Beta Sigma Phi HISTORY

The Beginnings of Beginning Day

The beginning of Beginning Day is, like that of many great traditions, something of a mystery. However, it is almost certainly as old as Beta Sigma Phi itself.

The "beginning" of each new sorority year appears to have always been around August, but it took a few years for the "official" tradition to begin. The Torch, which first rolled off the presses in January 1932, makes its first mention of Beginning Day in August of that same year—but not under that name.

"Another summer has come and gone," says the August 1932 issue. "The fraternity enters the new club year stronger in numbers, wiser in experience and closer knit with ties of everlasting friendship."

The first mention in print of the specific phrase "Beginning Day" doesn't appear until some 27 years later, though it was certainly in use before that. In the August 1959 issue of The Torch, page 8 reads, "Sunday, August 30, has been designated as the official opening day of your 1959-60 season in Beta Sigma Phi. Significantly, it is called `Beginning Day.'" Prior to 1959, The Torch merely references the "first meeting of the new sorority year" or some similar phrase.

Certainly, by August 1962 the phrase "Beginning Day" was in widespread use and the tradition was firmly established. In that month's issue of The Torch, a new theme is announced: "The Torch Will Light the Way." It goes on to reference Beginning Day, stating, "It has become a tradition in Beta Sigma Phi to launch a new chapter year on `Beginning Day,' the last Sunday in August." This is the first reference of Beginning Day being a "tradition," and that is recognized on the last Sunday of August. By 1965, The Torch was running articles about how to plan a great Beginning Day.

So, while the origins of the specific name of the day are obscure, it's clear that Beginning Day has always been held at the end of August each year, and has always been a time of special significance for Beta Sigma Phi.