

**President's Message**

*EXceptional Women doing, EXtraordinary Things*

Black History Month is upon us! A time to celebrate our heritage. A time to celebrate Iota's heritage. Our founder, Lola Mercedes Parker was a visionary in her time. As a trailblazer, she ignited a light which triggered the beginning of the first business sorority for African American women. She is a true heroin in her right.



Already, the world has suffered a loss of many heroes and heroines, but yet we find the strength and determination to move forward as they would have wanted us to. Honorable mentions include: Cicely Tyson, notable activist and the actress who taught us to take pride in our blackness; Hank Aaron, civil rights activist and the man who shattered Babe Ruth's home run record; and Meredith C. Anding Jr., a civil rights icon who as a member of the "Tougaloo Nine" and arrested for staging a peaceful sit-in at white-only library in 1961.

But even as we experience their death, we embrace new life. Life of those who have taken the torch from legends and continue to march with a sense of dignity and purpose. We visioned this on January 20, 2021 when the world saw the first woman of color to be sworn in as United States Vice President. We were awestruck when the words of 22-year old Amanda Gorman graced the stage as the youngest presidential inauguration Poet Laureate. Indeed, the memories of our ancestors will live on just as we will survive the challenges of this pandemic.

The Epsilon Chi Chapter is encouraged and enthused about the events of our Black History month and we too stand tall with pride and admiration of our rich heritage, our Iota heritage.

Continued Blessings

In Sisterhood & Service,  
Donna Mitchell, President

**Lola Mercedes Parker**  
Founder  
Iota Phi Lambda Inc.



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**Newsletter Articles are due by the 25th of each month**

## Calendar of Events

- February 13 - Chapter Monthly Meeting
- February 27 - Toys U Can’t Return program
- March 12 - Chapter Monthly Meeting
- March 26-28 - Southwestern Regional Conference
- April - Business Month
- April 10 - Chapter Monthly Meeting





## A Historical Moment in Time

### Every Voice Lifted: Reflections of an Anticipated Inauguration By Soror Cynae Punch-Brown



On January 20, 2021 members of the Epsilon Chi chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated, witnessed the flowers and fruits of ancestral hope and labor. Through our respective virtual platforms, we put on our Kamala-inspired Chuck Taylor shoes, wrapped our necks in pearls, and sent energy of love and pride ahead of a newly elected Vice President.

Our hearts were overjoyed as we watched our love and pride meet Kamala Harris at the footsteps of the west front of the Nation's Capitol. As the young poet, Amanda Gorman, gave us hope that the energy of Maya Angelou may very well not be a once in a lifetime experience, we recognized ourselves--our essence, our struggles, our hopes--in between the lines of her poetic articulation of what we were all witnessing. Amanda called out from the podium with courage that comes only from our feet standing firm in the places of ancestral defeat and triumphs---*where we met and walked with God*. These words came from her-story, passed down, no doubt, from generation to generation. Although we were all tuned in to welcome Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. as the 46th President of the United States, let's be clear: January 20th was a day of collective "*amens*," *selahs* and a significantly meaningful, "and it came to pass" for women around our nation.

We have lived and are currently living in *weary years* within these contemporary United States of America. Battling against the pandemic of COVID-19, and the widespread racism that has unfolded in front of our eyes--weather subtle or blatant-- we have learned to cry *silent tears* in our pursuit of America's unrealized promise to people of color. Yet, even in these times, our collective voice remained committed--lifted in high hope for a better tomorrow.

Wednesday, January 20th for some, was a day of renewed hope. For many women, no matter what party affiliation however, it was the dawning of a new day-- one that our foremothers worked toward since before the Suffrage March. Vice President Kamala Harris-- a Black woman of Asian descent-- has now fueled the fire for many mothers and fathers raising their daughters to believe anything is possible--especially in a world that more often than not, has dictated what a woman can and cannot do.

When Vice President Kamala Harris raised her right hand to take the oath of office, our experiences connected with hers. She represented every time women had to work harder to achieve equal pay. She represented the movement championing the rights of women.

On a national platform, the Vice President walked the road less traveled, taking on the criticisms along with praise from people attempting to discredit her very presence in a male-dominated profession. On inauguration day, Kamala Harris marched to the White House marking time with the *steady beat* to which the *weary feet* of our ancestors traveled "*over a way that with tears has been watered*."

In 1929, Lola Mercedes Parker set out to organize and advance the cause of Black business women through Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated. As members of an organization striving to "promote civic and social service activities," for the women of Iota, witnessing the election, and subsequent swearing in of vice president Kamala Harris was more than just a moment in time; it was the culminating breakthrough of a struggle to which Iota Phi Lambda is no stranger. Yet, even now, our voices cannot waiver, for there is still work to be done.





For the Epsilon Chi chapter, January 20, 2021 will forever be marked in our hearts as a day where once again, we saw what is possible when we all stand and lift our voices together.

*God of our weary years  
 God of our silent tears  
 Though who has brought us thus far on the way  
 Though who has by Thy might  
 Led us into the Light  
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray  
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee  
 Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee  
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand  
 May we forever stand  
 True to our God  
 True to our native land*

~James Weldon Johnson

## Epsilon Chi Chapter Announcements

The Epsilon Chi Chapter “Repped Chucks and Pearls” in honor of supporting our nations first black woman Vice President!

The Inauguration of the first Black woman Vice President Kamala Harris.

Knowing that a Black woman, a woman who looks like so many of us has achieved the highest office in the land. Let her be a beacon of inspiration for all of us to set high goals and rise to them. Whether you are an aspiring entrepreneur or running a multi-million dollar business, a school teacher or a superintendent, a grassroots organizer, or an elected official, let us strive for excellence in all that we do.

The bar has been raised, let's soar to the occasion!



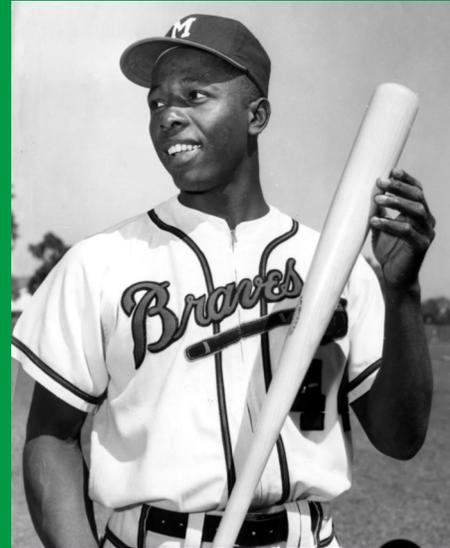
## Our Black History Tribute

We pay homage to those who walked before us and we have lost in 2021.

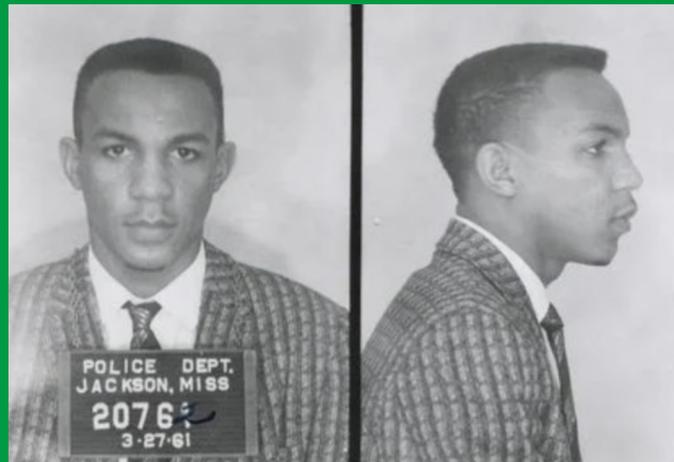
Thank you for paving the way for us!



Cecily Tyson  
American Actress/Fashion Model



Hank Aaron  
American Professional Baseball Player



Meredith Anding, Jr.  
Civil Rights Activist

## Our Black History Tribute

We pay homage to those who picked up the torch, paving the way for future generations!



Kamala Harris  
Vice President  
United States of America

Amanda Gorman  
American Poet and Activist



Roz Brewer  
first Black woman to be a CEO  
of a fortune 500 company,  
Walgreens

# Siemens Honors MLK Day

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2021 | Houston, TX

### HONORING THE DREAM IN WORDS AND ACTIONS

"Siemens Technology is Helping the National Center for Civil and Human Rights Reopen Its Doors"  
By: Soror Tameka White

*January 19, 2021 Houston, TX – Siemens Energy, is a global power generation company as such it has had an integral role in keeping power flowing and communications going. However, it may not be known that Siemens has played a significant role with the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.*

*Due to COVID-19, The Center for Civil and Humans Rights - NCCHR was forced to close its doors. It like many other museums and exhibits halls were not designed in a way that was conducive to the CDC guideline for safe visitor occupancy. Siemens answered the call to assist the center with state-of-the-art technology that would allow them to reopen its door safely and effectively.*

*The technology Siemens brought to the center makes it safe for them to reopen their doors, to continue to educate and widen the racial lens of hundreds of men, women, and children. This education is one of the most effective ways to improve race relations in the country.*

*As a part of the company's commitment to diversity the Diversity and Inclusion team conducted a virtual "field trip" facilitated by Siemens DI team member Nyra White and tour guide, Keisha Lewis Head of Visitor Services*

*Siemens has also sponsored events for our illustrious Iota Phi Lambda Sorority Inc. If you would like to know more about siemens visit [www.siemens.com](http://www.siemens.com). For more information about The Center for Civil and Human Rights visit their website [www.civilandhumanrights.org](http://www.civilandhumanrights.org). The virtual tour is excellent.*



Nyra White



Keisha Lewis



## Lotaversary



Soror Wanda McKinnies  
February 1<sup>st</sup>



Soror Tameka White  
February 29<sup>th</sup>

## Soror Birthday

Happy Birthday to Soror



Adria James  
February 5th

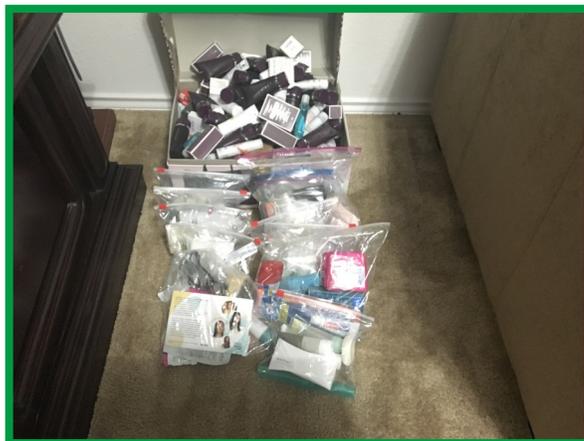
## Rose Beyond the Wall



Our region mourns the loss of Soror Nancy Diggs. Our sincere condolences goes out to her family and the Psi Chapter for their loss. Soror Diggs memory and her dedication to Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. will live on forever.

## Giving Back

January 18, for the Day of Service Dwain Marshall man of Iota and Soror Sheri, who made care packages and donated them to two hospitals for the nursing and Physician staff. The also delivered care packages to two urgent care facilities.



HERstory is written in the words and thoughts of a seasoned Soror. She has been posed with five questions and responds sincerely based on her experiences. The knowledge they impart is meant to inspire, motivate and encourage the continued progression of this illustrious sorority.

**Interviewer: Donna Mitchell**



19<sup>th</sup> Southwestern  
Regional Director  
Vahnita Loud

**What year did you join Iota and in what chapter?** I joined Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. in 1985 becoming a member of Psi Chapter, 36 yrs. ago.

**What is your fondest (favorite) Iota memory during your tenure as the SWR Director?** One of my fondest memories is the 72nd SWR Conference at the Rockwall Lakefront Hilton in Rockwall, Texas held March 28 -31, 2019 with the theme "Bonding in Sisterhood" where the host chapter, Epsilon Tau, provided a pre-dinner cruise on the lake with karaoke singing, drinks, and dinner which featured a variety of Mexican foods. Everyone seemed to have a great and fun time.

**What contribution are you most proud of while serving as the SWR Director?** Facilitating the very 1st Digital Planning meeting and the very 1st Virtual Regional Conference ever held across Iota land.

**Serving as a Regional Director can be very demanding. Since this is the last year of your term, what words of advice and encouragement would you have for the next SWR Director?**

My advice for the next SWR Director would be the 5 P's, "Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance." My encouragement for the next SWR Director is, No one person has all the answers and it really is ok to make a mistake.

**Are there any special interests or activities you will focus on after you have left your position?**

After leaving my position as SWR Regional Director, I will focus on spending more time with my family and making time to travel again as well as a focus on any activity or interest that promotes peace of mind, rest and relaxation.

**All of the Epsilon Chi chapter presidents have served under your leadership throughout your four-year tenure. What parting words would you like to share with the sorors of the Epsilon Chi Chapter?** My parting words to the Epsilon Chi Chapter sorors is to ask that you continue to serve with EXcellence. Remembering Jeremiah 29:11, knowing that God already has a plan for each of us. Forget self and in all that you do for Iota, only do it because it's for the "Good of the Organization."

Special thanks to the sorors of Epsilon Chi for this article being featured in your February newsletter. I pledge to you my Friendship, Aid and Loyalty for all time!

Sisterly, Soror Vahnita D. Loud



### The ABC's of Virtual Interviewing: Do's and Don'ts

During this time of the pandemic most companies have switched to having virtual interviews rather than in-person. Many people are not familiar with virtual interviewing etiquette nor are they well versed in understanding the technical aspects of the virtual platform. For this reason, the Epsilon Chi Chapter prepared a video called the ABC's of Virtual Interviewing: Do's and Don'ts. Soror Mitchell, Soror Tompkins and MOI Mitchell held two mock panel interviews that will be shared with the West Houston Assistance Ministries (WHAM) to assist their patrons who are unemployed or seeking to change careers.

During the panel interview, MOI Mitchell and Soror Mitchell played the role of the interviewer while Soror Tompkins acted as the interviewee. Thank you to MOI Mitchell for supporting the Iota Mother's Assistance Program. WHAM provides free assistance for people who are struggling to meet their basic needs in the form of financial assistance for rent and utilities, food, employment services, and classes to include GED and ESL, as well as cooking classes using food given to clients.



## Sisterhood Across Iota

On January 17, 2021 we witnessed the induction of 9 sorors into the Epsilon Phi Chapter. We congratulate them and welcome our new sorors into Iota. They concluded with a energized New Member Presentation revealing their personalities and excitement with joining our illustrious sorority. Stand proud sorors and enjoy your journey.



## Get to Know our Soror

Epsilon Chi invites you to get to know Soror LaSandra Collins

We asked Soror Collins

### **What makes you who you are?**

My past experiences shaped me and molded into the woman I am today. I am a perseverer! There is nothing I cannot do, if I believe I can, I can and if I believe I can't, I can't. I choose to believe I can.

### **What is your greatest achievement?**

My greatest achievement was overcoming a mindset of feeling inadequate and unworthy. Once I realized, I am everything Christ says I am, I embraced my uniqueness and now I am soaring in ways I could have never imagined.

**Name an influential woman you would like to invite over for dinner and conversation?** The influential woman I would like to invite over for dinner and conversation is Stacy Abrams.

### **Name one thing you wish someone had told you when you were younger?**

The one thing I wish someone had told me growing up is once you give yourself to a man, you have nothing else to give. Always remember you are a prized possession.

### **What do you like to do for fun?**

My first love and passion is writing it brings me joy. When I am not writing, I enjoy hanging with my family, friends and loved ones playing spades or scrabble. Family is everything to me.



## Executive Committee Corner



Soror Sheri Marshall

The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President is second in command of the Chapter. In the absence or incapacity of the President, the 1st Vice President shall automatically assume authority, duties and responsibilities of the President. She is the right hand woman of the President and has other authority as may be delegated by the Chapter President. She understands the dynamics of the chapter and is the support mechanism to keeping the president focused in communication, implementation, and the challenges which may occur. She is a leader in her right and is confident, committed, encouraging and resilient stepping up when and where needed. We are proud to have Soror Sheri Marshall serving as our chapter 1st Vice President.

## Supporting Black Owned Business

Through the Epsilon Chi Buy Black initiative, we are proud to encourage entrepreneurship and promote economic empowerment of black owned businesses (BOB) by intentionally spending our dollars. Whether virtually or in-person, a product or service, youth or adult we will invest in our community to help raise awareness and enhance the financial stability of BOB's. During the month of January the following businesses were patronized by Epsilon Chi Sorors, MOI's and FIL's.

- ⇒ Real Nurturing Family Practice
- ⇒ Brock Orthodontics
- ⇒ Eleven 86 Water
- ⇒ Nails by Donee
- ⇒ Tropical Diner
- ⇒ Herbs of Nature
- ⇒ Boss Moves with Orlando Daniels/  
Kairos Entertainment Network
- ⇒ Walton Publishing House
- ⇒ Crumbville Cookie Shop





By Soror Donna Mitchell, Registered Parliamentarian  
Recording Secretary  
Texas State Association of Parliamentarians

Have you ever voted on a motion and later decided to change your mind after learning more facts or even after further reflection? Well, there are special procedures for dealing with cases such as these. The two motions which assist the assembly in these situation are reconsider and rescind. In this issue we will talk how these motions are used and when best to utilize them.

## Reconsider- RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 37:1-52

- Can only be made by a member who voted on the winning side ( So, if the motion was adopted, the motion to reconsider can be made only by a member who voted in favor of it or if the motion was defeated, then only by a member who voted against it)
- Can be seconded by any member no matter how she voted
- Can only be made on the same day on which the vote sought to be reconsidered was taken
- To Adopt the motion a majority is needed

E.g. ***I move to reconsider the vote on the motion relating to*** the purchasing of an ad for the convention. I voted against that motion. (Note: Remember to state how you voted so that it is clear that you are entitled to make a motion to reconsider)

## Rescind - RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 35:1-13

- Can be made regardless of how you voted
- Must be seconded
- There is no limit on when the motion can be made (it can be made months or years later)
- To Adopt the motion without previous notice
  1. A two-thirds vote OR
  2. The vote of a majority of the entire membership of the voting body is needed
- To Adopt the motion with previous notice
  1. A majority is needed

E.g. ***I move to rescind the motion relating*** to the purchasing of the file cabinet which was adopted at our December meeting

Remember, you do have a right to change your mind. Nevertheless, if the majority is in favor of your motion it can be overturned.

### **BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS BRAND**

*By: Soror Jana Gaskin*

*The Business Manager  
Busy Bee Management*



Being a business owner is a reality for many and a dream for most. Just about everyone has a craft that they enjoy, a profession that they have studied long to achieve, or a trade skill they have spent many years perfecting. How do you turn that craft or profession into a business? Build a business brand. As a small business owner, myself and manager of other small businesses; I often hear, "I don't know where to begin with starting a business." It most definitely can be an overwhelming task to get started. But I have found through years of Business Management studying and personal experience that if you follow a business branding model, then your business will start to develop right before your eyes. There are many different models to building a business brand. However, they all address the same key areas needed to build a solid business brand. Ready to get started? Let's Go!

#### **Determine the purpose behind your business.**

Why does your business will exist?  
What makes you different from other businesses?  
What issue will your business address in the market?  
Why will people pay attention to your business?

#### **Explore competitor brands within your industry.**

Don't imitate other brands. But, note where they succeed and fail.  
Visuals, reviews, marketing techniques and product/service quality  
Brands that are recognizable and memorable are most effective.

#### **Define your target market.**

Who do you want to buy your product/service?  
Shape your mission to reach that specific group.  
Don't try to be everything to everyone.

#### **Establish a brand mission statement.**

Your mission statement should define the purpose the purpose of your business and the value it will bring to your target market.  
Everything generated for and by your business moving forward should reflect your mission statement.

#### **Outline your business's distinct qualities and benefits.**

Focus of the qualities and benefits that make your business unique.  
Give the consumer a reason to choose your brand over another.

#### **Form your unique brand voice.**

How you communicate with your consumers is how they will respond to you. A brand voice could be:

- Service-oriented
- Friendly
- Professional
- Informative
- Promotional

#### **Time to shine!**

Make sure your brand has personality and stands out.  
Consumers look for better experiences and more tailored products and services. Make sure your business is standing out and giving them an experience unlike the rest.

These beginning steps will allow you to pick a business name, decide on a color scheme and logo, and determine how and where you will market your business. These steps are also the building blocks for determining what kind of funding maybe needed, which business structure is best, and many more aspects of starting a business. The business brand building model can be shorter or more in-depth. However, whichever model you chose to follow to start your business will definitely give you a solid start as a business owner.



Iota Phi Lambda Sorority awards scholarships for scholastic achievement to female graduating high school seniors (2.5 GPA or higher) wishing to pursue a college degree in business related fields. This Regional Scholarship is held annually. Judging criteria will include academic performance/achievement, career aspirations, demonstrated leadership, and financial need. Contestants with the supervision of sponsoring chapters must mail their applications to the Southwest Region's Scholarship Chair postmarked by February 14.



**ALMA  
MACKEY**

**SCHOLARSHIP  
2020**

*awarded by  
The Southwestern Region of  
Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc.*

**CRITERIA FOR  
SCHOLARSHIP**  
The scholarship is awarded to a graduating high school female (2.5 GPA or higher) wishing to pursue a college degree in business related fields.

**SCHOLARSHIP  
AWARD**  
Up to \$3,000

**DEADLINE FOR  
APPLICATION**  
Must be emailed or postmarked by January 17, 2021

**DOWNLOAD  
APPLICATION & INSTRUCTIONS**  
at [www.iotaepsilonchi.org/scholarships](http://www.iotaepsilonchi.org/scholarships)

**For additional information:  
contact Genitra Andrews-Hypolite, Scholarship Chair  
at [genitraandrews@gmail.com](mailto:genitraandrews@gmail.com)**





## National News

### National FIL Scholarship

- ◇ Application submission deadline to President-Elect – February 28, 2021
- ◇ Award - \$1000
- ◇ Applicant must be a Future Iota Leader who is a male or female H.S. Senior pursuing a degree in a business-related field of study.

### Alice P. Allen Scholarship

- ◇ Application submission deadline to Scholarship Chair – March 7, 2021
- ◇ Award - \$2000
- ◇ Applicant must be a female H.S. Senior who is a teen mother desiring to further her education beyond high school.

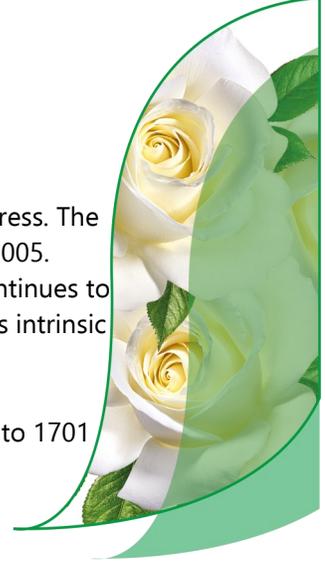
### Dorethea N. Hornbuckle Memorial Scholarship

- ◇ Application submission deadline to Scholarship Chair – February 14, 2021
- ◇ Award – up to \$3000
- ◇ Applicant must be a male or female H.S. Senior or undergraduate students interested in business, business administration, science, or engineering.





- Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Incorporated's National Headquarters has a new address. The offices relocated to We Works at 1440 G Street, NW, Suite 7-170, Washington, DC2005. The headquarters also has a transitional number of 202-656-1690 as leadership continues to explore a resolution in being able to keep the original phone number because of its intrinsic value to Iota.
- Iota's Lola Mercedes Parker Foundation has a new address. The offices located to 1701 Rhode island Ave NW, 2nd floor, Washington, DC 20036



## Amazon Smile

**Shop with a purpose.** Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the Lola Mercedes Parker Foundation for the Economic Empowerment of Business and Professional Women.

(Click AmazonSmile below to shop.)



Support Lola M Parker Foundation for the Economic Empowerment of Business A by shopping at AmazonSmile.  
When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon...  
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## 2020 - 2021 Epsilon Chi Executive Committee



**Donna Mitchell**  
President



**Sheri Marshall**  
Vice President



**Jana Gaskin**  
Recording Secretary



**Gloria Davis**  
Financial Secretary



**Trina Moore**  
Treasurer



**LaSandra Collins**  
Journalist



**Redessa Shaw**  
Dean of Intake

## Sorority Meeting

2nd Saturday of Every Month  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

## Epsilon Chi Chapter

P. O. Box 6398, Katy, Texas 77491

Let's stay connected:



Check out our website: [Epsilon Chi Chapter](#)

### SORORITY LEADERS



**Donna Mitchell**  
Chapter President



**Vahnita D. Loud**  
Southwestern  
Regional Director



**Dorothy White**  
23rd National President



**Lola Mercedes Parker**  
Our Founder

### Chapter Theme:

Together we are Limitless as we Imagine, Excite and Empower

### Regional Theme:

Affirming the Legacy, Bonding in Sisterhood and Committing to Business and Developing Leaders

### National Theme:

Business and Professional Women Building the Foundation for Generational Financial Empowerment

### National Headquarters:



202- 656-1690



1440 G Street NW, Suite 7-170  
Washington, D.C. 20005



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[www.iota1929.org](http://www.iota1929.org)