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**ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY MOURNS THE LOSS  
OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT  
BERNICE I. SUMLIN**



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority mourns the loss of former International President Bernice Irene Sumlin, who died on Thursday, January 11, 2018. An advocate for education and civil rights, she was the Sorority's 19th President, serving from 1970-1974.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Sumlin was initiated in 1946 into Zeta Chapter at Wilberforce University. During her junior year, the University was separated into two institutions, and she completed her degree with the first class to graduate from Central State University. She received a Bachelor of Science in business and secondary education in 1948. Sumlin earned a Master of Arts in 1951 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where she majored in school administration with a minor in counselling. She completed additional graduate work in human relations, administration and law at the University of Michigan, Wright State University, the University of Dayton and the University of Cincinnati.

Sumlin was a staunch proponent of education, literacy and business serving as a high school business teacher, guidance counselor, school administrator and an independent financial consultant. She helped to develop the Vocational Education Exploratory program for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base high school students and was an organizer for the NAACP.

During her term as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's International President, Sumlin:

- Rallied the Sorority to make substantial donations to various programs and organizations, including the NAACP & United Negro College Fund (for which \$500,000 donation initiated its telethon)
- Initiated the national Reading Experience program, a concentrated effort to improve minority groups' reading skills
- Designed a program with the International Foundation for Education & Self-Help
- Initiated Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's individual member milestone recognition – Silver (25-year), Golden (50-year), Diamond (75-year)
- Installed Founders' Window at Howard University Rankin Chapel
- Deposited Sorority archives at Howard University Moreland Spingarn Research Center

Sumlin served as International First Vice-President, Great Lakes Regional Director, International Standards Committee Chairman, among other leadership positions. She was a member of Beta Eta Omega Chapter in Dayton, Ohio throughout her lifetime.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Beta Eta Omega Chapter established a scholarship in Sumlin's name at Wilberforce University. In November 2017, historical markers were placed in her honor at Wilberforce and Central State Universities commemorating her lifetime commitment to civic, educational and professional causes.

She is survived by a host of relatives, friends and Sorority sisters.

Services are scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 11:00 AM at Wayman Chapel A.M.E. Church, 3317 Hoover Ave, Dayton, OH 45402. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Ivy Beyond the Wall Ceremony will take place at 10:00 AM at Wayman Chapel A.M.E.

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