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CENTRAL MICHIGAN INSTALLATION ADDRESS – November 10, 1985

I feel so good to be back and to see everybody again. As I told quite a few people since I've been here since Friday, going over to Steve and Debbie's house, and just seeing the house filled with so many quality people, it's just, it's really a special feeling to see that when we first started out, the 7 of us trying to figure out what the heck we were going to do to attract new members and now there are all these really sharp people, I think that's something. I think this is really a special afternoon and one I know everyone has looked forward to from the very beginning of the colony. As I thought of these events that are taking place today and this past weekend, I can't stop thinking that's its only happened 148 times in 145 years and that really makes my skin tingle.

The pleasure and the honor that we all feel is something that's only been cherished by a few people. I think that's really something special. One of our great Betas, and for all of those who are not very familiar with our great fraternity, his name is Seth R. Brooks. He is a very special person in all of our hearts and, in a sense, Mr. Beta Theta Pi. He once told me 'Randy, being a Beta has been a life long experience, but to be a charter member, this is the ultimate. And I'm really jealous of that fact that that's what you all are going to be.' That to me, I felt, was very, very meaningful. So Brothers, please savor these moments and remember that this is where our true chapter begins. What results and experiences you all have will be with you for your lifetime. The people that you meet and the efforts that you put forth are going by far to be surpassed. So just remember that the friends that you make are going to be far beyond this, and I can truly say, that the people I've met as a result of this fraternity and those that are in this chapter now, I think about very often. It's hard for me to be away sometimes, for once you graduate from college, and I'm sure many of us have all felt this way; you just think things are going to continue the same way, and they really don't. And when a few miles separate you, it gets a little tough sometimes. Many times you just plod along and you go week to week from class to class and you just can't wait for the semester to be over, and for the school year, to be over. You can't wait to get out of college and get out in the real world. Only then when it's really over do you realize what you had and the people that you miss, that's why I savor this moment.

Steve talked a bit about our history and how we got started, and I'm not going to talk too much about that, but I just wanted to mention a few things that we had initially. A little over two years ago, six of us got together and we decided that we wanted to become a part of a new fraternity, one that would be recognized on campus as a contributor to the campus and to other things. And we wanted to be different, we wanted in a sense to return to a point in time where Greeks were Greeks, and fraternities were recognized as a solid asset for one's growth and leadership, friendship, academics and of course, social activities. There were times when we were first getting started, a lot of people thought we were crazy and we were kind of looked down on. And we probably were kind of crazy. But, with the help of Steve Martineau, who we have talked about so much this afternoon and he deserves a lot of credit, we secured the chapter house which he talked about. He really helped us keep on track with our vision of what we wanted to do.

We were six guys who were trying to sell a dream, in a sense, to the people who would listen, of something that Central Michigan hadn't really experienced. Just to point out a couple of examples of how some of the fraternities were stereotyped, our first rush we had several rushees, we had a guest list and they came in and they registered under false names. We thought the guys were pretty sharp, so we wanted, of course, to get in touch with them. We had to send out our feelers to try and track them down, so we could have them back for another event or party. Instead of course, we found out that there was nobody living in those rooms that they had listed as their address. So several days later, they came back and said they had used false names and they wanted to be considered as members of the fraternity. I thought that was kind of neat and we felt then, that we were on track. I hope that Epsilon Gamma can always maintain the personal touch that we all held important, because that is really the name of it.

Of course, initially, the other Greeks were skeptical of us and I don't blame them. We were very vocal about some of the things that we wanted to do. As time went on, people got used to us. Something that I remember that was kind of fun, was that we became known as the gentlemen's fraternity on campus. By any means we were not perfect, but we tried to approach things from a different perspective. One thing that I felt was interesting at the time when I was still in school; approximately 98% of our actives were people who never thought that they would be in a fraternity, who never really wanted to pledge a fraternity. A little story I have, and again a couple of people will recognize, is the fact that one of our actives, when he first came to CMU went in his dorm room and there was a fellow sitting there at a desk or whatever and he said, "do you play football?". Of course, the fellow was a little bit larger than most and the guy said

“yea, I play football”. He then asked if he was a member of a fraternity, and he said “we just go to the parties, we don’t join fraternities.” And those two gentlemen are now members of our fraternity. So I thought that was kind of neat.

And if I can again mention Dr. Brooks, he said that he joined our fraternity because of you. Because as you look around this afternoon, all of the people that are here today, you wouldn’t know each other if it weren’t for the fraternity, and I think that is really nice. As for myself, I can say that the people I’ve met because of this experience are truly my closest friends and I just wish that the miles didn’t separate us. People always ask why you do something, or why you are a member of this, or why you take this class or whatever, and I think that I did this because of the experiences my dad had with Beta Theta Pi.

I grew up where are General Fraternity Headquarters are, as he was Administrative Secretary for our fraternity back in 1965—72. I remember a lot of the Beta greats. Those people that were very instrumental in the Fraternity at that time, like Ralph Fey Miami ‘40, Dr. Seth R Brooks St. Lawrence ‘22, Fred Brower Miami ‘50, and all the other people that I came to meet and I just thought that was really something; people really make this fraternity, and you want to have people that are really your friends, people that you enjoy being with.

I tried to keep the vision of what I had of Beta Theta Pi and tried to pass them on to our other founders. So that they could see what it could be like, the cause each of us had to really rely on each other for following everything through. I would like to touch on a story that most of us have probably heard. It tells of a man that crosses a river and he decides to build a bridge. A little bit later, this other gentleman ventures upon him and sees him building this bridge and he asks, “Why are you building this bridge?” to which he replies “For the others that follow” and I think that’s what everybody does and I think as far as the pledges, that is what each pledge class must do, is build for the other, as again we have to rely on each other and continue to grow.

Again touching on many of the people who helped Epsilon Gamma become possible: Steve Martineau - he’s done so much for all of us and I know on a personal level, Steve has given me many pep talks, ranging from classes to women. Steve and I have a lot of fun together; Steve is really a super person. I remember the first time I talked with him, his secretary put me on hold, and he got on the phone and I said, “This is Randy Helman, Ron Helman’s son” and it was like, “OK, do you need some legal service?” I really miss Steve; I wish I could be around for some of his courtroom inspirational speeches which pull us through the rough spots.

Andy Prentice, Michigan State ‘85, I remember the first time we met. It was at French Lick. Andy is Mister GQ, he was dressed up as usual and I was sitting on the front porch in a chaise lounge trying to catch the September sun. Andy has been a great friend and he and his MSU delegation, the Gamma Psi brothers; again they made many, many trips as a sponsoring chapter. It’s a little over an hour drive, and that’s through rain, snow, and all the other things. That is real dedication because it’s a very tough thing to do. They pulled us through many times; they gave us the back bone that we needed. And we had always told the potential rushees about the MSU Betas and the things they had, like this great house they have down there with 700 people or whatever. We told them about those things because luckily we are fortunate to have them close enough that we can actually take our potential rushees down there to show them what Beta Theta Pi can be. That was the thing that really helped. That really helped clinch a lot of deals for us.

From our General Fraternity, Tom Beyer and his happy crew, it’s been a pleasure getting to know all of you. Chuck Helman, even though he is no longer with the Administrative Office, he was very helpful to us. Gilmore Dutton, who cannot be with us today, he is in Oregon, they all have been very helpful. And they all helped coach us along the road to chapter status.

Again, our District Chief Jeff Radomski. He’s been a great chief and he has related to us one on one, and that I think really makes you feel important.

Again, our local alumni. There’s not a whole lot of Betas here in Mt. Pleasant, but the ones that are here, are very, very helpful. David Johnson and Ed Brookville; both of these gentlemen I really appreciated knowing you and the times we had to talk and your help has been very much welcomed. Again I need to thank CMU for letting us venture forth with this, because I think maybe at the time with the choice of a new group, you’re never sure what you are getting into. But, they have always given us a lot of support and help, and again, thank you CMU.

And last, but not least, my parents, Ron and Lou Helman. They showed me how special it can be to belong to a Greek organization. Because I believe that if you associate with people who are successful, then you in turn become successful. And I think each one of us want to be successful.

And I would like to end with a special verse from one of our many songs. I hope it just kind of sums up the experiences that I've had and that we will all have:

When our college days are over,  
We will toast on high  
Our Fraternity forever  
Beta Theta Pi.

Thank you.