

**UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

Denver, Colorado

**KAPPA SIGMA**



**BETA-OMICRON CHAPTER**

3rd Annual

**HALL OF FAME**

University of Denver Sturm Hall

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2004**



## BETA-OMICRON HALL OF FAME

The 3rd Annual Beta-Omicron Hall of Fame Awards are presented by the Beta-Omicron Chapter of Kappa Sigma Fraternity at the University of Denver. Conceived as a means of honoring our alumni for outstanding achievements and service, this award has become an integral part of our tradition at Beta-Omicron.

Kappa Sigma is a national fraternity with great pride and a tradition of excellence that our many distinguished alumni have served to enhance throughout the years. Since its beginning in 1902 the Beta-Omicron Chapter has seen many brothers rise to positions of prominence.

Congratulations to those who have been awarded this honor!

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# BETA-OMICRON CHAPTER

## 3RD ANNUAL HALL OF FAME

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### Welcoming Remarks

Mike West '71

Ed Estlow '41

### 2004 Hall of Fame Inductees

Lowell Thomas '12

Edward B. McWilliams '38

Fred Vondy '44

Lewis Babcock '62

### Closing Remarks

Scott Smith '76

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# BETA-OMICRON CHAPTER HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

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### Lowell Thomas '12

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Traveling to remote sites around the world, Lowell Thomas brought news and a sense of adventure into America's living rooms. However, it was not just the news story that captured his listener's imagination, but Thomas himself. Born on April 6, 1892, in Woodington, Ohio, Thomas grew up in Cripple Creek, Colorado.

After becoming an initiate of Beta-Omicron and graduating from DU, Thomas pioneered radio journalism with a career that spanned 50 years. He made his first sojourn to the battlefield during World War I, and began a daily newscast on NBC in 1930. Thomas later worked for CBS News during his long globetrotting career.

Thomas was the first reporter to enter Germany following World War I, bringing back eyewitness accounts.

Between his standard opening, "Good evening, everybody," and his closing, "So long until tomorrow," people knew they were hearing a solid, objective voice of authority.

Before his career in radio, from 1919-1922 Thomas traveled the world, writing and lecturing. Thomas said his

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ambition was “to know more about this globe than anyone else ever has.”

During World War II, Thomas broadcast detailed accounts of the war, often from a mobile truck behind front lines.

Lowell Thomas was named Kappa Sigma Fraternity Man of the Year, an award established in 1937 to honor a Brother who has achieved fame in his industry. Lowell Thomas joined the Chapter Celestial in 1981 and was inducted posthumously into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1989.

### **Edward B. McWilliams ‘38**

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After graduating from South High School in Denver, Colorado in 1937, Brother Edward Baker McWilliams enrolled in University of Denver where his father was the head of the Sociology Department.

During his undergraduate years, he played varsity level basketball. After his initiation in 1938, he quickly rose to the position of Kappa Sigma Grand Master where he served from 1939 to 1940. Not only was he the president of his fraternity, but he also led as the Student Body President from 1940 to 1941 and was a member of the honorary fraternity Omicron Delta Kappa before earning his degree in Liberal Arts in 1941.

Brother McWilliams’ professional career began that same year when he was hired as a teacher by the Denver Public

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School System. However, he left to join the Army in March of 1942 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant at Ft. Benning, Georgia in December of the same year. In early 1943, Ed was sent to fight in the South Pacific. He was killed in action on July 15, 1943 in the Solomon Islands. **Brother McWilliams was interred overseas at the Manila American cemetery (the former Ft. William McKinley) and posthumously awarded the purple heart.**

He had two brothers who also were brothers in the Kappa Sigma Fraternity at University of Denver. Through his older brother Robert and the fraternity, Brother McWilliams learned the value of hard work and enjoyed the fellowship and brotherhood of Kappa Sigma.

### Fred Vondy '44

Brother Vondy was a key figure in bringing Beta-Omicron back from dormancy when he enrolled at DU in 1944. By the end of his freshman year, Beta-O was back on campus and Brother Vondy was the Chapter President. Before he graduated, Brother Vondy was also a Grand Scribe and a rush consultant.

“We had a lot of good times,” he says. “It was the happiest time of my life.”

Today, Brother Vondy continues practicing law, which he has done ever since he graduated from DU's law school in

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1949. He is a partner at the Pferdesteller-Vondy firm in Denver.

Brother Vondy argued and won the first case in the Colorado Court of Appeals, the second highest court in the state, when it was reestablished in 1970. In addition to his general practice, he was the General Consul for the national Kappa Delta sorority, and he was also an incorporator of the Kappa Delta Foundation.

Brother Vondy is licensed to practice in the U.S. Supreme Court, 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. District Court for Colorado and the tax court.

He and his wife Geraldine, a Kappa Delta, have been married for 52 years and have three children. Frederick is an attorney in Winchester, Virginia, Barbara Jean is a banking consultant in Baltimore and Joan Laurel is in middle management in the Denver Housing Authority. He also has two grandchildren.

Joan Laurel is named after the wives of two of his Beta-O brothers, who told Fred and Geraldine that they had a dream that Geraldine was pregnant again.

“We just said, ‘No, that’s impossible!’ and then, sure enough, Geraldine was pregnant,” he says.

Brother Vondy graduated from DU in 1948 with a

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bachelor's degree in sociology and a minor in political science.

He still attends Friday alumni lunches as often as he can. And Brother Vondy was an alumnus advisor for Beta-Omicron, and has been the attorney for the House Corporation. Among his other activities he has served as Omicron Delta Kappa's senior men's honorary president and attended the national convention in Washington, D.C.

Brother Vondy's hobbies today include golf and traveling. While he won't reveal his golf score or handicap, he did enjoy trips to the Holy Land, the old Soviet Union and Europe.

### Lewis Babcock '62

Brother Babcock was appointed Chief Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Colorado on October 17, 1988, and has remained at the post to this day.

Brother Babcock was initiated into Beta-Omicron in 1962 and graduated Cum Laude in 1965. He returned and got his juris doctor from DU in 1968 before heading out into the professional field.

He started his professional career at Mitchell and Babcock in Rocky Ford, Colorado, where he stayed from 1968-1976. From 1969-1974, he was the City Attorney for the

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City of Las Animas, Colorado, and from 1970-1976 he was the City Attorney for the City of Rocky Ford. From 1973-1976, he was an Assistant District Attorney for the 16th Judicial District.

Brother Babcock was a District Judge in the 16th Judicial District from 1976-1983. He was also the Chief Judge for the 16th District from 1978-1983. He was a judge for the Colorado Court of Appeals from 1983-1988 before being appointed Colorado Chief Judge.

During his time at DU, Brother Babcock received numerous honors for his scholastic work. He was a member of the Intercollegiate Knights, Omicron Delta Kappa and Pi Beta Mu his sophomore, junior and senior years, respectively. He was a graduate of the DU Centennial Scholars Honor Program and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa honors fraternity and Phi Alpha Theta history honors fraternity. He was also a member of the Order of St. Ives.

He and his wife Judy have two children, John, 35, and Katherine, 33.

# BETA-OMICRON CHAPTER PAST HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

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2002

**Robert Selig '29**

**Lee Nelson '47**

**Gene Steinke '47**

**Gordon Westcott '47**

**Bill Foerster '48**

**Jack Pepper '57**

2003

**Judge Robert McWilliams '35**

**Ed Estlow '41**

**Blaine Chase '51**

**Pat McGinnis '66**

**Jon Niermann '84**



**“The Star and Crescent shall not be worn by every man, but only by him who is worthy to wear it. He must be a gentleman...a man of honor and courage...a man of zeal, yet humble...an intelligent man...a man of truth... one who tempers action with wisdom and, above all else, one who walks in the light of God.”**

*"Not for an hour  
... a day  
... or college term only  
... but for life"*



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