of Virtue, Knowledge and Truth, the mission statement of Acacia, our *Preamble*, the *litany* (back of membership card), *Acacia Sings* and, yes, the *white-throated sparrow* and the Acacia *whistle*, it is easy to see that Acacia has a special place in the Greek community.

Acacia is a unique organization. In the spirit of the season, Acacia is turning to its own version of a political action committee (PAC), the **Acacia Fraternity Foundation**, now in its 23rd year of existence. Acacians and friends of Acacia who make tax-deductible contributions to the Foundation make it possible for us

to support the educational activities of the Fraternity and provide scholarships for undergraduates.

This election season I encourage you to renew your support of our unique, and uniquely great, Fraternity.

Acacia Exceptionalism, yep!

Fraternally,

Darold W. Larson

Executive Director

Acacia Fraternity Foundation

To learn more about helping the next generation of Acacians by furthering an exceptional fraternal experience, please contact me at dlarson@acacia.org or call (317) 872-8210. Should you wish to donate online, please visit the [online giving page at acacia.org](#).

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