



## Stand and Cheer

By Paul R. Norstrom, National President (Alpha Pi '86)

**F**ormer Green Bay Packers head coach Vince Lombardi once said, "It is time for us all to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever—the one who recognizes the challenge and does something about it." Our Fraternity has experienced success through the efforts of many of these achievers, and their actions speak strongly of what is right about Theta Chi Fraternity.

The chronicle of one such effort began early on April 10th, 1994, when two new members from our Eta Phi Chapter at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan decided that the best way to spend Founder's Day was to embark on a "road trip" with a very specific purpose: a visit to the monument commemorating the founding of Theta Chi in Norwich, Vermont. Ken Maciejewski '96, and Joe Ross '97 hopped into an Astrovan and made their first of what would be 11 consecutive annual visits to the founding monument. This was no short trip, as travel consumed at least 16 hours each way. The two returned to their chapter quite energized, and, subsequently, Joe and Ken brought more brothers from Eta Phi with them on a Founder's Day trip to the monument in 1995. During this trip, the group decided to travel beyond the monument in search of the gravesites of the founders. Their visit to the Chase gravesite at the Pleasant Street Cemetery in Claremont, New Hampshire was described as solemn and inspirational for each of them. However, their visit to the Freeman gravesite at the Freeman Cemetery in Plainfield, New Hampshire would become inspirational for us all.

As Brother Jamie Pomaville (Eta Phi/Oakland '97) stood at the foot of Frederick Norton Freeman's grave, he was simply appalled by the dilapidated condition of the headstone. Jamie told his brothers that something had to be done, as this monument honoring the life of such an important figure in our Fraternity did not represent the respect he had earned. Jamie decided that he would personally work to have the headstone repaired or replaced. When the group arrived back in Michigan, Jamie was still passionate about what he saw in New Hampshire and he promised that he would not let that headstone fall to pieces.

Jamie contacted the International Headquarters and asked if a fundraiser to repair or replace the headstone could be developed. The IHQ worked with Jamie on this concept and, that summer during the Chapter Leadership Conference at Miami University, the Restoration Fundraising program was introduced. The program was based on the sale of "Restoration" t-shirts with all proceeds from the sales of the shirts placed in an account specifically earmarked for the restoration of the headstone. The fundraising efforts went quite well and, over the next 10 years, funding was generated to support the project. While this program raised a good portion of the funds necessary, it wasn't quite enough to get the job done.

Jamie's motivation in starting this project generated the momentum necessary to keep the restoration effort alive. This, coupled with the

efforts of another achiever, allowed the project to succeed. Back in 1997, Brother Terry Robinson (Zeta Beta/Adrian '66) had been inspired by a plan to award a brick from those that formed the foundation of the Old South Barracks at Norwich University to each of our undergraduate chapters. He was instrumental in the achievement of this goal at our 144th Anniversary Convention in 2000 by funding the cost for the hardwood bases that each brick was placed upon. When Terry learned of the efforts to preserve the Freeman headstone, the fraternal spirit, which had been renewed within him at the 2000 convention, drove him to make a significant contribution to fund the restoration of the Freeman headstone. The funds generated through these two channels allowed the Sesquicentennial Convention Committee to have the work completed by making a small contribution of their own to cover the remainder of costs associated with the project.

Once sufficient funding was in place, Brother Nick Collins (Alpha/Norwich '55) was asked to assist. As regular readers of this magazine will recall, Nick was the impetus behind the recovery of the aforementioned bricks from the Old South Barracks and has shown lifelong devotion to both his alma mater and his fraternity. When Nick was asked to be the local "point man" to get this work done, he tackled this task with the same zeal displayed in the successful execution of the brick preservation. First, Nick tracked down the trustees of the Freeman family cemetery and asked if the Fraternity could have this work done on behalf of the Freeman family. When they happily approved, Nick got to work identifying a suitable contractor to complete the project, negotiating a fair price on our behalf, and overseeing the proper completion of the work.

This unique effort to preserve a piece of our history demonstrates once again that one brother, one achiever, can cause others to achieve more as well. Thanks, Jamie! You've made a difference, and will have a positive influence not only on our experience in Vermont this summer, but on brothers for many years to come.

I encourage each of you to visit the gravesites of our founders during your trip to Vermont for our Sesquicentennial celebration this summer, and I promise a special surprise for each of you who takes the time to make these visits.

In closing, I want to thank all of my brothers for the honor of serving as your National President over the past four years. It has been a wonderful experience, and I remain,

Better Because of Theta Chi!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul".

Paul R. Norstrom  
National President