

PTK History

The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa is to recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students. To achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa provides opportunities for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate to exchange ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for the stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence. The Alpha Theta Theta Chapter was chartered in the Fall of 1962 at Essex County College. The members of the chapter came from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, and fields of study. The diversity of our members creates an environment of fellowship and friendship and is one of the greatest strengths of the Chapter. Membership is based on academic achievement and faculty recommendations. Our members are distinguished by their intellectual curiosity and zeal for learning, their ability to balance work and study, their desire to serve the community, and their determination for academic success. Phi Theta Kappa stands for excellence and our chapter has proven by its record that it has indeed achieved 20 years of excellence and achievement.

Soraida Romero & David A. Berry, Co-Advisors

FALL OF 1982: ECC FORMS HONOR SOCIETY CHAPTER

A local chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for junior and community colleges, has been formed at ECC. The purpose of the organization is to recognize outstanding academic achievement and encourage scholarship, leadership, and service among two-year college students. An orientation meeting of the ECC chapter was held on October 13 for prospective members to discuss upcoming induction into the honor society and plans to increase membership in the chapter. Student who seek membership must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Candidates must currently be enrolled at ECC for at least six college credits (during the fall and winter semester), have accumulated a minimum of 12 college credits, have achieved a grade point average of not less than 3.60 and have no grade below a "C".

The highlight of every year includes two induction ceremonies to introduce and bring recognition to the new members of our Chapter (one in the fall and one in the spring) and the year-end Phi Theta Kappa Awards Dinner to thank and acknowledge outstanding service rendered to the Chapter and to install new officers.



Phi Theta Kappa Awards Dinner (June 1989).



Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony.



President Dr. Zachary Yamba addresses and induction ceremony.

Alpha Theta Theta has been a leading Chapter within the Middle States Region of Phi Theta Kappa throughout the years. This is evidenced by the fact that we have hosted two New Jersey State Leadership Conferences (1983 and 2005) and three Middle States Regional Conventions (1986, 1991, and 2002). Our Chapter has also been recognized internationally for its achievements.



Attending the Phi Theta Kappa conference at ECC were (from the left) Professor David Berry, Regional PTK Advisor Robert Blank, State PTK Advisor Phyllis Pickens, President Yamba, Professor Soraida Romero, and student officers Kevin White, treasurer, and Vincent Wisdom, president.

Former Newark Mayor Sharpe James, addresses the PTK theme, "The American Dream...Past, Present, and Future" at the regional conference sponsored by the ECC student honor society in November.

Our Chapter has provided opportunities for the development of leadership skills for members, officers, and fellow students at the college. A number of our members have served as officers and have represented our Chapter at colleg-wide and community functions. A select few have run for regional or national office throughout the years, and two have attained this great honor. Each year, our Chapter conducts numerous programs and activities implementing the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic.



These honors seminars, symposiums, and programs are aimed at recognizing and promoting scholarship for students and faculty. Throughout the years, the Honors Study Topics have been varied, broad, and thought-provoking, challenging students to stretch their minds and run programs that are multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary. Some of these Honors Study Topics include:

- “The Paradox of Freedom: A Global Dilemma”; “In the Midst of Water: Origin and Destiny of Life”; “Science, Humanity, and Technology: Shaping a New Creation”; “Customs, Traditions, and Celebrations: The Human Drive for Community,” among others.

Of central importance to our Chapter has been the service hallmark. Our Chapter members have embraced this hallmark by conducting functions and activities that promote service to the College and the community. Among the programs we’ve been involved with include:

- Running the biannual blood drive on campus; reading to the children at the ECC Day Care; voluntarily tutoring ECC and high school students; visiting cancer patients at a hospital; collecting donations for the September 11th fund; donating children’s books to schools; donating toys to the Toys For Tots Program during the holidays; packing food for the poor with Project Share; and conducting a college fair for local high school students.

Cancer Walk (October 2002).

Understanding the importance of interacting with others, our Chapter has maintained open communication with other clubs on campus as well as other Phi Theta Kappa Chapters within the region. We have extended invitations to students and faculty to all Chapter functions and have also conducted joint programs with other clubs and chapters. The open channel of communication with other groups has helped roster campus and regional unity.

Fellowship with other regional members (2002).

President of Essex County College, Dr. A. Zachary Yamba (center), Co-Advisors, David A. Berry, Professor of History (left), Soraida Romero, Professor of Mathematics (right).

