

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®



Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter

**Celebrating 118 Years:  
Rooted in Sisterhood, Grounded in  
Service, and Rising in Legacy**

**Saturday, February 28, 2026  
12 pm**

**United Missionary Baptist Church  
118 Hayes Street  
Laurel, MS 39440**

**Dr. Terri Smith, President**  
*Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter*

**Breonna Ponder, Founders' Day Chairman**  
*Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter*

**Harriett Cooley, Founders' Day Co-Chairman**  
*Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter*



# The City of Laurel Mississippi

Johnny Magee  
Mayor

February 28, 2026

To: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®,  
Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter

It is a privilege and a pleasure to welcome to Laurel the members of the Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® on your Annual Founder's Day Celebration. Congratulations on celebrating your 118<sup>th</sup> year!

The AKA sisterhood has proven to be an important support network for women to benefit not only themselves but the communities in which they live, work, and worship.

Through your determination and perseverance, you achieved your dream of securing a local charter in Laurel where your members inspire young girls and women and help to strengthen families. Your presence in our community has made us better.

Please accept my best wishes for the success and growth of your organization and for a wonderful Founder's Day event. Welcome to Laurel, the City Beautiful!

Yours truly,

Johnny Magee, Mayor  
City of Laurel



On behalf of the Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, it is my honor to welcome you to our 2026 Founders' Day Program as we celebrate 118 years of service, scholarship, sisterhood, and commitment to all mankind. This special occasion reminds us of our Founders' vision and our responsibility to continue their legacy with excellence and integrity.

We extend sincere gratitude to our community members, partners, and supporters whose continued encouragement and collaboration strengthen our impact across Jones, Jasper, Covington, and Smith counties. Thank you to our dedicated Founders' Day Committee for planning a meaningful celebration, and to the members of Alpha Beta Theta Omega for your unwavering commitment to service and sisterhood. To our visiting Sorors, we are grateful you chose to celebrate with us.

As we honor this milestone, may we remain rooted in purpose, grounded in service, and rising in legacy.  
Thank you for celebrating with us.

**Dr. Terri Smith- President**  
**Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter**



Today we gather to celebrate Founders' Day and honor the vision and legacy of our illustrious Founders, whose commitment to service, sisterhood, and excellence continues to guide our work and purpose. This occasion allows us to reflect on our shared history while recommitting ourselves to the ideals that unite us.

On behalf of the Founders' Day Committee, thank you for your support and participation in making this celebration meaningful. May we continue to uplift our legacy through service, unity, and sisterhood.

With love,

Ms. Breonna Ponder  
Founders' Day Committee Chairman





I am so excited that you are here today to partake in our 118th year Founders' Day celebration.

As we embark on today's program, I encourage each of you to embrace the spirit of our

sisterhood and celebration. Let us engage with one another, share and revel in the legacy of

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. This 118th

Founders' Day celebration is not just a celebration of the past; it is a commitment to the future of

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated.

We gather to honor our Founders through the enduring spirit of sisterhood and service. As

Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated looks forward to the future, the 118th Founders' Day serves as a reminder of its foundational values and ongoing commitment to serve.

Thank you all so much for coming and fellowshiping with us for this 118th Founders' Day Celebration.

Warm Regards

Mrs. Harriett Cooley- Co Chairman  
Founders' Day Committee

# Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® History



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, an international service organization, was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African American college-educated women. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated was founded on a mission of five basic tenets that have remained unchanged since the sorority's inception.

Our mission is:

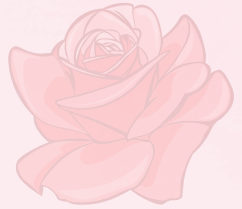
- To cultivate and encourage high scholastic and ethical standards,
- To promote unity and friendship among college women,
- To study and help alleviate problems concerning girls and women in order to improve their social stature,
- To maintain a progressive interest in college life,
- To be of "Service to All Mankind."

# Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter History

In 2014, the foundation for an interest group in the Pine Belt region was established following leadership guidance that inspired a vision for expanded service and community impact.

Research identified Laurel as a city with a predominantly African American population and limited NPHC graduate presence, revealing a significant opportunity to provide meaningful outreach and programming.

The group's mission centered on Progressive, Inspiring, and Empowering (P.I.E.) initiatives focused on education, economic security, health care, and poverty, while mentoring young girls and women and strengthening the community through skill-building programs. The first meeting was held on December 2, 2014, laying the groundwork for a graduate chapter rooted in sisterhood, growth, and service. This vision came to fruition on May 7, 2022, with the chartering of the first graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® in Laurel, Mississippi, marking a historic milestone of service and sisterhood.



**MS. TELEESA PAYNE MASON  
SOUTH EASTERN REGION REPRESENTATIVE  
INTERNATIONAL SISTERLY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Ms. Teleesa Payne Mason is a 25-year Legacy and Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, initiated in Beta Epsilon Omega Chapter in 2000, whose leadership has made a lasting impact locally and regionally. A former Chapter President and six-time elected officer, she modernized chapter operations through innovative technology systems and led numerous committees and the Sisters in Service Foundation. Her service has earned honors including Basileus of the Year, the Tracey Morant Adams Servant Leadership Award, and “Best of the Best” recognition at the International Leadership Seminar. A graduate of the Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover Leadership Academy, she currently serves as the South Eastern Region Representative to the International Sisterly Relations Committee. Professionally, she is a cybersecurity executive at FedEx, executive leadership coach, community advocate, and devoted mother, leading with purpose, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to service and sisterhood.**

## **Program Overview**

**Welcome ..... Dr. Roslyn Ashford**

**Opening Prayer / Meditation ..... Mrs. Sonya McSwain**

**Greetings ..... Ms. Sonya Varnell, Vice President**

**Special Greetings..... Dr. Tracey Morant Adams**

*Southern Eastern Regional Director*

**Founders' Reflection..... Mrs. Kristin Ward**

**Special Guest Recognitions ..... Mrs. Harriett Cooley**

**Purpose of the Event ..... Ms. Breonna Ponder**

**Motivational Message ..... Dr. Jaymar Jackson Sr.**

**Musical Selection ..... Laurel High School Choir**

**Introduction of Guest Speaker .....Dr. Roslyn Ashford**

**Founders' Day Message ..... Ms. Telessa Payne Mason**

**Chapter Recognition ..... Dr. Terri Smith, President**

**Ms. Paula McDonald**

**Community Recognition .....Mrs. Harriett Cooley**

**Mrs. Theresa Miller, Ms. Talana Fagan**

**Closing remarks ..... Dr. Terri Smith, President**

**Reception to follow**

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# Special Community Recognition

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**Family Health Center has made a valuable contribution to the community by providing medical examinations and health screenings whenever called upon to serve. Their willingness to offer accessible healthcare services supports early detection, promotes preventative care, and helps individuals and families prioritize their overall well-being. Through their partnership and commitment to community health initiatives, Family Health Center continues to play an essential role in improving health outcomes and ensuring that residents have access to vital medical resources and compassionate care when it is needed most.**

**The Mississippi Diaper Bank made a significant contribution to our community baby shower by generously supplying diapers for mothers and mothers-to-be, helping to meet one of the most essential needs for growing families. Their support eased financial burdens for parents while promoting the health, comfort, and well-being of infants within our community. By ensuring families had access to vital resources during such an important stage of life, the Mississippi Diaper Bank demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting parents, strengthening families, and uplifting the community through compassionate service and meaningful partnership.**

# Special Community Recognition

Southern Pine Members Helping Members made a significant impact on the community through its generous support of the CHIPP program, directly benefiting students at Taylorsville Elementary School. Through a \$8,000.00 award, Southern Pine helped provide meals for students, ensuring that children had access to consistent nourishment essential for their health, focus, and academic success. This meaningful investment reflects a strong commitment to supporting education, strengthening families, and addressing critical needs within local schools. By prioritizing student well-being, Southern Pine Members Helping Members continues to demonstrate the power of community partnership and compassionate service.

Cadence Bank is recognized for its generous donation and commitment to promoting financial literacy among students. Through its support, students gained valuable knowledge and resources to build strong financial foundations, encouraging responsible money management and future financial success.

# Chapter Special Recognition

## Visionarian Award

Sonya Varnell as the recipient of the Visionary Award. This recognition celebrates her forward-thinking leadership, unwavering dedication to service, and commitment to creating meaningful and lasting impact within the community. Through her vision, initiative, and passion for uplifting others, she has helped inspire progress, strengthen connections, and open doors for future generations. Her ability to see possibilities beyond the present and turn ideas into action embodies the true spirit of visionary leadership. We celebrate her excellence, her influence, and the legacy she continues to build through service and purpose.

## Outstanding Leadership Award

As the inaugural president of the Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter Breyon Magee embraced the responsibility of building a new chapter with grace, vision, and determination. She established a strong foundation rooted in sisterhood, scholarship, and service, strengthening the chapter's presence and impact within the community.

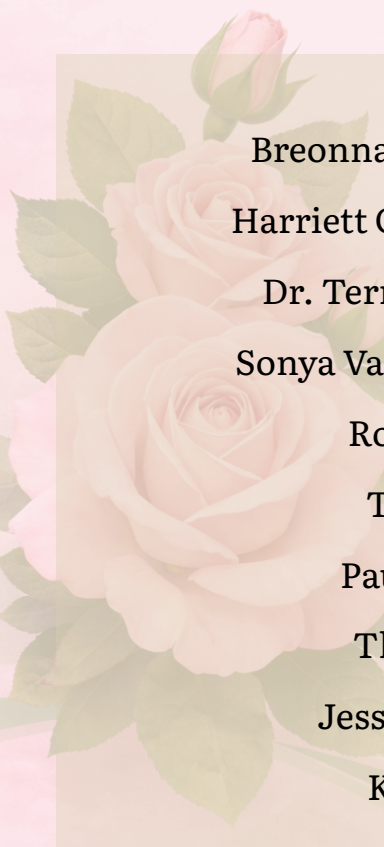
Through collaborative and empowering leadership, Breyon cultivated a culture where every member felt valued and inspired to lead. Her service driven example reflects the true spirit of an Alpha Kappa Alpha woman a leader of character, a servant to the community, and a beacon of resilience. Her legacy continues to inspire unity, purpose, and excellence, reminding us that when passion meets purpose, transformation follows.

~Mrs. Harriett Cooley

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# Founders' Day Program Committee

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Breonna Ponder, Chairman

Harriett Cooley, Co Chairman

Dr. Terri Smith, President

Sonya Varnell, Vice President

Roslyn Ashford


Talana Fagan

Paula McDonald

Theresa Miller

Jessica Scarbrough

Kristin Ward



# CHAPTER MEMBERS

**Dr. Terri Smith- President**  
**Sonya Varnell- Vice President**

Roslyn Ashford  
Jacqueline Barnett  
Harriett Cooley  
Talana Fagan  
Connie Fairley  
Nikitia H. Forest  
Deborrah Hyde  
Stephanie Lovett  
Breyon Magee  
Sonja McCaskill  
Paula McDonald

Barbara McNair  
Sonya McSwain  
Theresa Miller  
Helen Milloy  
Valerie Oville  
Breonna Ponder  
JaLyn Posey  
Gloria Rucker  
Jessica Scarbrough  
Kristin Ward  
Brenda Wiley

*Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter*

# GOLDEN, SILVER, AND LIFE MEMBERS

## Golden Members

M. Deborrah Hyde  
Helen Milloy

## Silver Members

Jaqueline Barnett  
Harriett Cooley  
Talana Fagan  
Connie Fairley  
Nikitia H. Forest  
Stephanie Lovett  
Sonja McCaskill  
Paula McDonald  
Barbara McNair  
Sonya McSwain  
Theresa Miller  
Valerie Oville  
Gloria Rucker  
Sonya Varnell  
Brenda Wiley

## Life Members

Harriett Cooley  
Nikitia H. Forest  
Sonja McCaskill  
Sonya McSwain  
Theresa Miller  
Sonya Varnell  
Brenda Wiley

*Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter*

# Celebrating 118 Years: Rooted in Sisterhood, Grounded in Service, and Rising in Legacy



**Since 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® has exemplified excellence through scholarship, sisterhood, and service to all mankind.**

**The Alpha Beta Theta Omega Chapter proudly honors the legacy of our founders and remains committed to serving our communities with purpose and distinction.**

**We thank all who helped make this Founders' Day celebration possible.**

Special thanks to  
Jams Cooks and Catering  
Cultured Creations, LLC

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