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Letters

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Dear Archon Burns:

I received my copy of the Spring 2008 BOULÉ JOURNAL a few days ago. My daughter Alexis commandeered it for a few days, reviewing and critiquing my piece about the Delta Rho Christmas party. When I finally got a chance to read it, I was most impressed with your piece about the hope and encouragement that we as a nation are experiencing through the presidential candidacy of Senator Barack Obama. I, too, am heartened by the prospects for the future as this dynamic brother strives to serve in the highest office in the land. My sincerest hope is that America is truly ready to embrace the hope that this historic moment presents.

Fraternally,

Archon Byron Huffman
Delta Rho Boulé

Dear Archons:

With Barack Obama's rise, it is important to note that he did not achieve success all by himself. Members of Zeta Boulé in New York City played a major role in the impressive chain of events that led to Obama's victory in gaining the nomination.

Archon Jeh C. Johnson was – and is – one of Obama's main fund-raisers. He did crucial work in Iowa, even knocking on doors, to help secure that early, impressive win. Without Iowa, the scenario today would be very different.

Archon Ralph Dawson, our Grammateus and doubtless one of the best in Zeta history, was appointed by Howard Dean, DNC chair, as a super-delegate. Archon Dawson is also a member of the DNC Rules Committee and is about to take over as chair of the powerful DNC African American Leadership Council. Archon Dawson helped shape the course of events that led to Obama's victory. First, he submitted a resolution, adopted almost unanimously, that stripped Florida of virtually all its delegates unless they offered a new plan that met DNC rules. Then he moved to seat Florida delegates but with only half a vote each. This last motion also passed unanimously. These rulings helped seal the deal for Obama and created the momentum that took him over the top. In fact Archon Dawson's own vote was one of the last ones needed for Obama officially to hit the magic number of 2,118.

Whatever your political affiliation, you should feel mighty proud of Archons Johnson and Dawson. They represent two good reasons why our fraternity is so great.

Archon Noel Hankin
Zeta Boulé



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As the 49th Grand Sire Archon of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, I am delighted to inform you that in each edition of THE BOULÉ JOURNAL I will address issues that have an impact not only on our illustrious fraternity but also on the lives of black people in this nation and abroad. As I express my views, it is possible that some Archons and Archousai may disagree with them, but this is healthy and adds to the marketplace of ideas. At the end of the day, however, we will remain unified in our collective endeavors to make our fraternity and our communities better.

In this message I discuss several important aspects of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity's strategic plan that will guide my tenure as Grand Sire. But first let me emphasize that Delta Eta Boulé did an outstanding job hosting our Grand Boulé. The Archons and Archousai went far beyond what could reasonably be expected of a member boulé by hosting one of the most outstanding Grand Boulés I've ever attended. Special gratitude goes to Immediate Past Grand Sire Archon Cornell Leverette Moore, whose extraordinary leadership and vision delivered us our first Annual Young Adult Symposium: More than eighty talented children of the Boulé gathered for two days to discuss career paths and issues of leadership and to network among themselves and with the Boulé family. This event should and will be a part of future Grand Boulés.

For me the 49th Biennial Grand Boulé shall always be special because it was there that I ascended to the highest office in the Fraternity. With this ascension are certain expectations that cannot be taken lightly. As Grand Sire Archon, I am committed to those issues I promised to pursue when I sought this coveted office. If I am to succeed, the assistance of every member boulé and every Archon in the Fraternity is needed. Moreover, we need the support of our Archousai, who are essential to our success.

Fortunately, our strategic plan maps a strategy to the future. Several aspects of it are key to our success at this moment in our history. First, we must renew our commitment to social action by focusing more on our young black males. With fewer than 50 percent of them graduating from our public high schools, we know that failure in the educational system most likely leads them to a cell in our deplorable prison system, which ultimately decimates them. All member boulés are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other appropriate organizations to assist our young black males, but even if this is not feasible, each member boulé is requested to do something to aid the community. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations. To assist member boulés, we will post on our Web site models of outstanding social-action projects from across the Fraternity and elsewhere.

Second, founded in 1904, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity is the oldest of all black Greek-letter fraternities. It now has 119 member boulés yet fewer than 5,000 members. Of concern is the fact our average age far exceeds the 32.5 average age of our revered founders. Beyond question there are, as observed by Archon W.E.B. Du Bois more than a half century ago, many areas where men of Boulé caliber reside but do not have the opportunity to join Sigma Pi Fraternity because we have no presence there. Significant steps are being taken to identify appropriate locations for establishing member boulés, and it is anticipated that by the time the Grand Boulé convenes in Las Vegas in 2010, several more new, energetic member boulés will be a part of our circle.



Grand Sire Archon Robert L. Harris

Consistent with growth and expansion is the necessity of inviting younger men into the Boulé. Since our membership is by invitation only, it is incumbent on all Archons to expand their sphere of influence to include younger men and thus ensure our future viability. Special recognition goes to those member boulés that have heeded our call and are inviting into membership more outstanding young men whose credentials and commitment to their communities shine brightly.

Third and finally, whether we agree or disagree, it is an undeniable fact that our quality of life and that of our people depend on public policy, which is the cornerstone of democracy. Every aspect of our lives is engulfed in public policy. Thanks to the foresight of previous Fraternity leaders, we now have a mechanism for injecting our voices appropriately into the public-policy arena. Thus we are positioned to place greater emphasis on such issues and be more visible and vocal on public-policy matters germane to the Boulé and to the viability of black people. In executing this responsibility we will not stand alone but rather will join with other appropriate national organizations to ensure that our collective voices reverberate forcefully in the arena where they make a difference. I am truly delighted to be your Grand Sire Archon and look forward to an exciting tenure and to communicating with you in each edition of THE BOULÉ JOURNAL. Ω