

Table of Contents

Chapter News

Lest We ForgetPage 2
Charles R. Drew Blood Drive.....Page 4
Children Items Distribution.....Page 5
Rho Phi Article—Oracle Spring 2004.....Page 6
Congratulations.....Page 7

International News

Omega Federal Credit Union Mobile App.....Page 8

Ninth District News

Healthy Que Tips.....Page 9



**Bro. Adrian Thibodeaux
Basileus**



Lest We Forget....

Aside from the Founders, perhaps no other Brother on the Fraternity's Charter Line had a greater impact on Omega than Bro. William Gilbert. His impact fraternally was equally matched by his achievements professionally. It is no wonder that when the Founders reflected on who to select as potential candidates, Bro. William Gilbert's name rose to the top.

Bro. William Gilbert was born on March 26, 1888, in Nashville, TN to the Rev. Dr. Matthew William Gilbert and Agnes (Boozer) Gilbert, the third of seven children. His father, a Baptist minister, was nationally renowned having risen from the bonds of slavery to earn his A.B. degree from Colgate University (then Madison University) in 1887, his D.D degree from Guadeloupe College in 1896, and B.D degree from Union Theological Seminary in 1907. His ministerial duties took him and his family to several cities during young William's upbringing including Nashville, TN, Jacksonville, FL, Savannah, GA, and New York, NY where Rev. Dr. Gilbert pastored at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. An educator as well as a minister, Rev. Dr. Gilbert taught at Benedict College from 1902-04 and was president of Selma University from 1911-16. He also co-founded Florida Baptist Academy (which is now Florida Memorial University) and served as its first president from 1892-94. His children would follow in his footsteps with two becoming pastors and two educators. Bro. Gilbert's calling was education.

After an early education in the schools of Jacksonville and New York, Rev. Dr. Gilbert sent three of his children, Ruth, William, and Newton to attend Howard Academy's college preparatory school on Howard University's campus in 1904. Ruth, two years older than Bro. Gilbert, graduated from Howard Academy in 1907 and enrolled at Howard University later that fall graduating with her degree in 1911. Bro. Gilbert finished Howard Academy in 1908 and followed in his sister's footsteps enrolling at Howard in the fall of 1908. His brother, Newton, left Howard Academy in 1909, became a licensed minister in 1910, finished his secondary education in New York at the DeWitt Clinton High School in 1911 before entering his father's alma mater, Colgate University.

Bro. Gilbert thoroughly immersed himself in the activities of Howard as an undergraduate. He was elected president of the freshman class. In the spring of 1909, he was selected by a young, upstart English professor, Ernest Everett Just, to be a part of a new acting organization he was putting together called the Howard University Dramatic Club (now the Howard Players). Just served

The Oracle History & Archives



WHO IS WILLIAM GILBERT?

By Brother Jonathan A. Matthews

as Director while Gilbert was Manager of the Club handling all business affairs. The Club's first performance of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* premiered at the Andrew Rankin Chapel to a capacity audience on Friday, April 16, 1909. The performance was a theatrical and financial success. The *Howard Journal* praised Just for his directorship and training of the all-freshman cast and Bro. Gilbert "who managed the affair in such a manner as to cover himself with glory." He would go on to manage the Club until he graduated from Howard in 1912 producing and managing three more productions.

After graduating from Howard, Bro. Gilbert pursued a career in education similar to his father and his sister, Ruth, who was teaching at Selma University where their father was president. Bro. Gilbert secured a teaching position at the State University in Louisville, KY (now Simmons College) in 1912. After teaching mathematics there for a year, he became principal of a school in Jackson, AL in 1913 before leaving there to teach printing and mathematics at Southern University and A&M College in 1914. Bro. Gilbert had a background in printing working at Howard's print shop during his undergraduate years. He taught at Southern until 1918 when he returned to one of his childhood homes, Nashville, TN, to become an instructor of languages, printing, and broom making at the Tennessee A&I Normal School (now Tennessee State University). He taught there until 1925 when he became Ass't Superintendent for the Sunday School Publishing



Cast of She Stoops to Conquer, April 1909. Future Omega Men
 1st Row: William Henry Pleasants, Charter Line (1st from the right)
 and Row: Ernest Everett Just, Founder (1st from the left), Clarence Albert Hayes, Charter Line (4th from the right),
 Moses T. Clayborne, initiated Feb. 28, 1908 (and from the right), William Gilbert, Charter Line (1st from the right)
 Photo courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. Color by @officialpiff

Board in Nashville. Health concerns caused Bro. Gilbert to resign that position in 1926. He and his mother, who was his business partner, established the Gilbert Sandwich Shop across the street from Tennessee A&I in 1926, a business he would own and operate until his death in 1928.

Fraternally, Bro. Gilbert was a giant in Omega. While graduating from Howard in 1912, he assisted Alpha Chapter in securing its first Fraternity house at 1907 3rd St., NW in the fall of 1912. With Alpha Chapter owing Bro. Gilbert \$25 for house start-up expenses, in 1912, he forgave the debt stating that Brothers should use those funds to purchase coal for the house and that he will send additional funds as soon as he is financially stable with his new employment. Upon moving back to Nashville in 1918, he joined the newly established Delta Chapter in 1919 where he was viewed as a "staunch member of Delta and well versed in all that belongs to Omega." At the 10th Grand Conclave (December 1921) in Atlanta, Bro. Gilbert was elected Omega's 4th Editor-to-the-Oracle. Up to that point, only two Oracles had ever been produced. During his tenure, he produced the Oracle on a quarterly basis, established publishing guidelines, and formal submission dates for Chapter updates and information. He also assumed, as part of his Oracle duties, the responsibility for constructing and implementing the second year of the fledgling Campaign for the Study of Negro Literature and History (now Achievement Week) in 1922. Two months after the Conclave, he was appointed Grand Keeper of Records after the sitting holder of that position, Bro. Benjamin Wilbon Clayton (Alpha Chapter 1914) was declared by the Supreme Council disabled "to properly perform the functions of his office."

Brothers were so pleased with the performance of Bro. Gilbert in these triad positions that they elected him to the newly revised position of Grand Keeper of Finance at the 11th Grand Conclave (December 1922) in Philadelphia (this previous position was Grand Keeper of Seals). Dreer notes in the first history book that "(Bro. Gilbert's) contribution to Omega's financial history cannot be praised too highly." During his two-year tenure, he devised forms for the transfer of funds and issuance of petty cash, installed a new

accounting system utilizing cash and ledger accounts, introduced financial membership cards to Brothers (a first), and oversaw the quadrupling of income to the Fraternity all while maintaining profitability.

His fraternal efforts did not end with his tenure as Grand Keeper of Finance in 1924. In 1925, he became a charter member of the first graduate Chapter in Nashville, Gamma Phi, where he would go on to serve as its second Basileus in 1926-27. Also, in the spring of 1926, he organized the historic Eta Psi Chapter at Fisk University.

Personally, Bro. Gilbert married Sadie Evans from Louisville, KY on January 1, 1924. They established their home in Nashville where Gilbert's mother, Agnes, lived after the death of her husband, Rev. Dr. Gilbert, in 1917. Unfortunately, tragedy found the Gilberts. Longevity in age was not known to the Gilbert children. Two of Bro. Gilbert's older siblings died in childhood. His younger sister, Florence, died in 1907 at the age of 15 after a long illness. His brother Newton, who was only a year younger than Bro. Gilbert, died during his senior year at Colgate University at the age of 25. And Bro. William Gilbert would tragically pass on April 10, 1928, at the age of 40 after battling several health issues over the years. Heartbroken over the loss of her son, Bro. Gilbert's mother, Agnes, fell ill shortly after his funeral and passed away just sixteen days after her son's death on April 26, 1928. She was 65. Bro. Gilbert's sister, Ruth, would go on to continue to teach. His youngest brother, Ralph, would take up his father's mantle and become a prominent minister and civil rights leader in Savannah, GA (he passed at the age of 57 in 1956).



Charles Drew Blood Drive

February 25, 2023— Rho Phi partnered with the Blood Center of New Orleans to host the chapter's annual Charles R. Drew Blood Drive . This event is an Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. mandated program and was held at the Optimus Entertainment Center located at 9820 Lake Forest Blvd in New Orleans East. Brothers from Rho Phi along with other volunteers donated 35 pints of blood during the event. Donors receive a Blood Center Mardi Gras beanie or t-shirt for their blood donation.



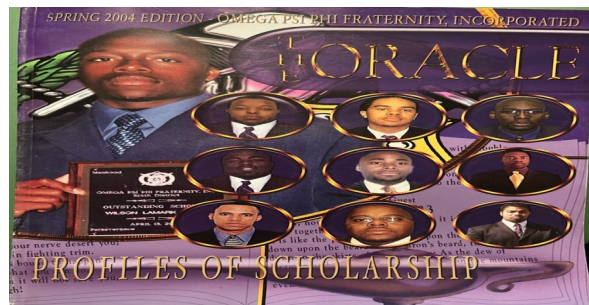
Children Items Distribution

February 3, 2023— Rho Phi chapter brother, Charles Brown volunteered to participate with Israelite Baptist Church to distribute boxes of baby formula and diapers to a local women shelter in the New Orleans area. Bro. Rev. Emmanuel Smith Jr., Senior Pastor of Israelite Baptist Church and his wife, Diane organized the event. A total of 9 -10,000 baby formulas and diapers were delivered to the New Orleans Women and Children Shelter. The executive director and staff of the shelter expressed their gratitude on behalf of the shelter.



Rho Phi Chapter Article — Oracle Spring 2004

In the Spring 2004 edition of the Oracle, Rho Phi was honored to have an article included in the fraternity's magazine. The article reported on a statewide Prostrate Cancer Symposium that the chapter helped sponsor in November, 2003. The article was written and submitted by Bro. Dr. Walter Rayford and Bro. John A. Jones, Jr., who served as the Chapter Reporter and chairman of the Health Committee during that timeframe. Bro. Jones, Jr. was able to get a copy of the article through the assistance of Bro. Dwight Jarrett, Sr. along with information about several of the early founding brothers of Rho Phi chapter, who also helped charter Beta Sigma chapter located on Southern University's campus in Baton Rouge, LA.



Omicron Lambda Lambda

Alport, Arkansas - Brothers Bruce Horton, Basileus and Reginald Davis, Vice Basileus (center of Photo) and the charter members of the chapter pose for pictures.

The chapter was chartered at the Supreme Council Meeting in Decatur, Georgia on January 22, 2004.

The charter ceremony was held on February 20, 2004 with a banquet at the Double Tree Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas. The ceremony was officiated by the 9th District Representative, Brother "Teflon" Don Davis with the 9th District Council Members assisting him.

NU IOTA HONORS BROTHERS MASON, MOON AND MAYS

by Milton H. Williams, III

Marshall, TX - Recently the Nu Iota Chapter honored three of its most achieved members. These brothers, who are respectfully known as the 3Ms, have a combined service of 170 years to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Brother L.U. Mason, a charter member of Nu Iota Chapter is a retired vocational agriculture teacher and a 65-year member of his Fraternity. He has served as chapter Basileus, Keeper of Records and Seal and presently serves as the Keeper of Finance. Brother Mason over the years has been affiliated with many organizations including the Masonic Lodge and Boy Scouts of America. Brother Mason is a graduate of Prairie View A & M University.

Brother Lawrence A. Moon, also a charter member of Nu Iota Chapter, is a retired businessman and a 78-year member of Omega. A graduate of Wiley College, Brother Moon is the owner of Moon Enterprises, which consist of real estate investments, cleaners and laundromats. Brother Moon has demonstrated his leadership by serving as a Board of Director for the Marshall Regional Hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, co-founder of the Harrison County Progressive Credit Union and Trustee for Wiley College.

Brother Vernon C. May, Sr., a retired

school administrator, is a 27 year member of Omega. He has served the Fraternity in various leadership positions including past Basileus. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Bishop College and his Masters from Stephen F. Austin University. Brother May has devoted many hours of leadership and he has received many honors while serving his church and community.

Brothers Mason, Moon and May. Three brothers of Omega, who have set the standards of commitment, blazed the trail of leadership and demonstrated their devotion to the Fraternity's cardinal principles of manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift for all generations.

Rho Phi Chapter Prostate Cancer Program

New Orleans, LA - Prostate cancer is a major healthcare dilemma, especially among African-American men. It is the most common malignancy in the American male and the second leading cause of cancer related deaths.

For that reason, the Rho Phi Chapter in New Orleans, LA, has taken an active and

"Rho Phi Chapter have already begun to plan for the second annual symposium to be held again in New Orleans."

aggressive role in educating the community about the importance of prostate cancer education and early detection. November, 2003 the Rho Phi Chapter helped to sponsor the first statewide Prostate Cancer Symposium in Louisiana. The title of the symposium was "From Controversy and Confusion to Clarity."

Brother Walter Rayford, M.D., Ph.D., FACS, and a member of Rho Phi Chapter is Director of the Louisiana Education Early Detection and Research Program which was the major sponsor of the educational symposium. Nationally and internationally recognized experts in the field of prostate cancer gave talks on prostate cancer topics including screening and early detection, medical and surgical treatment options, prostatic diseases, and diagnosis and treatment of erectile dysfunction. Nearly 700 participants were present for this morning and afternoon educational symposium. The

NINTH DISTRICT

majority owner of the New Orleans Hornets provided an excellent motivational talk during the noon lunch hour. The afternoon session included free PSA testing, cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes screenings, as well as empowerment sessions on erectile dysfunction, and dietary and health habits to reduce the overall risks of cancer.

Brother Carlos Vital of Rho Phi Chapter presided over the diabetes, hypertension, and asthma empowerment session, and Brother John A. Jones, Jr. also of Rho Phi Chapter co-presided over the prostate cancer support group empowerment session.

The Rho Phi Chapter played a crucially important role in the massive educational campaign, multi-media targeting, event planning, and program coordination. The first statewide prostate cancer symposium was a huge success and the Brothers of Rho Phi Chapter have already begun to plan for the second annual symposium to be held again in New Orleans.

Prostate cancer has been a major initiative for Rho Phi Chapter over the last 4 years. During this time, Rho Phi Chapter has provided a community based educa-

tional program and free prostate cancer screenings to men at risk for this disease. The level of participation in this program has increased each year.

Brothers of Rho Phi Chapter strongly believe that improved knowledge about prostate cancer may lead to a behavioral outcome of preventive actions which will include participation in prostate cancer early detection efforts. The brothers of Rho Phi Chapter are convinced that screening participation leads to earlier diagnosis of prostate cancer, and with effective treatment, a reduction in prostate cancer mortality and elimination of the disparity in prostate cancer mortality rate between African-American and other ethnic groups can be achieved. We therefore strongly encourage the Fraternity to make prostate cancer a major initiative in its outreach efforts and that each Chapter would offer an educational symposium to at risk individuals in their community.

Congratulations

Bro. Calvin Woods Jr. - Appointed as Dean of the Congress of Christian Education of the Louisiana Missionary Baptist State Convention.

- 42nd Anniversary as Senior Pastor of Greater Liberty Baptist Church. Celebration will be held at the church on 3/12/2023 at 9:00 am service.



International News

Omega Federal Credit Union Mobile App

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Ninth District News

Healthy Que Tips

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated MIGHTY NINTH DISTRICT Healthy Que Tips

Medical-Health Initiatives Committee

February 2023



Ninth District Health Initiatives

1. Stay Safe and Healthy
2. Brother, You're On My Mind (Mental Health Awareness)
3. Partner with a Non-Profit Health Organization (Diabetes, AIDS, Prostate Cancer, Sickle Cell Disease, Heart Disease, St. Jude)
4. A Brother's Keeper: Support Friends/Families affected by Illnesses
5. Sponsor a Blood Drive and/or Health Fair
6. Follow CDC Coronavirus Guidance at www.cdc.gov
7. Highlight Monthly Health Initiatives (during fraternity meetings)

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States (2,300 people/day combined with stroke). Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. The good news? Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions (healthy lifestyles).

Heart disease—and the conditions that lead to it—can happen at any age. High rates of obesity and high blood pressure among younger people (ages 35-64) are putting them at risk for heart disease earlier in life. Half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking). Other risk factors include: (again) obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, and unhealthy eating patterns.

Four ways to take control of your heart health include: 1. Stop smoking, 2. Manage high blood pressure and high cholesterol, 3. Make heart healthy eating changes (vegetables, fruit, low sodium/salt options), 4. Stay physically active. For more information, please see your health care professional and visit www.healthfinder.gov.

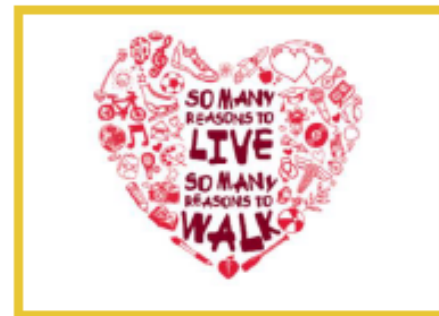
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MIGHTY NINTH DISTRICT

Healthy Que Tips

Medical-Health Initiatives Committee

February 2023, Page 2



Ninth District Healthy Events:

February is also National Children's Dental Health Month (See Page 3), Low Vision Awareness Month (See Page 4), and National Cancer Prevention Month (See Page 5)!

Have a Happy and Healthy Black History Month, **Valentine's Day**, and **Mardi Gras**!

Prepared "In Loving Memory" of my Earthly Father and our Fraternity Brother, Cecil R. Henderson, who passed away on February 14, 2019 due to congestive heart failure.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated

MIGHTY NINTH DISTRICT

Healthy Que Tips

Medical-Health Initiatives Committee

February 2023, Page 3



February is Children's Dental Health Month

tooth decay is the *most common* childhood disease

3 out of every 5 children are affected by tooth decay

5x more common than asthma

51 million school hours missed due to oral disease



National Children's Dental Health Month

National Children's Dental Health Month is observed every February. Developing good oral health habits at an early age and visiting the dentist regularly help children get a great start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Cavities, also known as caries or tooth decay, are one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood, yet cavities are preventable. Untreated cavities can cause pain, infections, and can lead to problems eating, speaking, and learning.

Your child's diet is very important for developing and maintaining strong and healthy teeth (eat fruits and vegetables for snacks rather than candies and cookies; serve water at mealtime rather than juice or soda). Proper home care also includes: brushing your child's teeth, flossing, and rinsing (at least) twice daily. Maintain proper (oral) health by keeping regular dental appointments (examination, cleaning, restorative treatment). For more information, please see

www.cdc.gov/oralhealth

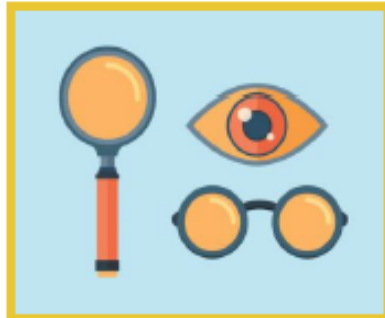
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MIGHTY NINTH DISTRICT

Healthy Que Tips

Medical-Health Initiatives Committee

February 2023, Page 4



GET THE FACTS ON
AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)

AMD is a progressive eye condition that affects the **macula**, the part of the eye responsible for central vision.

AMD is a leading cause of vision loss for people age 50 and older.

AMD IMPACTS 16M AMERICANS

EARLY DETECTION
As part of a physical or eye care professional, there are eye conditions that indicate high risk of progression. These include:

- Getting a comprehensive dilated eye exam once a year
- Smoking regularly
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Taking eye drops that contain the AMD drug, AREXO (AREXO)
- Monitoring vision regularly with an Amsler grid
- Stopping smoking

SightMatters
To learn more about AMD and to join the SightMatters Community, visit www.SightMatters.com or www.facebook.com/sightmatterscommunity



Low Vision Awareness Month

February is Low Vision Awareness Month. When your eyesight is impaired to the degree that you struggle with daily tasks like reading or cooking – or that you have difficulty recognizing faces, you may have a medical condition referred to as low vision. Someone with low vision can't simply put on a pair of glasses or contacts and see well.

Since it is unusual to be able to restore vision once it is lost, screenings can help preserve the vision you have and help you access adaptive lenses and devices if you need them. While there is not a cure for low vision, your specialist can help you adapt and if needed, create a vision rehabilitation program designed to meet your specific needs.

Low vision can be caused by several factors: macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, cataracts, age, or eye injury. Diabetes can also lead to extreme vision problems and result in low vision. For treatment information, see www.nei.nih.gov.

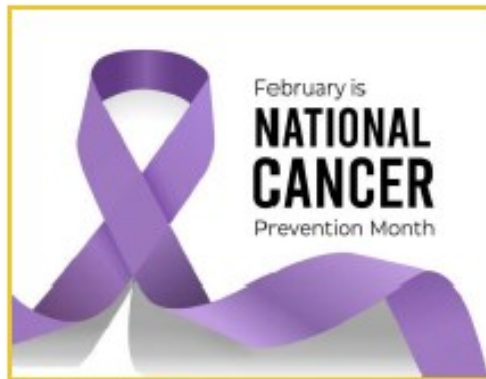
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MIGHTY NINTH DISTRICT

Healthy Que Tips

Medical-Health Initiatives Committee

February 2023, Page 5



National Cancer Prevention Month

Research has shown that more than 40 percent of all cancers diagnosed and nearly half of all deaths from cancer in the United States can be attributed to preventable causes – things like smoking, excess body weight, physical inactivity, and excessive exposure to the sun.

As a result, steps such as quitting smoking (or never starting in the first place), maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, protecting your skin from the sun, and getting vaccinated against the pathogens that cause certain cancers can dramatically reduce your risk of certain cancers. Get more information about cancer prevention in the [AACR Cancer Progress Report 2021](#), including how modifying behaviors can impact cancer outcomes. Also, please visit www.aacr.org.

CONTACT US

For more information on Rho Phi Chapter send an email to:

Bro. Keith Taylor/Chapter Reporter: reporter@rhophi.org

Visit us on the web:

<https://rhophi.org>

Or the chapter's social media sites:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rhophinola>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RhoPhiOPP>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rhophiomegas>