



# Cal Delta Spotlight

USC House Corporation of Phi Delta Theta | Winter 2010 | University of Southern California

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## 2010 and Beyond

By: Stephen Scully '81



I am pleased to report that the USC Phi Delta Theta House Corporation is vibrant, strong and more engaged than at any other time in my history with the Chapter. Today we enjoy 39 members living in the house, 62 active members of the Chapter plus we have just initiated 21 pledges to new active status. We are 83 members strong; our House is the most modern, impressive Fraternity House

on 28th Street and we have tremendous momentum carrying us into the Spring of 2011. This is an incredible distance from late 2007 when we stood in front of a burnt out shell wondering what our next steps were to be.

As I have written in the past, our most pressing issue is fundraising. As of today, we have \$2,500,000 of mortgage debt with \$900,000 of pledges remaining to collect. First and foremost, I would like to again express my sincerest appreciation to each of you who have made pledges and payments in this crucial effort. You are the reason why this project has been successful. Secondly, it is critical that our House Corporation reignite the fund raising effort to reach out to our past USC Phi Delt alumni. The statistics measuring this effort are clear. As of today we have had 185 people make pledges out of 1,100 identified USC Phi Delta Theta alumni. Clearly we need to network and engage the balance of our alumni to accomplish what we have started: the long-term ownership of the House and property on 28th Street.

I believe it needs to be said that the level of debt service we carry today absorbs the majority of the rental income from the students living in. We clearly are living on borrowed time and cannot be lulled asleep or believe that the House Corporation can absorb this debt service long term. Today we are only successful due to the collection of the pledges, which is paying down debt and has contributed \$1,000,000 towards the construction and debt reduction. Our fund raising effort is critical to continuing down this path.

Also, I would like to restate the mission of our House Corporation. Our mission is to rapidly pay off our mortgage debt, operate the House at full student capacity and insure that USC Phi Delta Theta is on 28th Street for the indefinite

## Alumni Spotlight: Blain Skinner '82

**B**lain Skinner '82 landed a dream job while a Phi Delt at USC. As a kid growing up in Newport Beach, Calif. he loved the Los Angeles Lakers. In 1981, he was offered an internship with the organization. On game days when fraternity brothers gathered to watch the Lakers on television, Skinner suited up in a coat and tie and was off to The Forum. Being at games was part of his job.

It wasn't long before the journalism student's hard work, and some lucky breaks, propelled him into a full-time position in the organization's public relations department. His luck would only continue. During the 1982-83 Season he was asked to oversee the Laker Girls. On game nights he met with the dance team's leader and choreographer, Paula Abdul, no less, to obtain a copy of her routines. He would type them up and distribute them to everyone who needed a copy from the PA announcer, to the person who played the music, to the girls on the dance team.

It was an interesting job without a doubt, but the activity on the court was almost beyond comprehension, Skinner said. "That was when Magic Johnson was there and everyone referred to the game as 'Show Time,'" he said, recently. "I haven't experienced a season like it since. It was a phenomenal team and the most entertaining basketball I had ever seen."

Today, Skinner is the Lakers' Executive Director of Corporate Partnerships. He secures sponsors for the team and works with Fortune 500 companies, including Coca-Cola, Subway and Verizon, to advertise their products and services through signage and promotions. His work is a major money-maker for the franchise. The team's four major revenue sources are sponsorships, broadcast rights, and the sale of tickets and merchandise.

In his almost 30 years with the Lakers, Skinner has amassed enough fascinating stories and photos to fill several books. One such story involves former Lakers coach Bill Sharman. As a kid in the early 1970s, Skinner closely followed the legendary coach. Working with the Lakers, Skinner found himself paired with Sharman during a team golf tournament.



Photo Credit: Andrew D. Bernstein, NBAE/Getty Images

"It was amazing," Skinner said. "During the 1971-72 Season when Bill Sharman was coach, they won more games than they had 30 years in a row. I was a 12-year-old kid and I idolized Bill Sharman. Here we were riding in a cart together."

The relationship wouldn't stop there. Skinner knew the coach

# Alumni News and Notes

## California Delta Phis Host LA City Attorney and Fellow Phi Carmen Trutanich



On Thursday, October 21st the California Delta Chapter of Phi Delta Theta in conjunction with the USC Phi Delt House Corporation held a dinner honoring Brother **Carmen "Nuch" Trutanich '73**, the Los Angeles City Attorney, at the new Tutor Center on the USC campus. The event was attended by the Chapter's alumni and active members and featured City Attorney Trutanich as the keynote speaker.

"This event gave us the opportunity to honor Brother Trutanich for his public service and gave our alumni and undergraduates a chance to talk with Nuch about his successful career", said **Andrew Christopher '13**, the Chapter's Alumni Chairman.

**Frank Hough '73**, a member of the USC Phi Delt House Corporation introduced Mr. Trutanich as Cal Delta's own "Famous Phi." The highlight of the evening occurred when Trutanich explained the widespread ramifications if Prop. 19 (the initiative to legalize marijuana in California) passed. Mr. Trutanich argued that the legalization of marijuana could lead to an all-out drug war on California soil, similar to the violence seen in Mexican border towns over the past two years.

"Mr. Trutanich made a compelling argument and brought up some good points that I'll think about when voting" said **Austin Taylor**, the Chapter's Secretary.

The event was characterized by the Chapter's strong admiration of Trutanich and his public service.

During his remarks Nuch appealed to the actives and alumni present not to settle for less than the profession that each of us is most passionate about. "It's there for you. I found my dream job at age 58," Nuch said, referring to his election as City Attorney.



*Bruce Buettell '82, Frank Hough '73, Carmen "Nuch" Trutanich '73, Bill Mitchell '76 and Stephen Scully '81.*

## 901 Club Hosts Alum's 50th Birthday

Some guys age with grace and class. Then there's **Bruce Buettell '82**. On May 29th Buettell held his 50th birthday party at every 'SC student's favorite bar: the beloved 9-0.

Asked why he chose that venue, Buettell explained, "Now that I'm a 20th of a millennium old, I'm shot physically, and my only hope is to stay young mentally—by avoiding personal growth at any cost. I may have the body of a 50 year old, but I can still have the wisdom and maturity of a 19 year old."

Given his lofty goals for the party, the only place better than the 9-0 apparently would have been the 9-0 of several years ago. "Unfortunately it was renovated a few years ago, so it's not the dive I knew as a student. But it's still a great place to regress," Buettell noted.

Organizing a major birthday celebration proved to be a challenge since Buettell never threw a party for his earlier milestone birthdays. "When you're as big a loser as I was at age 20, 30 and 40, there was no call for a party," he reflected. Watching the crowd swill beer and munch burgers, he said he was glad the attendees got to see how—had it been solely his decision—he would have done his wedding.

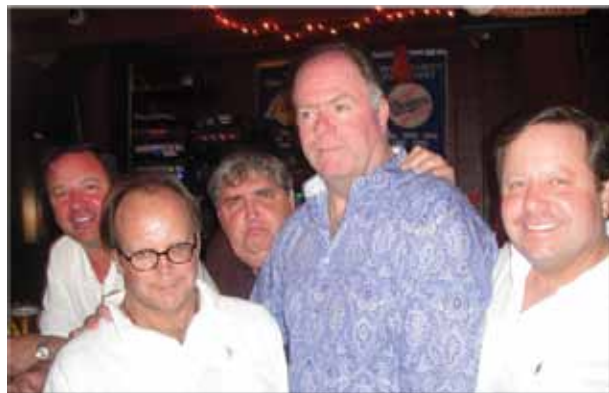
On a serious note, Buettell said "it's interesting that half of the friends in the crowd of 80 people were Phi Deltas, including six current actives and very recent alumni. I think it's very significant that half of the best friends I have come from that little four-year period—30 years ago—when I was an active in the Phi Delt House. It says a lot about Phi Delta Theta and how much I've enjoyed being a Phi."

Asked for some sage advice on the occasion of turning 50, Buettell said he progresses by taking to heart the hard lessons learned from one foul up after another. He plans to write a book entitled *Learning from Mistakes: Why I Know More than You*.

So how did the party turn out? Buettell was thrilled: "I asked my friends to make this a party that reflected a complete lack of personal growth, and they responded way beyond what I imagined. By the time we left at 1:30 a.m., we gave the 9-0 a workout like a Thursday-night student crowd. I'd say we did for personal growth what Iran has done for arms control."



*Bruce Buettell '82, Robert Kinney '80 and Geoff Grant '81.*



*Steve Detrick '84, Brooks Parriott '81, Bill Lieberg '80, Stephen Scully '81 and Dave Detrick '82.*



# Homecoming 2010

On October 30th, the Brothers of Phi Delta Theta, California Delta, welcomed their chapter alumni to a Homecoming Tailgate on the USC campus. This year marked the 5th consecutive Homecoming Tailgate, during which Alumni from around the country returned to campus to meet the current members of Cal Delta and recount their years in Phi Delt at USC. "The Alumni Tailgate is always a highlight of the year," remarked **Andrew Christopher '13**, the chapter's Alumni Chairman. "It gives our Brothers the opportunity to mingle with alumni in an informal setting and learn more about the roots of our chapter." An estimated 150 alumni attended the tailgate over the course of the afternoon. "The Alumni Tailgate is a fun networking opportunity and I love to hear about Cal Delta in its early beginnings" said **Thomas Koho '13**, the chapter's Philanthropy Chairman. The tailgate was marked by a renewed urgency to propel Cal Delta to excellence, fueled by the occupancy of a new chapter house which was completed in June 2009.



*2010 AND BEYOND, continued from page 1*

future. I see the opportunity for our future generations who will have the privilege of being a Trojan, to be part of the history that has shaped each of our individual lives. To make sure that this vision is secure, I call upon each of you who have not contributed to our active Capital Campaign to take part and make the largest pledge that you can. I cannot impress upon you how important our need is for your current participation.

In closing I would like to thank all members of our House Corporation. All alumni owe them a debt of gratitude for their hard work and "we will prevail" approach to rebuilding this House. Without question this group of individuals truly personifies the Trojan commitment to "Fight On!" I hope that all of you have taken the time to stop by and visit the House. The structure is truly outstanding and without question the active chapter is a group of outstanding men that will carry on our tradition.

## Biggest Pledge Class Since Re-Founding

*by Nick Stubberfield*

California Delta started the year with the most successful rush since our re-founding with 21 new members joining Phi Delt. They are a phenomenal group of guys who are really excited to start taking on roles as active members. Two of the newly initiated members, **Mattie Hanson** and **Brenton Caldwell**, are even holding Executive Council positions. The most recent pledge class is made up of guys from Boston, Wisconsin, Chicago, Seattle, North Carolina and of course the California guys. We're hoping to have another great rush in the spring because we are losing 29 seniors this year. If we can initiate more than 8 new members we will actually have grown during a year where we lost the most seniors since 2005.

## 2011 Office Roster

<b>President</b> Naad Banki	<b>Judicial</b> Jason Kerns	<b>External Social</b> Dave Palic	<b>House Manager</b> Mike Schmitt	<b>ALS</b> Jacob Curry
<b>Vice President</b> Nick Stubberfield	<b>Phikeia</b> Charles Qian	<b>Brotherhood</b> Aviel Chang	<b>Scholarship</b> Brenton Caldwell	<b>Creativity</b> Peter Johnson
<b>Treasurer</b> Ali Sheikpour	<b>Recruitment</b> Sean Gallagher	<b>Philanthropy</b> Andrew Montalvo	<b>Alumni</b> Andrew Christopher	<b>Warden</b> Tommi Koho
<b>Secretary</b> Andy Winningham	<b>Internal Social</b> Mattie Hanson	<b>Risk Manager</b> Nick Bral	<b>Public Relations</b> JonCarlo Topete	

was in the Hall of Fame as a player, but he wondered if Sharman had been inducted as a coach. He asked Sharman about it. When the coach responded he had not been inducted, Skinner set about to make that happen.

“I called our PR director and we started a campaign,” said Skinner. “We got letters from [Hall of Fame members] Jerry West and John Wooden, and a number of other legends. Three years later he was inducted, and the [Lakers] organization sent me to the ceremony. When Bill was making his acceptance speech, he mentioned my name and thanked me. I could not believe it. I take so much pride in that I had a role in getting him into the Hall of Fame.”

Other fond memories include promoting events at The Forum before the Lakers moved to STAPLES Center in 2000. Skinner explained that the Lakers organization was the landlord at The Forum, and is a tenant at STAPLES Center. As an employee of the Lakers, he often promoted events at The Forum outside of basketball, including tennis matches, ice skating shows and other special events.

“I had the wonderful opportunity to work with so many incredible people, including Dorothy Hamill, Curly Neal of the Harlem Globetrotters, John McEnroe, Chris Everett and Billie Jean King.

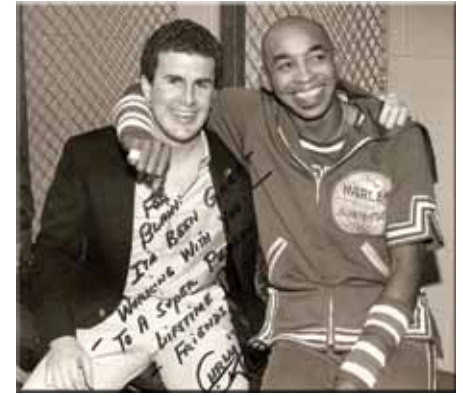
Skinner also has many recollections of rewarding times at USC. He joined the fraternity in the fall of 1980. He visited other houses during rush but immediately bonded with members of the Phi Delt house. “It was a good, easy-going group. Fairly low-key,” Skinner said.

That laid-back vibe was not, however, to be confused with unmotivated, he said. “There was a tremendous amount of peer pressure to succeed,” said Skinner. “You experienced an unpleasant wrath if you didn’t have your act together. Being a screw-up and not doing well in life and in school was just not tolerated,” he said, adding that many members of his pledge class have gone on to successful careers.

Great memories from his time on campus include water balloon fights with other fraternities and sororities, and football games with pledges. “Our class was terrible at football, but we had a lot of fun, nonetheless,” said Skinner. Skinner said he also enjoyed meeting as a chapter and sharing laughs with the other brothers, and road trips to the Cal or Stanford game.

Another fun memory is painting the line from the fraternity house

to the 901 Club. “Pledges had always painted the line azure [blue] and argent [white], the fraternity’s colors, and we continued the tradition,” said Skinner. “The line is probably a quarter-mile long and extends all the way down the sidewalk and across the four-lane road.” The idea, he said, was that if a fraternity member couldn’t find his way home from the 9-0, he could follow the line straight to the front door of the fraternity house.



Skinner, who was the alumni chair in 1981, and has been active with the fraternity after graduating, says he is proud of what alumni have done to help ensure the fraternity’s future.

The fraternity’s lovely late-1800s home wouldn’t be around today, he said, had alumni not stepped in to save it. The house was vacant from 2004-2008 and had become an eyesore. “During the winter, some transients broke in and were living there and started a fire,” said Skinner. “At that point, a decision had to be made – either the house was going to be torn down, or it was going to be restored and the chapter resurrected.”

Alumni came together and through a capital campaign saved the house, he said. “It is a tremendous deal to see it look brand new,” Skinner said, adding that alumni members have such great memories of their time there, it would have been a shame for them to return to the campus for events and not be able to go by the house.

Skinner says he made many friends in the fraternity, and has stayed particularly close with four brothers. “We were all in each other’s weddings and our families go on vacations together,” he said.

Skinner and his wife, Bridget, have been married for 17 years. They have two sons, ages 10 and 12. The family lives in Newport Beach where both Blain and Bridget grew up and attended Newport Harbor High School. When asked to describe his most valued personal achievement, Skinner said: “Raising a family, having two fantastic boys, and being married to a great woman.”

## Chapter Grand: Robert William Travenick

**R**obert William Travenick of Mount Holly died Tuesday, November 24, 2009 at his residence. Robert was born in Nashville, TN and was a Navy Veteran of World War II and served on a destroyer in the Pacific theatre. He was a graduate of the University of Southern California and a founder of Phi Delta Theta fraternity at USC. He retired as chief of loan management from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Camden in 1988. Mr. Travenick was former president of the San Diego Mortgage Bankers Assoc. and past district manager of Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles. Mr. Travenick was an avid and accomplished golfer. While at USC, Robert was a member of the golf team; was a former club champion at San Gabriel Country Club, former president and past champion at Torrey Pines Country Club in San Diego, CA and was the winner of the Southern California Public Links Championship in 1961.

In New Jersey he was a member of Buena Vista Country Club and Fountain Green Golf Course. Robert is survived by his wife Virginia Wilson Travenick; two daughters: Jolaine Pollard of Concord, CA, Kim Marie Travenick and her husband Gary Oppenheimer of Seattle, WA, a son Ronald Steven Travenick of Walnut Creek, CA; two step children: Judith Thompson of Mount Holly and Victor Scott III of Hainesport, 10 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.

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## LEAVE A LEGACY!

Consider a lasting gift that will support Phi Delta Theta long after you are gone. By including the USC Phi Delt House Corporation in your estate plans, you ensure the long-term health and success of our fraternity.

For more information on how you can make a contribution to USC Phi Delt House Corp., contact **Stephen Scully '81** at [sscully@teamscully.com](mailto:sscully@teamscully.com). Or, if you have already included the House in your estate plans, please let us know by contacting Steve.

\*\*\*This information is not presented as legal or tax advice. Always consult your advisors for questions you may have.\*\*\*