

August 12, 2008

My Dear Sigma Phi Brothers,

Unlike many throughout history, I grew up actually knowing that my father had another family. This family needed his time, his commitment, his energy, and his love, and it was Sigma Phi. I knew you were there, and I knew you were his life's passion. He told me about you all the time. I never questioned this other family, nor was I ever jealous and I will tell you simply why. The actions my father persevered with for Sigma Phi were demonstrable and transparent. They shaped me as an individual as much as they shaped you. He did for Sigma Phi, what he did for me. He provided, he counseled, he protected, he amused, and yes, he scolded as well. For me to not respect his time with all of you was unthinkable. You were his brothers. Your wives were his sisters. You were his family too. I knew that if we ever needed you, you would be there for us. To those of you I have known over the years, you always made me feel that I was your sister, or your daughter too. Although, at the Vermont Convention of 1977 that conveniently coincided with my college selection tours, I certainly was inclined to think of being more. Regrettably, introduction to any of those fine Sigs, "there or anywhere within the United States until I reached the age of 70", was immediately disallowed and the rule was strictly enforced by my Dad.

I must let you know that I am prouder of his commitment to Sigma Phi, than his career achievements, or any of his numerous other admirable ranks in community service. Only second to his 54-year marriage to my mother, the work for Sigma Phi is in my opinion, his life's greatest achievement. To be a part of a group that cherishes excellence, character, commitment, friendships, service, and dedicated mentoring is to have truly lived. And how my Dad lived. I thank all of you for your outpouring of support for my mother, and from her and the sister that most of you never knew, I tell you all that our doors will always be open to you.

My deepest and most grateful regards to you all,

Esto Perpetua,

Susan Blair Howard