

Today we celebrate 154 years of Kappa Kappa Gamma. A sisterhood built upon bonds of friendship and nourished by laughter, memories, and the boldest of dreams.

Our Founders were six friends simply looking to be part of something bigger than themselves. You remember the story oft told. Lou Bennett and Jennie Boyd had a conversation on a small bridge on campus. So the story goes, their world was evolving too slowly. They wanted something more and nothing short of a Greek-letter fraternity would satisfy. Soon they brought in Minnie Stewart, Anna Willits, Lou Stevenson, and Sue Walker. By the time the charter was signed, their number totaled six. In this short time, they had tripled their circle of friendship.

When the Founders announced Kappa Kappa Gamma by wearing little keys in their hair or on their lapel, they were trailblazers. It was mostly unheard of for women at the time to form an organization, so how could a small group of schoolgirls, the oldest only 20, be so bold? And soon it seemed the little organization might not last.

In 1874, Monmouth College banned Greek-letter organizations. But despite the forced closing of Alpha Chapter, the Founders remained alumnae and friends, still bonded by Kappa Kappa Gamma. Thankfully, the story doesn't end there. Delta Chapter at Indiana University, founded in 1872, found its footing and would go on to create much of Kappa's ritual and began installing new chapters.

The sisterhood that would change women's lives for generations to come started to grow and flourish. What began as a conversation between two friends has become an international organization encompassing more than 327,000 members, 140 chapters, and 217 alumnae associations. In 1934, Kappa proudly re-established Alpha Deuteron Chapter with Lou Bennett and Lou Stevenson present. Kappa Kappa Gamma had come full circle. Today, you can visit the birthplace of Kappa and the childhood home of Founder Minnie Stewart at The Stewart House Museum in Monmouth, Illinois, preserved by the Kappa Foundation.

Now look around you. Surrounded by sisters, friends, and women who will support you as you dare to dream big. They are your biggest cheerleaders and a shoulder to lean on when you need it most. Just like our Founders, with Kappas by our side, we never walk alone. The friendships formed in Kappa are something to cherish as we embark on life's journeys. Because, remember, Kappa isn't four years, it's for a lifetime. Here's to another year of the blue and blue, the owls, keys, and fleur-de-lis. Here's to Kappa.

"Here's to all who wear a golden key, whoever they are wherever they may be. Here's to every Kappa in the land, to every member of our band. Here's to every chapter in the east or in the west, here's to that fraternity of them all the best. Kappa Kappa Gamma here's to you, here's to your dark and to your light blue. Here's to friendship great and true, oh Kappa, here's our toast to you." (Songs of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternity, 1932, p. 92)

Happy Founders Day!