

# Two Greek organizations cater to black students

By Doreen Charles



Black fraternities and sororities offer black students a way to form close friendships, even though they lack some of the fringe benefits of traditional Greek organizations on campus, according to members of black Greek organizations.

The ideals of brotherhood are the same as those existing at other Greek organizations, even though the black organizations operate without campus housing and small memberships.

Eugene Tolston, president of UNL's only black fraternity, said the interaction among group members is different from the atmosphere at predominantly white fraternities.

He said the fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi, was established at UNL in 1916 and the fact that the organization for minority students does not have a fraternity house on campus has not hindered the group in its efforts to express the group's ideals.

"You don't have to have a house if you believe in brotherhood," he said. "The belief is in your heart."

A UNL alumni member of the fraternity said the circumstances surrounding the formation of the black fraternity at UNL were different from those of white organizations.

### Need for group

Andrew Young, who pledged in 1973, said the need to belong to a group was strong during the "post-riot" era of the early 1970s.

"Everyone felt there was more of a need for group support," he said.

Black students pledge the fraternity during the school year instead of through a rush period in the summer.

Young said the attitudes toward pledging the black fraternity also differ from other fraternities.

"For us, pledging has a deeper meaning. It symbolizes a blind period of life.

"Our pledge represents the struggle you

encounter during your lifetime. It's not a two or three day event like in white fraternities," said Warren Bell, a junior accounting major and member of the fraternity.

Bell said he pledged Kappa Alpha Psi in the spring of 1980 because of its recognition as a professional business organization.

The oldest Kappa Alpha Psi alumni member in Lincoln said he pledged the fraternity in 1924 when there were only 60 or 75 students at the university.

Burt Newton, who received a business administration degree from UNL, said it was not popular for blacks to attend college during that time, much less join a fraternity.

### Togetherness belonging

"We were pretty close," he said.

"It was a matter of togetherness and belonging. We stressed leadership and achievement," he said of the 12-member group.

Black sororities also emphasize close relationships as an essential part of the organization, according to Leslie Washington, president of Zeta Phi Beta, UNL's only black sorority.

"Sorority life is a major part of college life as a whole," she said.

A person may feel uncomfortable being in a white sorority and being the only black, just like being the only black in class."

Established last January, the sorority does not have a house on campus either. But like members of the black fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta members do not think this is a problem.

"Actually, it makes us closer," Washington said. We do a lot of things together. I can always depend on one of the sisters for help. It's like having 15 best friends."

The black Greek organizations participate in the Panhellenic and Interfraternity Council at UNL just like other Greek groups, according to Jane Anderson, director of Greek Affairs.

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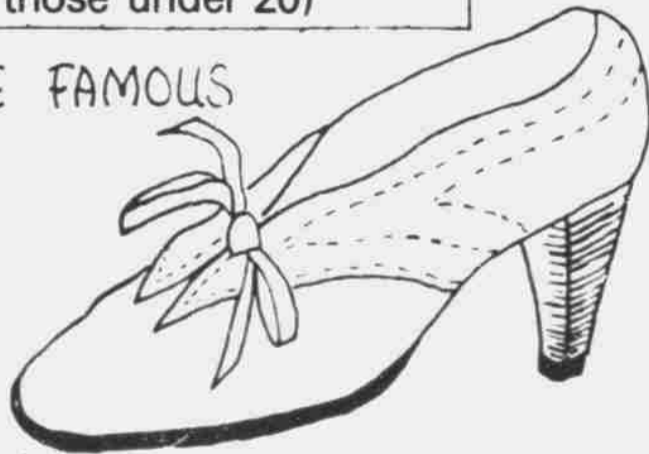
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