

What DKG Means to Me

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When I began my teaching career in 1970, I had never heard of DKG. Maybe it was because I was too busy working on the requisite master's degree within the first five years of teaching or perhaps it was because we were a new school and there were few veteran teachers. Fast forward to 1990. I returned to teaching after a nine-year hiatus during which I owned a restaurant. Many factors in my life again changed. Now I was in a new community and there were many veteran teachers in the Pioneer School District who proved to be not only good friends, but who also took me under their wing. In 1998 they invited me to become a member of Gamma Mu Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. I still wasn't that familiar with the purpose of DKG, but I knew that many of my colleagues were very involved with it and these were the teachers who had offered friendship and leadership as well as opportunities to grow as a teacher. I accepted the invitation and became a member in February 1999. I was unable to attend the regular December induction, but they held an induction ceremony just for me. I felt very honored to become a member. I was in awe the following December to see the full Ceremony of Induction. Hearing Janie Hornung sing the songs during the ceremony still echoes in my heart. She may be gone, but her songs linger. I was learning more about DKG at each meeting.

Since our chapter holds part of the meetings each year in Cass County and part in White County, I became acquainted with more of the members I did not know when we carpooled to these meetings. The more involved I became in attending state conferences and conventions, the more I felt I was growing professionally and personally. I especially am grateful for Penny Schaefer, Liz Billman and Marjorie Miller who guided me through my first international convention in Indianapolis. I was in awe of the proceedings and events, especially seeing Lois Vogel carry our flag in the opening ceremony.

One thing Penny emphasized when I was inducted was that a DKG member always says "Yes". When asked to serve on a committee or help with a program or event, I took her words to heart. I did say "Yes", and I am happy I did. Through these opportunities I have met fellow educators from around the state and the nation. I would not have met these ladies otherwise. Friendships grew and so did I. I stepped out of my comfort zone and continued to learn. The more I learned about DKG, the more I wanted to know. I have always considered myself a life-long learner. DKG has given me the opportunities to keep up with the latest trends, the legislation affecting education, and a chance to develop new skills. There are so many willing to share their knowledge, their friendship, and their leadership skills. I have collaborated to write articles with other DKG members in other states. I can't begin to list all the women I have met through DKG, but one thing is for certain, I am a different person because of these women. They did and still do inspire me to be a better person and a better DKG member. I only hope I can offer as much support to others as they have given to me. Through DKG, I have been empowered to speak up for education and not just accept the status quo.

DKG has enriched my life through the developed friendships, leadership opportunities, sharing of knowledge, and commitment to our students and the future of education. I still have much to learn about DKG, but I want to continue that journey.