



# THE GRIP

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The Monthly Newsletter of Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity International

## *Much I needed to know I learned in the Fraternity*

Mimico High School in Mimico, Ontario was the home of Alpha Phi Chapter and had been for a few years when I came on the scene in grade nine in 1953 . Mimico was a small town which was rapidly being absorbed into Toronto as a suburb and now is just another bump in the knotted rope along Lake Ontario which is Metropolitan Toronto. Mimico is an aboriginal word meaning "home of the pigeons". My father had a photographic studio there, having left his job as a school Principal in 1946. My mother was raised there and my parents met while singing in the church choir in the Presbyterian church around the corner, where my paternal grandfather was the minister. Deep roots!

There were two fraternities in the school, Gamma Delta Psi and Gamma Sigma. GDP had a good reputation and at that time of having snagged a good slice of the 'Jocks' .The other fraternity's reputation was not so good! The school was being changed over from a general high school to a commercial (secretarial training)/ general mix which meant with 600 students about 500 were young girls. Alpha Phi also drew members from the nearby New Toronto High School which was the flip side, they had auto shop and metal working facilities and the student mix was reversed.

As I became acclimatized to high school, I was 13 on the first day, I became aware of the different stratum of society. The scholars, the jocks and the in betweens. My first awareness of the fraternity was when my sister, who was 4 years older than me, came home excited because Alpha Phi was in the process of chartering a sister sorority in the school called Alpha Beta Psi and she was to be a charter member. The sorority spread to a couple of other schools and then slowly faded away - maybe lasting 10 years.

I won't bore you with my teenage struggles and pains, suffice it to say when I was 17, I had grown over a foot taller and went out for football. For the first time I experienced a kind of brotherhood with the members of the team. I liked it! Many of the team members were GDP brothers so in 1957 I was asked to pledge for the fraternity. Now the real learning begins. I was a shy kid with the usual teenage chronic erection. I could barely speak in front of the class and blushed scarlet whenever noticed. Now put a silly orange paper derby on my head, a tie knotted around my bare neck and sentence me to be the indentured slave of 20 young men. Brothers who were determined that no one was going to get in the fraternity without enduring

the same humiliation that they did. Add to the mix a flu epidemic which raged through the school during my pledge period, and my cursed good health and I became one of the few pledges available for them to work on. Most of the school used to assemble on the school steps at noon to see and be seen and there I was on my knees proposing marriage to some, collecting names addresses and phone numbers from others and generally making a spectacle of myself. And then there was the night time drives, being taken to the houses of only the most beautiful and sought after young ladies in the school in my full regalia to get them to sign my book. It all taught me that if you want something badly enough - and I wanted to be part of the fraternity - you can do it. You have to lock your eyes on the goal, make the necessary changes and adaptations that the goal makes worthwhile. Anyway, that pretty much wrapped up my shyness. I learned humiliation and personal discomfort is not fatal, something I've recalled every time I've made a presentation to a meeting or client. Sometimes you just have to do it.

All through my tenure on the Board of Control, I was an outspoken critic of pledge physical hazing. I did everything I could to make the pledge periods to be more educational not physical but I have to admit, pledging for the fraternity for that 5 weeks changed my life completely and I'll be forever grateful.

Yours in Bonds  
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PS: I think I've finally got a handle on the erection thing!



Doug speaks to the Brothers gathered at the 130th Anniversary Celebration in Toronto in October 2009

# GAINING EVER FAILING NEVER