

They Wrote "The Song" (The DKG Song)

Presented to Area XVIII as a Founders Day Program 2016

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Editor's Note: These go along with the PowerPoint "They Wrote the Song" which is also included on the California State website. The PowerPoint includes a picture of each Founder and some words from the DKG song. When presenting this program a member can read the words from the DKG song from the PowerPoint as each slide is presented.

Slide 2: Have you ever thought about the words of "The Song" and why they were written? This song has remained part of our Society since 1929 and still has meaning today for our members.

Slide 3: Dr. Annie Webb Blanton and Dr. Cora Martin

Obviously, the first lines of the song should belong to Dr. Annie Webb Blanton because she was the one who had the original idea of a society for women educators. She gave much thought to forming a society that would unite women educators in an effort to improve their working conditions and would help in giving them a voice. Throughout the days of planning, she was in discussion with Dr. Cora Martin. They had been colleagues for several years and both lived in the Faculty Women's Club in Austin.

After their plans were in place and they were ready to actually begin the endeavor, invitations were mailed to selected women who were known by both women. Each one was chosen because of her professionalism, courage and determination. Knowing that this activity could be discovered before they were ready for publicity, the invitations were sent under a pseudonym to keep the project secure. Never did they doubt the validity of what they were doing nor did they doubt the fact that such a society would stand the test of time.

As the acceptance notes arrived, I can imagine the excitement and pleasure as they discovered the names of women who would become the Founders of the Society. Staunch? Courageous? Yes!

Slide 4: Ruby Terrill Lomax

Which of our founders might be described by these words. Ruby Terrill Lomax is our choice because of her career in education. She was a teacher and became Dean of Women early in her career. She was extremely well liked by her students and spent much time counseling them. Mindful of their needing? That was one of the qualities attributed to her and that trait carried over into her Society work. She was loyal to the organization and was often called upon for her advice in the business of the young society. She was the first parliamentarian and thusly aided and guided the growing organization in forming policies and rituals. Bunch, as she was called, used her sense of humor, creativity and intelligence to aid and guide both her students and the Society.

#### Slide 5: Mamie Bastian and Lela Lee Williams

Mamie Bastian and Lela Lee Williams were both crusaders in the quest for equality for women in education and for teachers to be recognized as professionals. Mamie was a fun-loving vivacious woman who found ways to inject a festive spirit into early Society activities, such as birthday celebrations and unusual programs. One of her quests became the establishment of a teacher retirement system for educators of Texas. It was said that legislators “quailed at her hickory-stick tactics”.

In Dallas, Lela Lee was involved in the same types of activities that would be of benefit to classroom teachers. One of her accomplishments was the salary increase brought about because of her campaign leadership. Another of her campaigns was for better training to prepare classroom teachers. Lela Lee helped organize the Texas Grade Teachers Association to unite teachers of elementary grades into an organized group that could bring change and equality. Like Mamie, she had a zest for living and liked to inject fun into Society activities.

#### Slide 6: Mabel Grizzard

In considering which Founder should be associated with these words, it can easily be seen that each one of our Founders would fit. Each showed courage in standing firm in the quest for improvement in education. Each had faith in colleagues and felt that her life should be honorable and lead by truth and justice.

The biographies of the Founders led us to choose Mabel Grizzard. It was said of her that she had faith in associations and faith in God. She was concerned about the civic welfare of her community and this led her to work with the Red Cross and other civic endeavors. Honor was important to Mabel and she sought to build character in students by the teaching of life lessons as a teacher and later as a principal.

#### Slide 7: Lalla Odam

Lalla Odam called herself an exacting perfectionist and that trait influenced her attention to details in every aspect of the early decision-making in the new society. Her advice and thoughts were of great value to the other Founders as they were creating the Constitution and rituals. Standing up for herself and others was shown in a major decision in her teaching career. She was hired late in a year when classroom populations necessitated hiring emergency teachers. Being a married woman, she was told at the end of the year that she would be hired for the next year, but without a regular contract. She would be hired as a substitute because she was married. She told them that she would not accept such an arrangement. Because of the quality of her teaching, the Austin Superintendent decided that married women could receive regular contracts after all! That decision affected not only Lalla's career but that of many other teachers.

#### Slide 8: Ruby Cole and Anna Hiss

All our Founders were pioneers in education and stood up for equality and standards of excellence. Those qualities made them successful educators and insured the successful establishment of the Society.

Ruby Cole was an educator in San Antonio. After the first initiation was held for the Founders and Alpha Chapter, she was determined to have the second chapter in San Antonio. Because of her diligence, Beta Chapter was organized. Ruby worked to elevate the status of women educators and foster the idea that they were professionals. She was energetic and was known for her cheer, courage and good will. Teachers in her school knew that they had her never-failing support.

Anna Hiss also worked for others in her position at the University of Texas in the physical education department. She was constantly seeking ways to improve the department to provide the best for the girls in the program. One of her most innovative ideas came when she realized the girls were lacking in the social skills of the day. She organized a formal dance for them. Because there were no boys, Anna assigned half of her students the role of escorts wearing tuxedos. The roles were reversed for the second dance.

#### Slide 9: Ray King and Sue King

The two sisters among our Founders, Ray and Sue King, were chosen for this section of the song. They truly exhibited unity in their relationship and liberty in their pursuit of the best in educational training.

Sue King, the older of the sisters, led the way for college attendance and was a great influence on Ray. She was a true scholar and always wanted to have a thorough mastery of the subject she was studying. She taught language and history, but organized a library for the school when one was needed. When she purchased books for her own summer reading, she kept in mind what could be used in the library. She knew Annie Blanton and Annie recognized that Sue would be a unifying influence among the members. Sadly, her service to Delta Kappa Gamma was brief because of her unexpected death during the first year.

Ray King joined her sister in the teaching profession and accepted the invitation to become a Founder of the Society. These two sisters were in unity as they taught in Fort Worth, lived in a shared home and started the fourth chapter for the state. Ray served as the first treasurer and in many committee memberships. She had a vision for the Society and worked enthusiastically to make the organization the best it could be.

Slide 10: Helen Koch

To close the words of the song, Helen Koch has been chosen. She was an accomplished pianist and her dedication to improving those skills can be seen in the habits she established early in life. Because of her participation in after-school activities, there was no time for piano practice. So, she woke up at 4:00 each morning to practice piano. During college, she had to give up the practice as other girls in the dorm were not thrilled to hear her music so early! She trained nursery school teachers in America and in Europe. She was interested in the psychology of siblings and the research that was outstanding in that area. Some of her findings are still quoted in the study of the influence of birth order in families.

Slide 11: Conclusion

We can certainly see that “The Song” reflects the purposes and ideals that were held by the twelve women who became Founders of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. Their lives live on through the song and all the contributions they made that still influence us today. Sing the song with pride as you honor these Founders.