

Endowing the Future

By El Ahlwardt (Gamma Rho/Florida State '73), Director of Development

The year was 1942. The attack on Pearl Harbor had occurred only ten weeks earlier, and amidst the relative insecurity of the world at war, college and university administrators were doing all they could to ensure the strength and readiness of America by educating her young men and women. At 10AM of that wintry February Saturday, a 21 year-old local fraternity on the campus of the University of Akron ceased to exist and at once gained national prominence as the Beta Lambda Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity.

Together, alumnus and undergraduate members of local Chi Theta Tau became the first initiates of Beta Lambda chapter as they collectively were given the oaths and obligations of Theta Chi Fraternity by the Installation Committee, and accepted their chapter's charter. Among those alumni becoming members of our Fraternity was Victor H. Simon, a University of Akron alumnus from the class of 1935.

Brother Simon was among 40 new brothers who were assigned their roster numbers on February 21st. The next day, 46 more men were initiated. On the evening of the 22nd, at Beta Lambda's Installation Banquet, Brother Simon and his newly initiated Theta Chi brothers heard the following from Frederick W. Ladue, the National President of Theta Chi Fraternity: "Alumni, now more than ever before, your help and guidance are needed. Form an effective organization to help these boys. During this period of trial, let us work together, let us prepare to give our best to our country, our alma mater, and our Fraternity."

Also addressing the banquet gathering was Dr. H.E. Simmons, the President of the University of Akron. Among Dr. Simmons' remarks were the following words: "The Fraternity means a great deal to the men who are fortunate enough to be identified with it." Sharing a theme similar to the National



As they enjoy a Theta Chi Fraternity blanket, Victor and Mary Simon share the moment with Ms. Beverly Brown, right, their financial advisor and friend.

President, Dr. Simmons continued by noting: "Now, more than ever, the fraternities must assert their leadership and their ability to produce leaders."

Brother Simon took those words to heart. He was an engineering major who left his Alma Mater to make his mark on the world. After working successfully for other companies, Brother Simon started his own engineering company in Chicago, Illinois, called Pioneer Service Engineering Consultants, specializing in power generation. The firm was eventually sold to the Fluor Corporation. During his career Brother Simon became an industry leader in power generation consulting. As a result of a lifetime of professional successes, Brother Simon notified the Foundation of his desire to

designate a portion of his estate to benefit Theta Chi in the form of a planned gift.

Last November 16th, on another winter day more than 62 years after taking his oaths and obligations as a member of Theta Chi Fraternity, Brother Simon, and his wife of 65 years, Mary, were visited in their Phoenix, Arizona home. Joining them that morning, accompanied by Ms. Beverly Brown, the Simons' financial advisor, were representatives of the Foundation Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity, Inc.

The occasion was an opportunity for Warren E. Hoffman, II (Alpha Iota/Indiana '76), a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, to express profound appreciation to the Simons for their planned giving decision. That future

gift will be used to create an endowed scholarship fund for men of Theta Chi pursuing an engineering major.

Simon shared these highly revealing thoughts with his visitors. "I had considered, very seriously, leaving school to go to work, as I attended college during the Great Depression," he noted. "But my fraternity brothers helped me stay in school and would not let me drop out. If it was not for my Fraternity, we would not have done what we have." Mrs. Simon also explained that her relationship with the Fraternity started before she met her husband. She lived across the street and was introduced to Brother Simon by another chapter member. "The rest," she explained with a smile on her face and a loving look at her husband, "is history."

Brother Simon modestly spoke of his career, and Ms. Brown gave additional insights about her friends and clients that can only be described as the substance of which a legacy is made in an industry such as power generation.

With their generous planned giving decision, inspired by their heartfelt memories of Theta Chi, and shaped by years of a blessed life together, Brother and Mrs. Simon have shown exceptional and inspirational leadership. They have modestly taken a major step to ensure that Theta Chi will be strong in its future. Indeed, the Simons have, with much grace, arranged to do what they can, to enable future brothers to pursue an engineering education with a financial Helping Hand provided by them.

As tokens of appreciation and recognition, Hoffman presented Brother Simon a Golden Guard certificate to recognize his membership in Theta Chi for more than 50 years. On behalf of the National Fraternity and the Foundation Chapter, Simon also received a Citation of Honor and the Fraternity's Alumni Award from Hoffman. Ahlwardt (Gamma Rho/Florida State '73), the Foundation's Director of Development, presented a sterling silver Theta Chi lavalier to Mrs. Simon, as well as a Theta Chi blanket that Mrs. Simon proudly spread across both her lap, and that of her husband, after asking him to sit a little closer by her side.

The Simons will be invited to attend the 148th National Convention that will be held this coming July in Phoenix, as special guests of the Fraternity.

We are very grateful to Brother and Mrs. Simon for their generous gift, and look forward to recognizing them again this summer. ■



In recognition of the exceptionally gracious decision by Victor Simon and his wife, Mary, to provide for an endowed scholarship fund for engineering majors within Theta Chi, Brother Warren Hoffman presents Brother Simon with the National Fraternity's Citation of Honor.

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—Frederick W. Ladue, the National President of Theta Chi Fraternity, 1942



Victor Simon proudly receives his Golden Guard Certificate that recognizes his membership in Theta Chi for at least 50 years. With Simon is Warren Hoffman, representing the Board of Directors of the Foundation Chapter.