



## **Founders' Day Proclamation**

### **April 30, 2021**

This time each year, sisters and friends of Theta Phi Alpha honor our founding at the University of Michigan on August 30, 1912. Theta Phi Alpha was established to provide a home for Catholic women, who found that they could not live authentically within the framework of existing organizations. We were exclusive to all other religions for many years. At the 1960 National Convention in Pittsburgh, Theta Phi Alpha eliminated the requirement to be of the Catholic faith, which formally removed any discrimination against women in our membership requirements. However, it was a change that ultimately took quite a few years to be adopted fully throughout the organization.

Similarly, today, while our membership policy explicitly prohibits discrimination against anyone who identifies as a woman, we still have work to do to be inclusive of all the members in our organization in practice. While our formal policies are inclusive, how can we do better to include all sisters equally and respectfully? We must continue to ask ourselves this question and grapple with the truth that we can and must be better. To be a strong organization is to be a diverse organization, which will only be true if we honestly value the diversity of identities, voices, and experiences of our members. And to do this, we must first acknowledge where we have fallen short.

It is my hope that all members can see themselves valued by and represented in our membership, in our volunteers, and in the leadership of our organization. So, we will put our time and resources into the efforts to be the strong organization that is inclusive of all members.

As we gather to celebrate Founders' Day and honor Dorothy, Katrina, Mildred, Selma, Otilia, Amelia, Camilla, Helen, May, Eva, and Bishop Kelly, who all had the courage to establish Theta Phi Alpha in 1912, I ask you to make courageous choices. Be the example for your neighbors. Have respectful conversations, whether you agree or disagree with one another, and continue to work together, love, and value one another. Be accepting of others, no matter the differences. Be supportive and empower each other. Recognize wrong and stand up for what is right.

We can honor our Founders every day with our words and deeds, our values and purpose, and with the Theta Phi Alpha Creed, written in 1933 by Mildred Connely. We recite our Creed to ground ourselves in Theta Phi Alpha's values and purpose. So I ask you, "how do you live our Creed every day?"

In 2021, we celebrate our 109 years of sisterhood as Theta Phi Alpha. We have survived for this long because we met the challenges of the times and recognized the need to evolve with our membership. We will continue to do so in order to be here for generations to come. I look forward to seeing the evolution of Theta Phi Alpha, the evolution that the members here today will create.

Happy Founders' Day!

Yours in the bonds of sisterhood,

Tracey Liphardt, Alpha Nu  
National President