

Never Too Busy To Help

Beginning next year, scholarships will become available for needy and deserving Delts at George Washington University, through a bequest by the late Rhesa M. Norris, George Washington '14. Mr. Norris, who died last year, left a bequest of \$10,000 to the Delta Tau Delta Educational Fund, with income from the money to be used by deserving undergraduate members of his chapter in pursuing studies at George Washington. Guidelines for applicants include general scholarship, moral character, and value to the advancement of their chapter and their fraternity. The article about Mr. Norris was written by his long-time friend and business associate at Weaver Brothers, Inc., Washington, D.C.

By LOWELL H. MORAN

George Washington '42

RHESA MILES NORRIS, known to his friends as Reese, was a Delt for over 60 years, and a fine and loyal Delt he was. Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1890, Reese attended public schools in Maryland. Later, he entered George Washington University where he became associated with the Delts and was initiated into Gamma Eta Chapter on April 29, 1911. At George Washington University, he was the first chairman of the Student Council which he helped to organize in 1916 and was active in school politics. In 1917, he graduated from the University and received his Bachelor of Laws degree.

World War I came along and Reese enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he later attained the rank of lieutenant.

Upon leaving the Navy, he went into the real estate business, operating his own firm in New Rochelle, New York, then in Sebring, Florida and finally in Washington, D.C. In

Washington, Reese became associated with Weaver Bros., specializing in industrial real estate where he became a recognized expert in his field. As a vice president of Weaver Bros., he became nationally known as an industrial realtor.

Although extremely busy in his work, he was never too busy to assist his Fraternity. After World War II, the National Capital Alumni Chapter began having weekly luncheons and Reese was one of the faithful members. It was during one of these luncheons in 1947 that a discussion centered around the re-activation of Gamma Eta Chapter which became dormant in 1943. A committee was formed for this purpose and Reese was one of those most responsible for the re-establishment of Gamma Eta.

Fraternity quarters were rented from the University, two or three Delts returned to school, selective rushing took place and all of this resulted in a splendid nucleus for a new Gamma Eta. Reese was not

satisfied with the small rented house and was constantly urging the chapter to rush quality men and to grow so that then a larger house could be supported.

Three years later a most suitable house was found and Gamma Eta was on its way. The Chapter became stronger and attained a fine reputation, But Reese had always dreamed of Gamma Eta having a Shelter all its own. In the past, the Delts had always rented a house but had never owned one.

Reese was relentless in pursuing his dream. He had the undergraduates out scouring the entire area looking for property which might be suitable for a new Shelter and which could be purchased for the right price. He too, through his contacts, was doing the same thing.

He was enthusiastic, always full of ideas. Finally his zealous efforts were crowned with success when a house in the right location and for the right price came along. The house



Rhesa Miles Norris

was just a block from campus and it compared favorably with the other fraternity houses. The house was purchased, a loan was obtained from the national Fraternity, a fund drive was put on, the chapter flourished! Reese's dream had been fulfilled!

Then a tragedy. In the fall of 1958, a fire occurred in which the Shelter was badly damaged and worst of all, two young Delts lost their lives. In the early morning hours when the fire was going on, Reese was on the scene giving aid and assurance and leadership to those whose lives were so tragically affected. Reese was in the forefront again in organizing and making plans to continue the operation of the chapter in temporary quarters. The Shelter was rebuilt during the next year and a new and better Shelter it was.

In 1968, as the result of the strategic location of the Shelter, the House Corporation was able to make a fantastic deal. The Shelter was traded

to a syndicate who in turn built for Gamma Eta a much larger and new house, closer to the campus and furnished it completely. And who was there all the time; working, planning, negotiating? Reese Norris. Gamma Eta now has a Chapter House which is second to none at George Washington University.

During Gamma Eta's recent history — since World War II — many things have happened, good and bad; but always the Chapter has made progress. There have been set-backs, such as the terrible fire, and internal problems have occurred; but always Reese was there to call on for help. And Reese always came through. He was an idea man, an optimist and a hard worker. Problems did not discourage him. They were a challenge. HE worked assiduously until they were solved. When he had an idea, whether to solve a problem or improve a situation, and he thought he was right, he pursued that idea relentlessly.

Reese was never the chapter adviser, at least not in name. But always he was in constant touch with the Chapter and always he was available when needed. Many young Delts discussed their problems with him and sought his counsel. Reese loved his fraternity and he loved working for it.

On March 3, 1949, one of Reese's most treasured moments came when at the National Founders Day Banquet, he received the Distinguished Service Pin. This was one of the highlights of his life.

Reese retired from Weaver Bros., and from the real estate business in May 1971 at the age of 81, still an active and mentally alert man for his age. Only eight months later, death came to him while he slept. The Fraternity had lost a true and faithful Delt. Reese was buried with his Delt badge over his heart. I am sure that is the way he would have wanted it — for Reese was a true Delt.