



Contact: Melody McDowell – Chief Information Officer – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
773-660-2001 – Office - 312-371-8917 – Cell e-mail: melodyaka@aol.com

Alpha Kappa Alpha Charters Inaugural Chapter in South Africa
Members Vow to Serve in Spirit of Nelson Mandela



Caption: Alpha Kappa Alpha's International President Attorney Carolyn House Stewart – (seated center) and the Sorority's International Regional Director Mrs. Evelyn Sample Oates (seated second from left) are pictured at the chartering of the South African chapter along with the new members from the chapter.

Chicago, Illinois – January 13, 2014 - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., made history while expanding its global service reach when it recently chartered its first chapter in South Africa. The chapter, Psi Tau Omega, embraces Pretoria and Soweto. Its 15 members include business executives, attorneys, foundation leaders, educators and financial agents. Tracy Whitfield, an entrepreneur from Johannesburg, is the chapter's first president. Other members include Theolyn Blackwood, Letitia Campbell, Angela Deh, Pamela Graham, Monica Douglas Howard, Nozipo Mbere, Rhonda Lege Scott, Mokgadi Machaba-Abiodun, Cynthia Parrish, Louis Paulsen, Rufaro Rugara, Marcia Shaw, Cindy Thompson and Allison Watson

While the members represent a diverse cross section of professionals, they are all bound by their allegiance to Alpha Kappa Alpha's 105-year-old mission to "serve all mankind."

Attorney Carolyn House Stewart, Alpha Kappa Alpha's international president declared that Psi Tau Omega would give life to Nelson Mandela's Call to Action by creating programs to assist the poor, the illiterate and the sick.

The journey to chartering the Sorority's inaugural chapter in South Africa began three years ago when women of note expressed a desire to establish an Alpha Kappa Alpha presence to fill a service void in South Africa. Cognizant of Alpha Kappa Alpha's 105-year record as a global service change agent, AKA's International Regional Director, Mrs. Evelyn Sample-Oates worked with local leaders to identify strong candidates. Drawing from a pool of inactive members and those committed to the Sorority's mission, an impressive roster of prospects was identified. They resolved that the chapter would help uplift those in need while increasing the sorority's visibility.

To commemorate this milestone, a delegation of dignitaries journeyed to South Africa for a weekend of service and celebration, led by International President House Stewart and International Regional Director, Sample Oates. Other officials from the Sorority who attended were Adrienne PK Washington South Eastern Regional Director. Schylbea Hopkins, former Great Lakes Regional Director and chairman AKA African School Task Force, Cynthia Howell AKA executive Director, Patricia Watkins, Director corporate office membership department and Dr Jean Bailey, director of the Howard University Republic of South Africa.

As part of the chartering agenda, the new members engaged in a series of activities that included inspiring workshops and informative meetings.

The highlight of the weekend was a service project with Stop Hunger Now, S.A., an international organization that coordinates the distribution of food and provides other life-saving aid as part of its mission to end hunger in southern Africa. Members' hard work resulted in the distribution of 5,000 bags and 36 boxes of food, which contained rice, soy, wheat and a multivitamin pack for ten children or six adults.

Mr. Barry Mey, Stop Hunger Now's SA Chief Executive Officer, was impressed by the members' diligence and expressed gratitude for their dedication.

International President House Stewart spoke glowingly of the impact the chapter would have on the country.

"Collaboration is critical to our work throughout the world," stated House Stewart. "I'm proud that so many people are excited and eager to develop partnerships that will assist Alpha Kappa Alpha in carrying out the mission to improve the quality of life for South Africans." She added that the new chapter's programmatic goal embodies the Sorority's theme: "Global Leadership Through Timeless Service."

The chapter's newly-elected president, Tracy Whitfield, shared her sentiments on the influence Psi Tau Omega would have on the region, the country and the world.

"We are excited to be part of an organization that helps the underserved while focusing on health, education, poverty and human justice," she said. "We want to especially focus our efforts on serving women and children in the area. These are areas of importance to the late President Mandela. We are honored to fulfill his vision through the programs Psi Tau Omega will launch and execute."

President House Stewart and Regional Director Sample-Oates used the celebratory occasion to also meet with leaders from the Graca Machel Foundation, named after President Mandela's wife. The Alpha Kappa Alpha officials also met with executives from Coca-Cola Africa.

During a celebratory luncheon, Stewart presented the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa a copy of the sorority's history book PEARLS of SERVICE. An executive from the Oprah Winfrey Foundation accepted the book for the school library.

The chartering weekend activities ended with a public reception attended by close to 100 family and friends. President House Stewart delivered an inspiring keynote address. Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity gave remarks and offered both support and flowers to the new members. The program also featured two youth groups who sang South African melodies.

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