



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES RESOLUTION TO HONOR ALPHA KAPPA
ALPHA SORORITY, INC**

Resolution Recognizes the AKAs as the first Greek letter sorority for African-American women on its 112th Chicago's Founders Day

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced a resolution honoring Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc on the sorority's 112th anniversary, which will be acknowledged on January 15, 2020.

“For more than 100 years, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has been a pillar for excellence and social advocacy, while empowering African-American women to pursue and thrive in higher education,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Their commitment to enhancing the social, economic and educational well-being of its members and others is a focus and commitment that we should all aspire to achieve.”

Even though women were allowed in higher education institutions during the 1900s, college campuses, especially those in the south, were very segregated and male-dominated. Howard University co-ed Ethel Hedgeman desired a support network for like-minded women to gather in a safe space for mutual uplift and to unite their talents for the benefit of others. In 1908, Ethel's vision manifested as Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first Negro Greek-letter sorority. In 1913, lead incorporator, Nellie Quander, ensured Alpha Kappa Alpha's permanency through incorporation in the District of Columbia.

“Our sisterhood throughout Illinois and the country has nurtured and cultivated strong, independent, black women,” said Alderman Stephanie Coleman, 16th Ward. “By honoring the Sorority that has made strides for better opportunities for its members, the Sorority has allowed for young black women to know that they too can be a part of a fellowship that has stood the test of time.”

From the core group of nine members, Hedgeman crafted a design that has fostered interaction, stimulation, and ethical growth within the organization, while also providing hope and support to others. Today, the AKAs number nearly 300,000 members and alumnae constituting 1,007 chapters in 42 states, the District of



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Columbia, the US Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Germany, Liberia, South Korea, Japan, Canada, South Africa and the Middle East. The organization's second oldest chapter, the Beta Chapter was chartered in 1913 in Chicago encompassing the University of Chicago, Loyola University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Columbia College, and Roosevelt University. For more than a century, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sisterhood has fulfilled that obligation by becoming an indomitable force for good in their communities, state, nation, and the world.

"My mother is an AKA, I'm an AKA, their national headquarters are in my ward. When I need my sisters, they are they for me, no matter the distance," said Alderman Leslie Hairston (5th). "Together we have a voice that can be heard around the world allowing us to make a real impact in the lives of people and in our communities. I want to thank the Mayor and my fellow City Council members for honoring the first Greek letter organization for African-American women and our commitment to sisterhood and to serving others."

Steeped in tradition and dedication to its credo "To be supreme in service to all mankind," the AKAs use their Sisterhood to raise the status of all African-Americans, particularly for girls and women. The women of AKA use their platform to continue their original mission to connect and support each other, with an emphasis on community service to aid the poor, advance human and civil rights, and produce current and future generations of female leaders.

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