

Past President A. Bruce Bielaski Passes to Chapter Eternal

Editor's Note: A. Bruce Bielaski, George Washington, '04, the twelfth President of the Fraternity, died in New York City on the 19th day of February, 1964. One of the most loyal and active Deltas ever, Brother Bielaski was a familiar figure at Karneas, Founders Day events, conferences, and chapter houses across the land. No task the Fraternity ever requested him to perform was deemed either too big or too little for him to do. He accepted the assignments willingly and executed them efficiently. The September, 1955, number of *THE RAINBOW* featured a story on Bruce Bielaski, one of a series on past Presidents. The story is reprinted in full as a tribute to this good Delt.



A. BRUCE BIELASKI

"LIVE YOUR FRATERNITY life so as to merit advancement by those who should know you best. But most important of all, go into this as you must go into all things if you are to be a real man among men—unselfishly and with a desire to serve and to be a useful citizen of a great land. If, in your chapter work, you can learn that unselfishness and self-control are the things you wish to mark your life, you will leave college qualified for whatever may then confront you."

These are the words of Bruce Bielaski.

Although they were directed to the undergraduate Delt, they provide the key to the creed and the great heart of this man among men—the 12th President of Delta Tau Delta.

"Unselfishly and with a desire to serve"—that is the history of Mr. Bielaski's Delt life and his life as a citizen.

His service as President of the Fraternity began, as a matter of fact, immediately following a period of distinguished service to his country. He came to Boston and the "Victory Karnea" of 1919 as a celebrated national hero.

HEADED EARLY FBI

During Theodore Roosevelt's administration, Mr. Bielaski had been named chief of the Bureau of Investi-

gation of the Department of Justice. America's entrance into World War I threw a tremendous burden of work and responsibility on Mr. Bielaski. His department made investigation of every suspect in America, and more than four million enemy aliens were registered and thousands interned for the duration. The job was done so well that the Bureau of Investigation won a permanent and respected position in the esteem of the American people, which it maintains to this day as the FBI.

The Fraternity at this critical juncture was searching earnestly for a new and inspired leader. Colonel James B. Curtis, who had held the reins for 12 years, had announced that he was not a candidate for re-election. Having successfully weathered the storm of the war, Delta Tau Delta was ready to strike out for new horizons, to cultivate further its field of usefulness, and it needed a man to chart the course.

Memorable moments, then, were those at the Copley-Plaza Hotel, when the 1919 Karnea placed the gavel in the new President's hand. The minutes record simply: "Brother Bielaski

was conducted to the platform amid prolonged cheering, while the Karnea rose. He addressed the Karnea and pledged the Fraternity his faithful service."

That was a pledge which was to be honored with interest.

As the new President assumed his office, he called upon both actives and alumni to join him in his dedication to the Fraternity ideal.

"Our progress," he said, "depends altogether on how many of us are going to work harmoniously together for Delta Tau Delta. I earnestly request of Deltas everywhere to pledge to themselves that they will this year and each month, if possible, render to the Fraternity some specific service and that from every direction advice, assistance, and earnest work for the common cause may come."

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

So saying, the new President went to work. For the next six years he served Delta Tau Delta as its chief executive and directed the Fraternity in as aggressive and fruitful a program as it has ever seen in a like period. From 1919 to 1925, the record reveals, the following major accomplishments were compiled:

1. New or improved Shelters were acquired for 26 undergraduate chapters.
2. The Loyalty Fund was adopted by the Karnea.
3. The field secretary system, a pioneering movement, was instituted.
4. The Undergraduate Loan Fund was founded.
5. The office of Supervisor of Scholarship was established, as Delta Tau Delta became the first fraternity to place on its governing board an officer charged solely with the fostering of good scholarship.
6. The Fraternity's *Constitution and Bylaws* was completely revised and brought up to date.
7. The scope of the Central Office was expanded and its role as business

headquarters of the Fraternity consolidated.

8. Nine new undergraduate chapters were chartered.

9. Delta Tau Delta's participation and influence in the National Interfraternity Conference were extended.

Each of these accomplishments represents a great stride forward for the Fraternity. Together, they mark President Bielaski's six-year term as the turning point in the modern evolution of Delta Tau Delta.

SHELTERS ACQUIRED

From the outset of his tenure, Bruce Bielaski recognized the urgent need for adequate housing of undergraduate chapters, and he knew that assistance and encouragement had to come from the national level. Within the scope of the then limited funds available loans were made by the Fraternity and serious study was given to recommended plans for new houses. At the same time, sound financing at the local level was stressed, and the Arch Chapter began to visualize what an endowment fund could mean to the Fraternity in terms of acceptable undergraduate housing.

These efforts were productive. President Bielaski was able to report at the Meadville Karnea in 1925 that 26 chapters had acquired new or improved Shelters since 1919 and a total of 55 of the 72 chapters owned their homes.

Indirectly, this program had led to another of even greater significance. The Fraternity in 1919 had an endowment fund of approximately \$40,000. Accumulated largely through voluntary contributions, it fell pitifully short of the requirements of a vigorous, growing organization. By today's standards, it probably could not serve the financial needs of more than two chapters.

LOYALTY FUND FOUNDED

Led by President Bielaski, Delt leaders of this period began to lay the foundation for an endowment fund large enough to serve the broad interests of Delta Tau Delta. Their plan was presented to the 1925 Karnea, and the Loyalty Fund as we know it today was adopted by the delegates to that session. Shortly afterward, it was ratified by the chapters and became effective on January 1, 1926.



BRUCE BIELASKI (top row, second from right) started his Delt career as a charter member at George Washington. He was chapter president later and captain of football and baseball.

With assets now well over one million dollars, the Loyalty Fund in the 30 years since its inception has more than lived up to the expectations of its founders. It has been acclaimed the most cogent factor ever adopted to insure the development of the Fraternity on a sound, progressive basis. The principal of the Fund, of course, cannot be expended. Loans from it are made to incorporated chapter house corporations to build, obtain, or improve chapter homes. Through the years, a total of 68 chapters have been assisted by an aggregate of 127 separate loans, representing investments of \$1,452,966.65.

The Fund assures, moreover, a constantly informed membership by providing for life free of charge publications of the Fraternity. With this issue of THE RAINBOW, 16,349 Delts have now become Loyalty Fund Life Members.

Income earned by the Loyalty Fund is returned to the Fraternity's general account, where it further serves the undergraduate chapters by making possible progressive programs of service.

Another milestone for President Bielaski was implementation of the field secretary system. The President was among the first to realize that real assistance could be delivered to undergraduate chapters in their administrative problems by a full-time employee who devoted himself to vis-

iting the chapters and counseling them on the ground. "Delta Tau Delta Needs a Man" he announced through THE RAINBOW in June, 1922, and by the following fall the right man had been found and sent on his appointed rounds.

Ralph M. Wray, Colorado, '21, who had behind him a brilliant record of collegiate achievement, was that man. So well did he succeed in this pioneering effort that President Bielaski reported one year later:

"I know of no way in which the undergraduate member of the Fraternity gets more for his money than through the work of the Field Secretary. I am inclined to think that the time is soon coming, if it is not here, when the Fraternity should have two field secretaries, so that each chapter may be sure of a visit once a year."

The field secretary system has since been universally endorsed as thoroughly sound. There is hardly a national fraternity today which does not employ at least one such traveling representative, and Delta Tau Delta itself has had as many as six men in the field at one time. Currently there are three.

MILESTONES IN SCHOLARSHIP

Research of early records reveals some interesting side lights on the Bielaski character. When the President addressed the 1921 Karnea in Omaha, THE RAINBOW reporter ob-

served: "His speech was like all Bielaski speeches—short but full of meat."

He did not mince words. There was too much to be done. There was scholarship, for instance.

Although the Fraternity had been routed down the road to respectable scholarship during President Curtis' regime, much of the steam which had been generated was playing out, and by 1923 President Bielaski bluntly told the Fraternity that he was dissatisfied with $\Delta T \Delta$'s standing. At his suggestion, the 1921 Karnea appointed a committee of three—Alvan E. Duerr, Frederick C. Hodgdon, and the President—charged with the responsibility of finding and recommending steps which would insure satisfactory scholastic performance.

The committee in 1923 brought in a searching study, with concrete suggestions. One of them urged the establishment of the office of Supervisor of Scholarship as a member of the Arch Chapter. Recognizing, as phrased by THE RAINBOW, "the obligation of a college fraternity to foster and encourage, indeed to insist upon, a decent respect for scholastic attainment among its members," the Karnea adopted the committee's recommendations.

The work of Alvan E. Duerr—appointed the first Supervisor of Scholarship—inspired President Bielaski in 1925 to assert: "The most outstanding development in the work of the Fraternity during the past two years has been performed by the Supervisor of Scholarship." This was the same year that Mr. Duerr himself appeared before the National Interfraternity Conference and persuaded that body to set up a special committee on scholarship.

LOAN FUND BEGUN

While these movements were in progress, Mr. Bielaski had other ideas for making the Fraternity meaningful to its members. In 1920 he wrote: "The Fraternity sorely needs a fund from which temporary aid may be had by a Delt who is overtaken by financial misfortune during his college career. It should be able to stretch out the fraternal hand to such a student and enable him to begin his life's work with the complete college training which he set out to have—a better man and a better Delt because of such aid than he could be without it."

After the Undergraduate Loan Fund



Speaking at Gamma Eta's Golden Anniversary observance in 1953, Mr. BIELASKI recalls humorous incidents in chapter's early days.

had been established the following year, a campaign for contributions was conducted, administered through the four Divisions. One of the largest donations was a bequest from Frank F. Rogers, first manager of the Central Office and early Editor of THE RAINBOW, following his death in 1923.

The Undergraduate Loan Fund, as predicted by the President, has filled a vital need. Today a revolving account of more than \$40,000, it has assisted scores of undergraduate Delts with a total of 454 loans, totaling \$102,117.00

SOUTHERN EXPANSION

The expansion which took place during President Bielaski's term rounded out the Fraternity's representation in the Southern Division, with strong chapters at Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina, and Alabama. Chapters were also installed at Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Carnegie Tech.

He aptly summarized his philosophy on expansion for the 1925 Karnea in this manner: "No really national fraternity can grow and develop that does not keep up with the educational growth and development of the country, and every part of the country. . . . It is altogether too ob-

vious that a fraternity which cannot grow as the country grows, will fall behind in its true development, and the only result of withholding charters from petitioning groups in acceptable institutions, is to hold back the development of those groups and so work harm to them and to the fraternity of which they finally become a part."

N.I.C. CHAIRMAN

Even as he was serving Delta Tau Delta with his demonstrated ability for organization, Bruce Bielaski was also giving his best efforts to the entire fraternity system. During 1921-22 he was secretary of the National Interfraternity Conference, and on December 1, 1923, he was elected Chairman of that association.

Of the N.I.C., he said: "Delta Tau Delta surrenders none of its rights of independent action but believes in the wisdom of united action in a common cause."

Such common cause was also the beneficiary of Delta Tau Delta's pioneering efforts in the field of scholarship. Following his term as Supervisor of Scholarship, Mr. Duerr was appointed in 1925 first chairman of the N.I.C.'s Scholarship Committee, a post which he held until 1946.

The twelfth President is a man who seemingly was marked to perform ably anything he undertook. Born April 2, 1883, in Montgomery County, Maryland, he is the son of a Methodist minister. At George Washington University, he was a charter member of Gamma Eta Chapter and president of the chapter. A versatile athlete, he captained both varsity baseball and football.

After his graduation from law school, Mr. Bielaski accepted employment in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and shortly moved over to the Department of Justice. Starting as a clerk, he was chief of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation by 1917 although not much over thirty. When the Armistice was signed, he resigned to go into private practice, but returned to Government service as special assistant to the Attorney General during 1925-26. In June, 1922, Delta Tau Delta came within a hair of losing its chief executive, for during a trip to Mexico he was kidnapped and held for ransom by Indian bandits. The resourceful Bielaski, however,

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