

MEMBERSHIP RITUALS

Initiation Into Active Membership

The ceremony is to be conducted by the following officers of the chapter: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and advisor. They should stand facing the initiates (pledges), with the initiated active members of the chapter seated behind the initiates.

If an electric emblem for initiation is available, it should be placed where everyone can view it. (Plans for constructing an electric emblem follow the Honorary Membership Ceremony). The chapter sergeant-at-arms should be positioned beside it to light it at the proper time during the ceremony.

INITIATION CEREMONY ALPHA TAU ALPHA Revised 1994

President: Standing before us are those seeking admission into Alpha Tau Alpha – National Professional Honorary Agricultural Education Organization. The purposes of the organization are best stated in the preamble to the Constitution, which the Secretary will now read.

Secretary: “In order to develop a true professional spirit among agricultural educators, we band together in this professional organization.”
I shall now ask the Advisor to give you a brief sketch of our history.

Advisor: In 1921, at the University of Illinois, under the direction and leadership of Dr. Aretas W. Nolan, Head of the Department of Agricultural Education, and fifteen of his students who became charter members of the association, Alpha Tau Alpha was organized. Today, there are 48* chapters in Alpha Tau Alpha, actively functioning in nearly that many states in their colleges and universities, and the membership is now over the 18,000* mark.

Secretary: I now ask that each pledge state your full name, age, place of birth, and background in agricultural education.

(Pledges respond individually.)

President: Before you become members of this organization, we would like to share with you the elements upon which the success of our honorable profession is based, the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. These typify the three sides of life, each in itself incomplete, but when united form an equilateral triangle symbolic of our three-sided obligation to life.

*Adjust number as new chapters are installed.

(Note: The **Sergeant-at-Arms** should light each symbol as it is described, if lighted emblem is available.)

President: The **Physical** represents the foundation for building a better life – to be sound and strong in body and health. Agriculture and natural resources are basic cornerstones in our lives. Man’s primary work is to develop, use wisely, and to conserve these resources. Necessary in this endeavor is the possession of a strong, clean and healthy body.

The **Intellectual** represents the realm of learning. In the professional studies of the teacher there is an ever-increasing body of scientific knowledge, relating to the organization of subject matter, the learning process of the mind, and the best methods of teaching. These should become the possession of those who would enter into this organization.

The **Spiritual** represents the invisible and eternal, yet real and practical. The evidence of one’s spiritual life is shown by his or her relationship to the Supreme Being and fellow individuals. Growing out of the cultured spiritual life are love, kindness, geniality, warm-hearted sympathy, purity, refinement, pleasing expression, moral courage, truthfulness, optimism, enthusiasm, reverence, and unselfish service for others.

The Treasurer will now describe the remaining portions of our emblem.

(Note: The **Sergeant-at-Arms** lights up these words and other parts of the electric symbol, if available, as they are mentioned by the Treasurer.)

Treasurer: On the emblem before you we have the symbols of our organization: the three sides of the triangle symbolize our obligation as teachers to the physical, intellectual, and spiritual attainment of life. Binding them together is our golden bond of fellowship, Alpha Tau Alpha. Within our organization a sacred meaning is attached to the following words:

Love: the attitude we should have toward our students and fellow individuals, and the acceptance of all those who live with us in this world of diversity;

Truth: the subject matter we should teach to our students; and

Virtue: the character we should exemplify before our students.

Love, Truth, and Virtue

A motto which we all hold as a standard for our lives.

Below the golden bond are two sheaves of wheat, which are symbolic of our agricultural profession. Above the golden bond is a lamp over an open book. It is the lamp of learning, which lights up the open book of wisdom. This is to remind us that we go forth as a never failing light of learning, gaining wisdom from our studies, and imparting this to our students.

President: (To the Active Members): Each of the pledges standing before you has favorably met all the qualifications for membership into this organization.

(To the Initiates): Pledges, it has been fully decided that you will be accepted as fellow members. Are you willing to make a pledge of honor? If so, answer, "I am."

Pledges (in unison): I am.

President: Raise your right hand while the Vice-President repeats the pledge to Alpha Tau Alpha.

Vice-President: I do hereby solemnly and sincerely promise that I will uphold, protect, and enforce the Constitution and By-Laws of the Alpha Tau Alpha, being loyal to its worthy members and their interests; and that I will so govern my conduct, as to honor the organization and the profession.

I sincerely and solemnly promise that as long as I am actively engaged in agricultural or extension education, I will strive for professional growth, and work for the improvement of standards of teaching among my fellow members in the profession; that I will seek to cooperate with my fellow educators, with the school authorities, and with the community where I work, in the interest of education.

I further promise that I shall strive to promote the welfare of the students under my charge and with sincerity, enthusiasm and sympathy, try to teach them to become productive members of the agricultural community and patriotic American citizens.

As a member, will you solemnly subscribe without reservation to these promises? If so, answer, "I will."

Pledges (in unison): I will

Vice-President: The oath to which you have now obligated yourself is of no slight consequence; may it ever remain with you through your teaching career and life. Let it also remind you of your obligations to this organization. From now on you shall be known as a member.

Alpha Tau Alpha welcomes you into the circle of those who aspire to enter the profession of agricultural or extension education. We believe that through mutual helpfulness, the organization will aid us toward this worthy goal.

(Optional) The members will now introduce themselves to you, indicated their home and background in agricultural education.