

Dalhousie Medical Fraternities

THE PHI RHO SIGMA MEDICAL FRATERNITY

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To present a lengthy treatise on Phi Rho Sigma is not the intention of this article. The purpose however, is to present a brief outline of the nature of this International Organization which is hoped will be of interest particularly to the new students commencing their course at Dalhousie.

This fraternity differs from "service organizations and clubs" chiefly in two respects: the academic atmosphere in which by tradition it is nurtured; and the personal relationships among the members. This fraternity therefore supplies the mechanism for capturing the more pleasant experiences of college life, including the renewal of fruitful friendships, and for the humanizing influences of intimate association, over a period of years, with congenial companions engaged in common pursuits. The results, so far as the individual is concerned, may be important or not, according to his needs and his receptiveness, but they lie almost wholly in the realm of intangibles. If there are practical useful by-products, such as profitable contact or some profitable pre-examination tutoring, these are fortuitous, and do not alter the basic subjective character of the fraternal relationship. Fraternalism is primarily an emotional adventure, in theory as well as in practice, and its basic val-

ues, whatever they may be, are subjective in nature.

This fraternity offers to the sincere, conscientious member unsurpassed opportunities for self-development. The ramifications are too numerous to outline, but some important phases come to mind immediately: the formation of lasting friendships, the development of tolerance and respect for one's fellows, self-discipline, loyalty, the awakening of social consciousness, the satisfaction of well-directed and integrated communal effort, acquisition of a sense of personal and professional responsibility. Such things have no value in dollars and cents—at least none that can be anticipated with any approach to accuracy—their weight is felt in the business of living with one's self and with one's associates.

It is now logical to ask whether fraternity membership is essential to the development of such personal attributes. The most ardent fraternity man could not sincerely hold any such convictions. The fraternity fosters the attributes. It neither assures or claims any monopoly on their development.

It can be said that the beginnings of Phi Rho Sigma involved a group of medical students attracted in the scholastic sphere by the common interest in the practice of medicine.

They felt that they had something to offer to each other and something to gain in return—by working and living together. A chapter developed here, another there, and inevitably a group of men on one campus found a kinship with a group on another campus, and a linking of chapters with similar purpose and interest and zeal and devotion evolved the National Fraternity.

This truly professional fraternity was founded in Chicago in 1890. Since that time it has flourished to the proportions of seventeen thousand Phi Rhos and has chapters located at key medical schools throughout the United States and Canada. In 1925, Dalhousie University had established its first medical fraternity—Alpha Eta of Phi Rho Sigma with a nucleus of nine chartered members. Since that year this fraternity has had a steady course of progress at Dalhousie and over 400 doctors have participated in the medical fraternalism during their student days on the campus.

The present Chapter House in which we are now living, on 101 Inglis Street, was bought in 1950 by the active members at that time. This spacious house accommodates over one-third of its active members for room and board. In addition meals are provided for over one-half of the actives.

Our activities for the year are on a social, professional and athletic basis. These include Interfraternity athletic competitions, films, social evenings and discussion groups. In event, we attempt to provide ample recreations for the members during any spare time they may have at their disposal.

To sum up this brief essay, we may say that as a result of Phi Rho Sigma's persistent interest in profession matters, it has developed over the years into an impressive force, dedicated to develop medicine in the broadest sense and unified by bonds which transcend geographic and all other arbitrary boundaries. It is a force organized to exert continuous pressure upward. Its power is felt in the highest councils of medical education, organization and practice. Its goal is something less than a heaven, yet even an inch beyond reach—the best doctors possible now, and ever better doctors in the years to come.

Hygiene is the only useful part of medicine, and hygiene is rather a virtue than science. Temperance and industry are man's true remedies; work sharpens his appetite and temperance teaches him to control it.

Jean Jacques Rousseau.

The desire to take medicine is perhaps the greatest feature which distinguishes man from animals.

Life of Sir William Osler.

Speck in cornea, 50c . . .

(Entry in account book of Sir William Osler, first fee as a practicing physician).

Life of Sir William Osler.

We have medicines to make women speak; we have none to make them keep silence.

Anatole France.