

## 16-MONTH YEAR-END REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL GRAND BASILEUS

**Dear Sorors, Philos, Rhoers, Staff, and Friends of Our Great Sisterhood,**

This is a time of significant transformation for our Illustrious Sorority. We remain vigilant and work tirelessly to deliver on our brand promise of “Greater Service, Greater Progress”. It has been my distinct honor to serve as your International Grand Basileus for the last 16 months. We have accomplished so much together.



International Grand Basileus  
Deborah Catchings-Smith

I am often asked, “What is the best part of being a leader in Sigma Gamma Rho?” I say without hesitation: experiencing first-hand, the individual and collective accomplishments of our international community—your remarkable accomplishments! You have been intentional and impactful in providing measurable results! There are far too many to mention here, so I’ll highlight just a few. Please review the monthly Golden Communique and our national website ([www.sgrho1922.org](http://www.sgrho1922.org)) for a more detailed reporting of all that our Sisterhood has accomplished.

### **From International Corporate Headquarters**

- Much of the work of your Board of Directors and Staff focuses on the daily operations of the Sorority, managing the technology upgrades to IMIS, strengthening our technology infrastructure, implementation of our T.O.R.C.H. process enhancements, and supporting programs and initiatives locally, regionally, nationally and globally.
- Under the leadership of First Grand Anti-Basileus Liberty and the Regional Syntakti, our Soror membership grew by 12.36%; the greatest growth has been in the Southeastern Region.
- Philos have grown 20.2% and Rhoers have grown 14.9%. We are on a great pace as we grow the Rosebuds.
- Over the last 16 months, we experienced a substantial increase in revenue. This success was led by a significant increase in membership.
- Under the Leadership of Past International Grand Basileus Bonita M. Herring, our 56<sup>th</sup> Biennial Boule in Cleveland, Ohio received raved reviews!
- During the 56<sup>th</sup> Boule, we congratulated our Soror Deshauna Barber, who was crowned Miss USA 2016.
- We donated more than \$83,000 to various charities.
- We endowed our “first” scholarship at Butler University. The \$50,000 scholarship is presented annually.
- In addition to these accomplishments, more than 900 undergraduate and alumnae members along with 110 affiliates from five regions, and 19

national committees provided member value through leadership training, professional development programs, initiatives and fellowship opportunities during the 56<sup>th</sup> Boule.

- It was a bitter sweet occasion when former President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama invited leaders of the Sorority to their last White House Holiday Reception. I attended along with First Grand Anti-Basileus Rasheeda Liberty.
- After Trump's election, we were the only Pan-Hellenic Sorority invited to share insights with President-Elect Donald Trump's transition team. This was yet another Sigma "first" thanks to sorority sister and former Maryland State Delegate, Aisha Braveboy.
- To align with the Going for Sigma Gold: 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, we launched our first-ever member survey (some highlights can be found below). The Board and Staff coordinated a Special Boule in Las Vegas this summer. This gave the Grand Chapter an opportunity to review our current operational model, financial policies and procedures, find new sources of revenue, ways to reduce expenses and put measurement tools in place that will take the complexity out of a lot of our decision-making—all this to support our strategic plan. More than 200 recommendations were considered.
- Soror Rachel Morris resigned her post as Executive Director (ED) in August after nine years of dedicated service to Sigma Gamma Rho. We wish her the best as she pursues other endeavors. We are currently conducting a search for the ED role. This effort is being led by First Grand Anti-Basileus Rasheeda Liberty, who serves as our Personnel Chair.
- The Golden Alert Social Action continues to grow and expand as the Sorority seeks to enhance our advocacy efforts through a focused issue management strategy.
- We thank our sponsors and partners who made it possible for Sigma Gamma Rho to provide our members additional value at no additional cost to us: JCPenney, Carol's Daughter, USA Swimming and TYR.
- Our greatest mark of distinction is our commitment to "service", and the countless hours each

member of the Sisterhood contributes to enhancing our communities. During this period, we invested more than 63,000 hours of community service. The Community Service Reporting Tool is managed by National Programs Chair, Soror Jacqueline Greely, and her Committee who have done amazing work. Sorors who have not recorded their service hours can do so by visiting the portal on our national website no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## National Membership Survey Highlights

As part of the Going for Sigma Gold: 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors commissioned a membership survey to understand your level of satisfaction with a variety of Sorority related topics. Additionally, the Board and Strategic Planning Committee wanted to gain insight into the demographic background of our members—ranging from household income, career, as well as skills and knowledge that may be useful to the future growth and development of the organization. A special thank you to Soror Syreeta Greene, Ed.D, Chair of the Ad Hoc Research and Development Committee, for leading the team that did all the heavy lifting ensuring we completed our first-ever international membership survey.

Research America, Inc. was retained to design the survey and leverage mix-mode survey methodologies to quantify our membership's perceptions, while using qualitative focus groups to delve into the reasons behind the perceptions. The focus groups were conducted during regional conferences in 2017. To get the word out about the survey, we leveraged the Sorority's standard email communications channel, phone and mail as an alternative for non-email users. Member contact lists were provided by the International Corporate Headquarters for all members with known contact information. A sample of 6,727 members were sent email invitations to participate in the online survey. One email invitation was sent to 5,936 Financial/Active members, and a slightly different email invitation was sent to 791 Non-Financial/Inactive members. 92% of non-financial members stated they have been inactive for nearly 10 years on average.

The survey revealed that our Sisterhood is strong and is aligned with our mission, vision and values. Your insights will help us plan our area meetings, conferences, boules, and special events. There is also information that can be useful as we consider leadership succession planning and support of our emerging leaders.

What follows is a brief summary of the 1,843 completed surveys. Using a population of 11,301 possible respondents, the membership participation rate was 16%. The industry average is 10-15%.

Who Are We?

The “average Soror” responding to the survey:

- African-American
- Heterosexual woman
- Average age of 41.6 years
- Not currently married
- No children in the household
- Christian religion
- Holds a post-graduate degree
- Employed in the field of education

Distribution of Membership:

- Northeastern 29%
- Central 26%
- Southeastern 25%
- Southwestern 11%
- Western 9%

Member Classification:

- Non-life member alumnae 62%
- Life member alumnae 23%
- Undergraduates 10%
- General members 5%

Household Income:

- Less than \$25,000 7%
- \$25,000 to \$49,999 21%
- \$50,000 to \$74,999 23%
- \$75,000 to \$99,999 17%
- More than \$100,000 23%
- Prefer not to answer 10%

More Data:

- Average membership in Sigma Gamma Rho is 16.2 years.

- Primary reason for joining Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority: Sisterhood.
- Secondary reason for joining Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority: Community Service Opportunities.
- Undergraduates want professional networking, professional development, job opportunities, although career advancement was rated the least important overall by those surveyed.

Training and Professional Development:

- Members had the least experience with forecasting, financial investments, and grant writing.
- Training in effective communication, fundraising, and conflict resolution were the top highlighted sessions recommended for holding leadership positions within the chapter.
- Undergraduates expressed more interest in various skills and training topics than did members in other classifications. For undergraduates, conflict-resolution was the top named needed skill or training area.
- Non-life member alumnae expressed more interest in mentoring professionals than did other groups.
- Life member alumnae expressed more interest than others in inter-generational leadership.
- Members expressed the most interest in additional training on approved fundraising guidelines and examples, and on developing partnerships with other organizations.
- Respondents classified as undergraduates were much more likely to express interest in training regarding proper implementation of national programs/initiatives, proper use of Sigma branding and communication, and the

Sigma Foundations than respondents in other membership classifications.

- The majority of respondents would attend continuing education workshops if made available at regional and national conferences; even those who were not in a profession that requires continuing education. Interest in attending such workshops was lowest among respondents classified as life member alumnae compared to respondents in other membership groups.
- Two-thirds of members named inter-generational communication as a needed training to better advise undergraduate members, followed closely by training on mentoring young adults. Two-fifths of life alumnae named hazing prevention; though, it was named much less frequently among the other membership classification groups. Respondents classified as undergraduates were much less likely to express interest in inter-generational communication training workshops than those in other membership classifications.

#### Community Service Initiatives:

- March for Babies received the top average rank and was ranked first or second in importance by half of the participants.
- The St. Jude Walk/Run was the next-highest rated initiative.
- Initiatives which received the lowest rankings included activities: community beautification, walk/run-a-thons and other chapter specific initiatives.
- The Youth Symposium received the highest average rank and received the most overall top place rankings.
- Operation Big Book Bag, Project Reassurance and Hattie McDaniel Breast Cancer Awareness also received positive rankings among those responding to the survey.

- Mwanimugimu Essay Contest received the lowest average rank and was ranked last by seven in ten study participants.
- Undergraduates gave a slightly higher ranking to Operation Book Bag than to the Youth Symposium, but the Youth Symposium was the top-ranked National Program among members of all other segments.

#### Communications/Branding:

- Financial members had similar levels of satisfaction for The Golden Communiqué monthly newsletter, Aurora Magazine, other email announcements, and the national website.
- General members and undergraduates had much higher satisfaction levels with the website and other e-mail announcements.
- Nearly half considered Sigma Gamma Rho's brand to be extremely strong or very strong within the National Pan-Hellenic Council.
- A third considered the brand to be very strong on campus and within the larger fraternal community, and one quarter felt it was very strong within local communities or social and professional groups.
- Members were twice as likely to use Facebook as to use Instagram, and only one-in-eight accessed Sigma Gamma Rho's Twitter feed. Instagram was much more likely to be used among undergraduates than found for the other member classifications.
- The majority of respondents receive sorority information through email.
- When asked about the most effective ways for Sigma Gamma Rho to keep members informed, most named email, followed distantly by Facebook. Facebook was more frequently mentioned among non-financial respondents than among their financial counterparts. A third named the national website, and approximately a quarter named

text messages, U.S. Postal Service Mail, or Instagram.

## Highlights of the Special Boule

The 2017 Special Boule was called by the National Board of Directors and membership to address the Sigma Gamma Rho Going for Sigma Gold: 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, the constitution and bylaws, and other proposed changes in Las Vegas, Nevada July 21-23, 2017. Our registration expectations were exceeded when more than 700 Sorors and Philos registered. The Philos took advantage of this opportunity to join us and conducted a review of their governing documents to make appropriate changes.

The attendee's feedback received from the Special Boule Membership Satisfaction Survey are reflected here:

- 77% Satisfaction Rate for the Recommendations Process
- 73% Satisfaction Rate for the Constitution and Bylaws Process
- 85% Hotel Accommodations Satisfaction

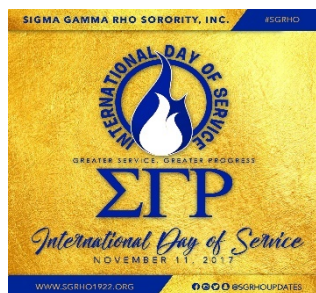
Some proposed changes adopted by the Grand Chapter include:

- Streamlined electronic submission of membership fees effective July 1, 2018.
- Expanded Sigma branding with all new inductees required to receive the official sorority blazer, included in the intake process fees.
- Membership Intake Certification enhancements were approved (T.O.R.C.H.).
- Revised the targeted reclamation program, Campaign 2022.
- Global Membership Liaison role was added to support Military and International Chapters.
- Revised requirements to streamline the establishment of Military and International Chapters.
- Revisions to the Boule Order of Business in preparation for the Centennial Boule.

## 95<sup>TH</sup> Founders' Day Celebration

**JCPenney** Our 95<sup>th</sup> Founders' Day celebration featured several firsts for our Sisterhood. A major retailer, JCPenney, under the direction of the company's Inclusion and Diversity Manager and our Soror LaTisha Brandon, saluted our Founders' Day with an exclusive shopping event for the Sisterhood. Our National Corporate Liaison, Soror Cherie Washington, coordinated the November 5<sup>th</sup> national effort with in-store fashion shows, dancing, great food and of course, lots of shopping!! International Grand Epistoleus, Soror Angela Spears, helped to get the word out through email and social media communications resulting in the national elevation of the Sigma Brand. Our Regional Syntakti worked with chapters to engage our sorors, affiliates, family members and friends at eight in-store events held in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles and New York!

## Greater Service, Greater Progress



The Grand Epistoleus, Centennial Committee and International Corporate Headquarters Staff collaborated to make our 95<sup>th</sup> Founders' Day celebration impactful with an "International Day of

Service". Sorors and Affiliates around the world were asked to focus their efforts on our "H3: It's All About ME!" This program focuses on healthy living, healthy choices, and healthy generations and is supported by several Project Reassurance programs.

We exceeded our 7,000 November community service hours goal by 194.57 percent, reporting 13,620 service hours to-date. The commemorative t-shirts provided a visual reminder of why we exist and helped to position our brand throughout the world. This effort was flawlessly led by Centennial Committee Chair, Past International Grand Basileus Joann Loveless and Co-Chair Soror Karen Vernell Williams, International Founders' Day Chair Soror LaTonya Theus Nelson, Founders' Day Co-Chair Soror Martha Riley, International Grand Epistoleus

Soror Angela Spears, Regional Epistolei, International Corporate Headquarters Staff and the many Sorors who helped plan and/or participated in the countless activities implemented to honor our Founders.

### Major Branding Efforts Elevate the Sisterhood

We continue to seek opportunities to increase awareness of the Sigma Gamma Rho brand to external audiences. The fastest way to do this is through the news media and non-Sorority social media posts. While we can post all our news on the Sorority website and social media platforms, the news media determines what is covered in their publications and on television and radio stations. Grand Epistoleus Angela Spears and A Step Ahead PR Consulting and Coaching firm (headed by Soror Cheryl Procter-Rogers, [www.AStepAheadPR.com](http://www.AStepAheadPR.com)), work to obtain national press to build on the coverage local and regional leaders receive. This all contributes to increasing awareness of the impact we make in our communities. Below, I highlighted two initiatives that were expanded over the last sixteen months to increase awareness of our brand nationally and internationally.

#### Swim 1922

Our Swim 1922 program, led by our sorority sister and Olympian Maritza McClendon, Olympian Cullen Jones, and USA Swimming partnership chair, Soror Secenario Jones, continues to be a game changer for Sigma Gamma Rho. Last year alone, nearly 20,000 sorority members and affiliates participated in 117 swim clinics across the U.S.

As background, it was 2012 when USA Swimming diversity officer and Soror Talia Mark Brookshire facilitated the partnership with Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. USA Swimming is a 400,000-member service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through teams, events and education. USA Swimming is also responsible for selecting and training teams for international competition including the Olympic Games. Sigma Gamma Rho worked with USA Swimming to conduct a survey of 3,200 of our members. It was an

effort to get a pulse on why, apparently, African-American women choose not to swim. Based on the alarming statistics surrounding African-Americans and swimming, Soror Brookshire wanted to find a way to get more children and black mothers into the pool. Thus, Swim 1922 was born.



A recent study by the USA Swimming Foundation revealed that youth swimming abilities have improved 5-10 percent. USA Swimming attributes much of this improvement to the sorority's five-year Swim 1922 program.

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#### Swim 1922 Goes International



**Fina**  
WORLD JUNIOR  
SWIMMING  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

presented by ΣΓΡ SIGMA GAMMA RHO  
SORORITY

Sigma made headlines when USA Swimming invited us to be the presenting sponsor for the 2017 **FINA** World Junior Swimming Championships in Indianapolis, August 23-28. We agreed and were the only sorority or African American organization involved in this international event televised to more than 40 million viewers on NBC Sports cable networks.

The event was open to female athletes aged 14-17 and male competitors aged 15-18. The six-day meet welcomed nearly 1,000 Olympic hopefuls from more than 100 countries. All events were held at the newly-refurbished Indiana University Natatorium in Indianapolis, Indiana and Sigma Gamma Rho signage was clearly visible throughout the complex, at the airport and throughout the City. A video public service announcement highlighting the Swim 1922

program and USA Swimming partnership was broadcast daily in the swimming venue and on the NBC Sports networks viewed world-wide by millions nightly. Nearly 6,000 tickets were sold to the events.

I was excited to represent our Sorority twice daily on the **Deck Pass Live** webcasts during the championships. It was an opportunity to speak about our history and our current programs and initiatives. Onsite media covering the competition included journalists from the United States, Japan, Hungary and Germany. They were capturing their athletes with the Sigma Gamma Rho logo in the background. We are truly international now!!! Local Indianapolis media did multiple stories on the Sigma Gamma Rho sponsorship. Our partner, USA Swimming, posted multiple stories per day throughout the championships on its website and social media platforms.

Two autograph sessions were sponsored by Sigma Gamma Rho featuring Olympians Maritza McClendon and Cullen Jones. Local Sorors and Staff worked our booth outside the pool area. A special thank you to Soror Secenario Jones for coordinating a Swim Clinic led by Olympians McClendon and Jones. Much appreciate to the fifty Sorors who participated in the Clinic and received Swim 1922 tote bags filled with branded swim suits, caps, towels, and goggles. National Corporate Liaison Soror Cherie Washington organized Sorors being treated to a demonstration by expert stylists from Carol's Daughter on how to protect, style and manage hair after swimming.

We also hosted a reception for FINA and USA Swimming dignitaries. Local Sorors and members of the Board of Directors participated in most of the events, including the Sigma Gamma Rho Day during FINA that was held on Saturday. The bleachers were filled with royal blue and gold. Thank you to those who gave up their weekend to make sure we had a large presence for the cameras!!

Past Grand Basileli and I were part of several medal ceremonies. We are thrilled to report that during the championships, 45 records were set; USA took 1<sup>st</sup>

place in the medal count: 12 Gold, 13 Silver, 7 Bronze.

Social Media Records Set for USA Swimming and the FINA events:

- Facebook: More than 551,400 views; 576,060 video views
- Twitter: 2,700 link clicks (average 388/day)
- Instagram: Story Views 2,251,688
- Snapchat: a gain of 1,400 followers over previous week; 40.4% use rate for filter in-venue; 918 people used the filter; about 200,000 videos overall

To supplement the media relations efforts of USA Swimming, A Step Ahead wrote and placed the announcement press release on a news wire service. The service has a reach of 30,000 journalists and bloggers at nearly 1,000 media outlets. The release and photo were featured on **BlackNews.com** which receives over 250,000 monthly visitors. In addition, the news release was distributed to their 650,000+ Facebook fans and Twitter followers. Months later, the release and photo are still being utilized online by the national black press, national media outlets and the Associated Press.

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**Useful facts on drowning from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):**

*Each year, about 4,000 people drown in the United States; drowning kills more children 1-4 years of age than anything else except birth defects. Among children 1-14, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death (after motor vehicle crashes). More than half of those who are treated in an emergency department for drowning require hospitalization or transfer for further care (compared with about 6% of all unintentional injuries). A person who survives drowning may suffer lasting consequences like brain damage.*

*Between 2005 and 2009, the fatal unintentional drowning rate for African-Americans was significantly higher than that of whites across all ages. The disparity is increasing among children 5-14 years old. The fatal drowning rate of African American children ages 5 to 14 is almost three times that of white children in the same age range. The disparity is most pronounced when looking at drowning that happens in swimming pools; African American children 5-19 drown in swimming pools at rates 5.5 times higher than those of whites. This disparity is greatest among those 11-12 years where African Americans drown in swimming pools at rates 10 times those of whites. These disparities might be associated with lack of basic swim skill in some minority populations.*

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## Swim 1922 is Saving Lives!!!



*Soror and Olympian Maritza McClendon conducts Swim 1922 clinic.*



*Grand Basileus Catchings-Smith presents medals during FINA medal ceremony.*

### Building on Swim 1922's Success

The Sigma Gamma Rho Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference (CBCFALC) attendance planning team was led by special events consultant Aminata Mbaye and Soror Karen Vernell Williams, along with support from our International Corporate Headquarters Staff, members of our Board of Directors, Local Chapters

and Philos. In addition to building on the recent international exposure and awareness of Swim 1922 during FINA, two weeks prior to the CBCFALC, Sigma Gamma Rho hired The Hamlet Consulting Group (HCG) to garner expanded media placements, facilitate introductions and arrange meetings with members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

The activities provided by HCG were in addition to our leadership's participation in conference workshops and panels, our Swim 1922 exhibit booth, reception, and swim clinics. Lucky for us, Soror and Congresswoman Robin Kelly of Illinois served as the honorary co-chair of this year's Annual Legislative Conference and was able to provide additional support as we sought to gauge interest for partnerships by members of Congress.

### Brief Background on HCG

Candace Sandy, HCG's President/CEO is a senior communications practitioner with more than seventeen years of media relations and crisis management. For over a decade, she served as the Communications Director for Congressman Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY) of the Fifth Congressional District, a member of the House Foreign Affairs and Financial Services Committees. Candace led the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) Weed & Seed initiative in East New York and recently served as the press secretary for Hillary for America (HFA) in Northern Nevada a battleground state.

Her six-person consultant team is well connected and includes professionals who have worked at all levels of government, award-winning journalists and communications professionals ranging from 10 to 30 years of experience.

### Highlights of Work Performed by HCG:

HCG examined the communities with the highest rates of pool, catastrophic floods, and ocean deaths. They also researched the role lack of recreational activities in communities play in gun violence and gang activities and how swimming can be an alternative for at-risk-youth. We will use this research as we expand Swim 1922 and acquire new partners. According to their research, districts prime for conducting the Swim 1922 program expansion included:



- Chicago, IL
- Far Rockaway, NY
- Houston, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- North Carolina (Northeastern corner of North Carolina, stretching from Durham to Elizabeth City)
- North Carolina (West-central portion of the state and includes Cabarrus, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties)
- US Virgin Islands

HCG also researched additional states for expansion: The Minnesota Legislature is studying a proposal that would require that all public-school students are provided access to free swim lessons.

Tactics: Wrote letters of request to members of Congress and coordinated with schedulers to secure dates and times for visits; Briefed congressional staff on Swim 1922 in advance of meetings; Arranged for lunch in the Capitol Hill dining room; Designed and hung promotional Swim 1922 doorhangers on each hotel room door of the host hotel; Pitched news story and press release/media advisory to media desks of local and national media outlets, etc.

Capitol Hill Visits and Results:

The firm planned and executed a day on the Hill, to meet with members of Congress and their staff. An HCG consultant briefed and escorted your International Grand Basileus and Western Region Syntaktes Kennessa Marshall to each Congressional office:

- Rep. Alma Davis, (NC) - Would like to have a series of Swim 1922 clinics in her district and specifically asked what resources are needed.
- Rep. GK Butterfield (NC) - Interested in partnering with Swim 1922.
- Soror and Rep. Kelly (IL) - Expressed that she leads the CBCFALC Health Braintrust and wants to partner with Swim 1922.
- Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX) - Interested in co-sponsoring and partnering on Swim 1922 Clinics in her district.

- Rep. Gregory W. Meeks (NY) - Interested in co-sponsoring and partnering with Swim 1922 Clinics in his district.
- Rep Stacy Plaskett (USVI) - Interested in partnership with Swim 1922 in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Rep Maxine Waters (CA) - Interested in a partnership with Swim 1922.



*Western Region Syntaktes Kennessa Marshall and Grand Basileus Deborah Catchings-Smith make the case for a Sigma Swim 1922 partnership & advocacy on Capitol Hill.*

Swim 1922 Booth at CBCFALC

We sponsored a Swim 1922 booth at the Walter Washington Convention Center during CBCFALC to share drowning prevention information with the thousands in attendance. Our partner, Carol's Daughter, shared hair care tips with women of color at the booth.



*(pictured are Grand Tamiochus Vanessa Tyson and Corporate Liaison Soror Cherie Washington). USA Swimming Liaison Soror Secenario Jones coordinated the Sorors and Philos who manned the booth.*

Community Service – Swim 1922 Clinics

Under the leadership of Soror Secenario Jones, along with the support of Olympian and Soror

Maritza McClendon and Olympian Cullen Jones, the sorority executed an unrepresented four Swim 1922 Clinics over a four-day period during CBCFALC Week. Basileus Dawne Stanton and the Sorors of Eta Theta Sigma Chapter also hosted a clinic during the week.

Sigma Gamma Rho Biennial CBCFALC Reception

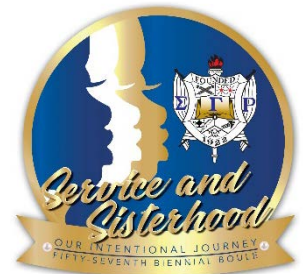
Traditionally, we hold a reception in non-boule years because planning the CBCFALC week's activities and a major Boule is too daunting for all those involved. This year during our reception, we recognized the leadership of our very own Soror and U.S. Representative from Illinois, Robin Kelly with a leadership award. Our innovative partnership with USA Swimming is unmatched and we recognized Tim Hinchey, President and CEO of USA Swimming and presented him with a \$7,000 check for the USA Swimming Foundation in honor of our Founders. Olympian and Soror Maritza McClendon and Olympian Cullen Jones delivered brief remarks.



Check presentation to USA Swimming Foundation – (left to right): Olympian Cullen Jones; Soror and Olympian Maritza McClendon; Grand Basileus Deborah Catchings-Smith; Paris Jacobs, USA Swimming Board Member; Tim Hinchey, USA Swimming President & CEO.

**We Are Preparing for Your Arrival!!!**

Registration is now open for our 57<sup>th</sup> Biennial Boule that will be held July 12-15, 2018 in Dallas. Hotel reservations can be made after registration has been completed. I look forward to fun-filled and productive four days!!!



**Save the date for Our 2020 Boule in Atlanta, July 9-12.**

As I stated at the beginning of this message, you have accomplished far too much over the 16 months for me to encapsulate here. Please review the previous Golden Communiqués, visit our Facebook page and website for more! Know that your accomplishments enable us to continue fulfilling our mission of “Greater Service, Greater Progress”. Thank you for an outstanding 16 months and best wishes for a Prosperous New Year!

Yours in the Sisterhood,

Deborah Catchings-Smith  
International Grand Basileus  
**“Intentional Impactful Measurable”**



Soror and Congresswoman Robin Kelly (left) accepts the Leadership Award from Grand Basileus Catchings-Smith (right) at the Sigma Gamma Rho reception held during the CBCFALC.



Grand Basileus Catchings-Smith welcomes Sorors and Actress Victoria Rowell to the reception.