

What DKG means to me:

History: When I graduated from Ball State University, my major was history. As current DKG state historian, I maintain the history of our organization. I have always been a “history” person. When I began teaching I had colleagues who had been part of the movement in the 1960s and ‘70s to organize teachers, increase teacher input into decision making, and increase teacher pay. I respected their contributions to the history of our profession. Some of these same colleagues were members of the Gamma Mu chapter.

The membership book for Gamma Mu chapter indicates that I was initiated into our chapter in 1993. I do not remember the year, who asked me to become a member, or what they said about DKG. However, because I have pictures, I can visualize the initiation ceremony. I can tell you what dress I wore, how much dark hair I had, the church where the ceremony was held, who the officers were at the time, and my fellow initiates – we look very young. What cannot be visualized are the feelings, including the fears I had that day.

My greatest fear was that I would not be able to live up to the ideals of the society, especially if I might want to say “no” to tasks. Well, I can now say that I can live up to DKG’s goals. I have been in numerous positions in our chapter, from committee member to president. I have discovered since initiation that I can complete jobs and that few tasks can be completed individually at either the chapter or state level. I have always been about to call on fellow members for advice or help. Members have helped with everything from lending their artistic talent to being the program when a presenter had an unexpected issue (“thank you” Penny Schaefer).

Along the way, I have listened to respected colleagues and made friends from two counties. Along the way, I have learned skills that transfer to other areas of professional and private life. Along the way, I have learned to value a society and a history that I did not understand in 1993.

I enjoy attending meetings. During the meetings in the 1990’s, I remember older members discussing their friends. Many had passed, so they were only names to me. In much the same way, I miss my sponsors, Pat, Rosemary, and Dorothy Moore. I miss Liz Billman. I honor them for their contributions. But I enjoy meetings because we have new members, with great ideas.

The profession, in many ways, is not the same as it was even when I retired in 2015. Sometimes members cannot attend meetings. Sometimes members have to say “no.” To new members, I say, “keep attending, keep doing.” We want to know what’s occurring in our important profession. We want to make friends.

During a chapter meeting Saturday, Oct. 5, we accepted candidates for initiation. Some of the candidates came to the profession in non-traditional ways. One person who truly interested me professionally was a teacher who has taught welding for many years. Because of her abilities, the number of female students in that program has increased. That is exciting.

You ask, "What does DKG mean to me?" My answer: "We honor our past contributions but are even more excited for our future contributions."

Marsha Riggs, Historian, Indiana State Organization and member of Gamma Mu since 1993.