

CHI SIGMA THETA

2025 ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Chi Sigs,

It has been an exceptionally wonderful year for Chi Sigma Theta!! We celebrated our 110th Anniversary celebration, were honored as presenters at the UAlbany Foundation Scholarship Luncheon, and recognized Diane Heilbrunn Reiner '68 as an Alumni Association Excellence Award recipient. Our deepest appreciation and thank you go to the Alumni Association and the UAlbany Foundation for this recognition and support. As this newsletter is dedicated to showcasing these events and the excitement that we experienced, we hope that you, too, will share in the excitement, pride and joy which we've experienced!

PLEASE NOTE: Our 110th Anniversary Celebration AND this awe-inspiring newsletter are the culmination of hard work, creativity, dedication and joy on the part of the Executive Committee and are the last large projects which we will undertake to celebrate Chi Sigma Theta. As future newsletters will be much smaller in content, an article by Stef Bollam on page 11 chronicles their creative growth over the years and celebrates this pinnacle newsletter edition.

SCHOLARSHIP: We are pleased to announce our 2025-2026 scholarship recipient is Linnette Cruz from New York City. For more detailed information on Linnette, please see page 4.

Our Chi Sigma Theta Foundation Scholarship continues to be one of the most significant scholarships offered, and that is because of YOU and your generosity. We all are so very proud of the financial impact we make on UAlbany students. Please know that your continued support of our scholarship through the UAlbany Foundation is greatly appreciated, AND this

year, we're providing an additional way to donate—a QR code and a website. See page 4 for a further details.

HOMECOMING 2025: Please join us from 10:00-12:30 at the annual Homecoming Coffee Hour Saturday, October 18, 2025 in the Campus Center Ballroom (second floor.) The Homecoming Football tailgating activities begin at 1:00 followed by the game at 3:30—both at the Tom and Mary Casey Stadium. Specially priced football packages for groups of 20 or more are offered for \$15 each. For further details and to register for either or both, please visit www.aumni.albany.edu/events (under Homecoming). You may also contact the alumni office at alumniassociation@albany.edu or (518) 442-3080.

As per tradition, our fun and delightful conversations will be followed by lunch at a local restaurant! We hope to see you then, as good times always await when Chi Sigs gather!

NEW TO THE UALBANY OFFERINGS: The Albany Lifelong Learning Institute (ALLI) will offer continuing education courses geared towards older adults and taught by current and retired UAlbany faculty. For further information, contact the UAlbany Emeritus Center.

Now, enjoy this spectacular newsletter with hopes that it brings joy, stirs many memories and refreshes bonds of friendship! I think you'll agree that Chi Sigma Theta is and always has been "the best sorority" and that our sisterhood is brimming with gracious vitality and extraordinary affection for one another.

Yours in XEO,

Ann Holcomb Fairbank '67



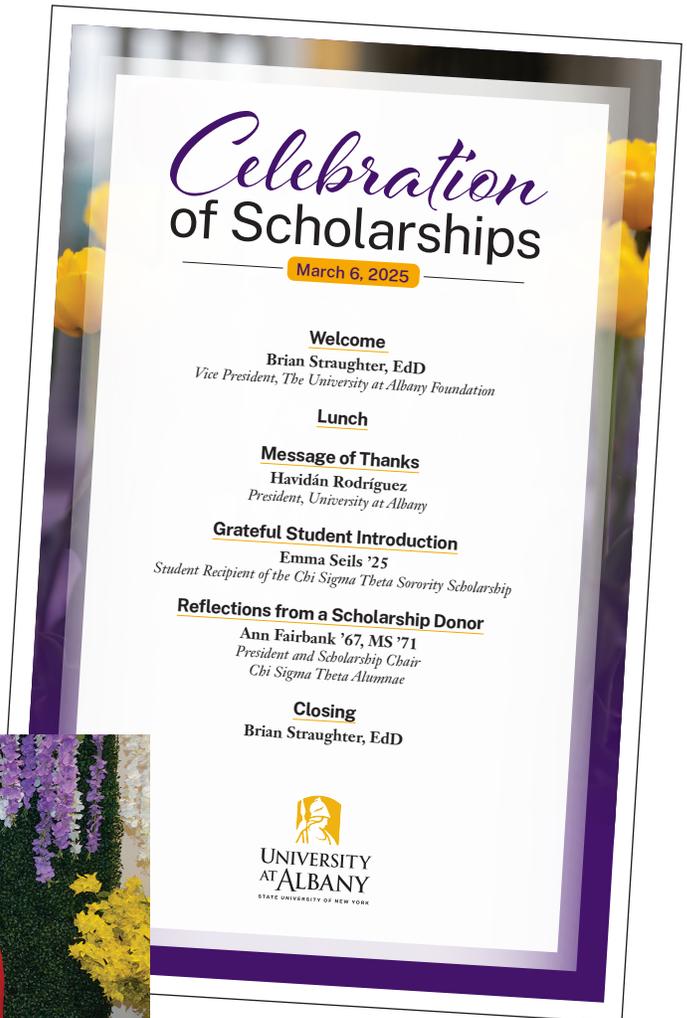
Impressive attendance at our jubilant 110th anniversary celebration during Homecoming Weekend included sisters who traveled to Albany from as faraway as the West Coast and Paris, France. Chi Sig sisters from 14 different class years, between 1957 and 1976, gathered for Saturday's luncheon at the elegant Fort Orange Club in downtown Albany. This photo is on page 35 of the Spring 2025 UAlbany Magazine.

A Special Recognition for XEO and Our Legacy Scholarship

What a proud moment for us all! This year Chi Sigma Theta was selected to be featured at the UAlbany Foundation's annual Celebration of Scholarships held at the impressive Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC), March 6, 2025.

Our president, Ann Holcomb Fairbank, delivered the inspiring keynote address after a heartfelt introduction by Emma Seils, our 2024 scholarship winner. To conclude her reflections, Ann expressed "deep pride for our UAlbany Scholarship recipients" adding that "our alumnae recognize that their undergraduate education has enabled them to live very productive lives and make valuable contributions to society. Certainly there is no greater way to show appreciation and to 'pay it forward' than by helping others and this continues to be our goal in awarding the Chi Sigma Theta Scholarship through the UAlbany Foundation."

Our sorority and its legacy were duly honored, and several Chi Sig sisters attended the University-wide event and proudly shared in the recognition on behalf of all of us!



XEO Alumnae Executive Committee with Emma Mary Kay, Ann, Emma, Debbi and Carol

Scholarship Program

Emma Seils, our 2024 Scholarship Recipient,
introducing Ann



Ann delivering "Reflections of a
Scholarship Donor" Speech



Over 150 attended the Scholarship Luncheon
in the ETEC Building

CHI SIGMA THETA OPERATING EXPENSE DONATION

Sincere *THANKS* to those of you who've helped us finance our annual operations.

Name: _____
Last
First
Maiden
Class Year

_____ Phone Email Address - **Indicate if new**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS ONLY _____
Street
City
State
Zip

Suggested Donation: \$15.00 made payable to:
Chi Sigma Theta Alumnae Association.

Send form and check to:
Carol Darby Siver, Treasurer 14 Cynthia Lane Nassau, NY 12123

Linnette Cruz '26 2025 Chi Sigma Theta Sorority Scholarship Recipient



As a New York City native and a senior in the Honors College at UAlbany, Linnette Cruz is a criminal justice major and political science minor whose eventual goal is law school and then a career in public interest law or policy reform. Currently, she is in the process of applying to UAlbany's 4+1 combined BA/MBA program in Criminal Justice.

Linnette describes her UAlbany experience as transformative both academically and socially through campus life by serving as an EMT and a member of the Board of Directors for Five Quad Volunteer Ambulance Service as well as holding leadership roles in Democracy Matters, The Pre-Law Society and the Women's Club Volleyball Team.

In expressing her thanks for the XEO Scholarship, Linnette says, "The support from this scholarship reminds me that my goals are within reach, despite financial obstacles, and I'm sincerely grateful for that encouragement . . . I appreciate this opportunity and look forward to one day being able to pay it forward."

New convenient ways to donate to the XEO Scholarship

In addition to the enclosed card and envelope, online giving is available, using the QR code below or www.albany.edu/giving/xeo

Please specify
XEO SCHOLARSHIP
when making a gift and
remember you can honor
or memorialize someone
with your donation.



Chi Sigma Theta Sorority Scholarship Honor Roll of Donors 2024-2025

A hearty THANK YOU to the following sisters, who contributed to our legacy scholarship July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

1844 Society (\$1,000+)

Barbara Fairbanks '69
Mary Margaret Welker Young '65

Minerva Club (\$500-\$999)

Stephanie DeSimone Bollam '67
Mary Furner '57
Kathleen Brown Hay '67
Canon Kay Hotaling, FHC '67
Joan Cali Pecore '60
The Rockefeller Foundation

Carillon Club (\$250-\$499)

Marcia Lembcke Bernstein '67
Catherine Bertini '71+
Doris Hische Brossy '60
Patricia Campbell '71*
Doreen Frankel '70

William Huehn
Mary Prehn '69

Albany Club (\$100-\$249)

Barbara Bender '70*
Judith Mills Bunnell '68
Deborah Bloom Cole '72 +
Marilyn Desanta DeLorenzo '57
Ann Holcomb Fairbank '67
Ingrid Mahnke Fernandez '68*
Marcia Lawrence Gauquie '57
Thomasina Pagan Hannum '56
The Hershey Company
Michele Hughes Marcil '68*
Sandra Cole McAvoy '67
Donna Baffino O'Higgins '66
Diane Heilbrunn Reiner '68
Christine Steiner Ristow '74
Carole Waldron Robinson '59

Rosemarie Vairo Rosen '68
Elizabeth Sanning '79 +
Mary Kay Sawyer '67
Kathleen Tanner '67
UNUM Corp.
Naomi McElrath Woolsey '66

Contributors Club (Under \$100)

Janet Zember Biviano '61
Carol Hrvol Flores '66
Nancy Ryan Gnan '60
Francine Naccarato '66
Cherie Pash-Corr '70
Georgiana Ryan '72

*Indicates first time donor

+Indicates gift was matched by employer

Alumni Office News

William Jimenez – A New Face in the Alumni Office



Welcome Bill Jimenez!! Hired as the Associate Director of Alumni Programs after Loida Vera Cruz retired, Bill hails from Long Island and is a product of the SUNY system!

Born to Colombian parents and bilingual in both English and Spanish, Bill was raised in West Islip, Long Island. He received his Bachelor's degree from SUNY Farmingdale with a major in

business and a concentration in sports management and was a four-year college athlete in tennis! His Master's in Higher Education Administration was earned at SUNY Stony Brook. His goal is a doctorate in Education Administration and then serving as a university president.

Bill's career has been concentrated within the SUNY system, working first at SUNY Farmingdale for seven years and then at SUNY Stony Brook as Coordinator of Alumni Relations for another seven years.

His recent move to upstate New York has brought a different pace, allowing more time for some of his many interests, including cooking, sports, traveling as well as making new friends. The change in jobs has also brought a color shift in his wardrobe — purple and gold!! Bill quickly embraced being a Great Dane, and he can be seen sporting these colors among many articles of clothing including bow ties, socks, shoes — even sunglasses!

Being a “people person,” Bill has very quickly jumped into his new duties, commenting, “working with alumni is very interesting and rewarding!” During his very busy time adjusting to his new role at UAlbany and with a welcoming smile on his face, Bill continues to meet with and support Chi Sigma Theta with our mission! We welcome Bill and wish him much happiness and success at UAlbany!

Honorary XEO Sister Loida Vera Cruz Retires

Our wishes go to Loida Vera Cruz for a happy, healthy and memorable retirement after her 16 years of work as the Associate Director of Alumni Programs!

Loida's creativity, attention to detail, communication with XEO alumnae, as well as problem solving techniques have greatly impacted Chi Sig meetings, newsletters, Homecoming events, and our milestone celebrations. Throughout these years, Loida has been a force behind much of XEO's vibrancy and legacy within the Alumni Association! How coincidental that our work relationship with Loida began in the early days of planning our 100th Anniversary XEO Celebration and concluded with her help with our 110th Anniversary Celebration. She is an amazing woman who always went “above and beyond” to help us in every way possible! As a valued friend AND an honorary XEO sister, she retires with our best wishes for much happiness in all her adventures ahead.



Many thanks to Lee Serravillo and the Alumni Association staff for their assistance at our 110th celebration and continued support of our newsletter.

Chi Sigma Theta's 110th



Friday night gathering at the Alumni House

Saturday Morning Coffee Hour at the Campus Center



Carol, Donna and Ruth



Stef and Kathy



Doreen and Diane



Debbi and Ann

Anniversary Celebration



XEO Aluminae Association Executive Committee past and present: Diane, Mary Kay, Ro, Debbi, Carol, Stef, Donna, Ann, Susan, Kathy, Kay, Carol (missing Kathy Tanner)



Luncheon place setting



Ann conducting the annual meeting

110th Chi Sigma Theta Reunion Attendees

1950s

Beth Beehler
Stefano 1957
June Burroughs 1957
Marilyn DeSanta
DeLorenzo 1957
Marcia Lawrence
Gauquie 1957
Eileen Lally
Purcell 1958
Arline Elizabeth
Whitlock 1959

1960s

Patricia Rosinski
Gregory 1963
Arlene Pacianas
Maranville 1963

Susan VanHorn
Shipherd 1964
Carol Darby Siver 1965
Gloria Aluise 1966
Michele Larocca
Nigriny 1966
Anne Luden
Latsch 1966
Carol Hrvol Flores 1966
Donna Baffino
O'Higgins 1966
Carol Castorina
Reid 1966
Naomi McGrath
Woolsey 1966
Ruth Silverman
Bald 1967
Pam Becak Fales 1967

Stephanie DeSimone
Bollam 1967
Ann Holcomb
Fairbank 1967
Kathleen Brown
Hay 1967
Canon Kay Hotaling
1967
Mary Kay Sawyer 1967
Kathleen Tanner 1967
Andrea Bologna
Dombrowski 1967
Dianne Gregory 1967
Diane Heilbrunn
Reiner 1968
Rosemarie Vairo
Rosen 1968
Elizabeth
Carrature 1969

1970s

Debra Weitz Kahn 1970
Barbara Isaacowitz
Bender 1970
Doreen Frankel 1970
Carole Clarke
Doody 1971
Joanne Kobylenski
Crawley 1972
Mary Anne Wood
Bibbo 1972
Beth Costello
Monahan 1972
Georgianna
Ryan 1972
Deborah Thorne
Mazzone 1976

Celebrating Our 110th at the Fort Orange Club



Sisters singing "Oh What's the Best Sorority"



Ro and Diane watching the fabulous slide show of old XEO photos created by Loida Vera Cruz



1950s Arline, Patty, Eileen, Marcia, Beth, Marilyn



1963-65 Carol, Pat, Arlene, Sue



Gloria, Naomi, Michele, Donna, Anne, Carol (missing Carol Castorina Reid)



Mary Kay, Ruth, Dianne, Kathy, Pam (front row)
Ann, Kay, Stef, Kathy, Andrea (rear)

110th Anniversary Celebration



1968-69 Ro, Diane, Betty



1970s Debbi, Barbara, Doreen, Carol (front row)
Debbie, Joanne, Beth, Mary Anne (rear)

Several class-of-'67 sisters gathered together Saturday evening to extend the XEO celebration activities.
Andrea, Dianne, Stef, Ruth, Kathy, Mary Kay, Pam, Ann



Class of '67 Traveling Sisters

Ruth and Kathy each traveled over 3000 miles to Albany: Ruth from France and Kathy from Washington. Pam, who lives in Colorado, hadn't been back since her graduation in 1967. We asked them, was it worth it?

Ruth: "One thing is very clear to me: the friendships we forged so long

ago erupt with passion the moment we meet again...one of the most unforgettable delights in life."

Kathy: "How did I go so long without seeing these women? It was comforting to see that my XEO sisters are still the same, still strong and curious and funny and lovable."

Pam: "Everyone was so happy to be there. We laughed, hugged, shared stories. Our being together was comfortable, seamless, as if we had just seen one another last week, a month ago, perhaps a year or two at most. Obviously, our sisterhood is forever."

Worth it without a doubt!

Another Chi Sig Sister Receives a UAlbany Excellence Award

Kudos to Diane Heilbrunn Reiner ('68) for her Excellence Award sponsored by the UAlbany Alumni Association and presented at the Awards Gala on April 26, 2025.

She joins the other seven sisters who won excellence awards over the years and who were featured in our 2022 newsletter: Catherine Bertini, Michelle Miller Bloom, Doris Hische Brossy, Sue Gaffney, Kay Hotaling, Ro Vairo Rosen and Susan Van Horn Shipherd.

An excerpt from the Gala Program: "Diane is the co-founder and executive director of Jajja's Kids which began in 2008 with the simple desire to help street children in Uganda, East Africa. Today the non-profit, named for the Ugandan expression for 'grandmother', provides a home, food, education, medical care, guidance and love for 18 Ugandan children in Kampala, the capital city."

How amazing it is seeing what blossomed from Diane's photography workshop trip to Uganda to travel and focus on photographing material for world relief organizations. She has done it all and made such a huge difference in the future of these children.

"Diane has been a beacon of light. She has given these children a chance to dream and the tools to make those dreams a reality," said Ronnie Sseruyange, Director, Jajja's Kids-Africa.



XEO Ad in the Gala Program



Diane accepting the award



Diane with Chi Sig sisters : Ann, Debbi, Carol, Stef and Mary Kay

Other XEO Alumnae News



Cathy Bertini, '71, one of Chi Sigma Theta's accomplished sisters, with esteemed recognition by the University, was unable to attend the 110th anniversary celebration, but she passed along a personal update: "I continue my role as board chair of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, supporting seed banks and vaults, including the one in Svalbard, Norway. End of 2024, finishing a three-year role in global food security with the Rockefeller Foundation."

HATS OFF TO CATHY FOR HER ONGOING, EXTRAORDINARY OUTREACH!

Our Chi Sigma Theta Newsletter

From the 1970s hand-typed edition to the recent, professional publication

As Chi Sig sisters, we have stayed in touch with one another over the years, especially through our sorority newsletter. And even though we've decided to discontinue our multi-feature publication, we'll no doubt continue to communicate with each other in one way or another.

After the mid 1980s, when the University's local sororities formally dissolved, our XEO Alumnae Association and its publication, the newsletter, became particularly important. A group of Capital Region XEO alums formed an Executive Board, and since then the members of that small board have been responsible for the ongoing newsletter.

Early on, board members personally handled every aspect of the newsletter process, including the typing and the mailing. Eventually an outside source did the newsletter's layout, and the University's Alumni Association took over its printing and the creation of address labels for our 450+ alumnae, address labels which board members have individually affixed to the copies.

At one point, two newsletter editions — spring and fall — were mailed out, often with a full page of sisters' marriage and birth announcements as well as news about advanced degrees and job promotions. Increasingly, those announcements were replaced with retirement and travel plans, grandchildren's achievements, and nostalgic reminiscences

about sisters who have passed away. In 2015, we consolidated to a single, annual edition and began spotlighting especially noteworthy Chi Sig alums.

The regular highlight of our newsletter, to introduce the XEO scholarship recipient, began with our local award in 1992 and continued when we transferred the Chi Sigma Theta Scholarship to the UAlbany Foundation in 2014. Each year since then we've showcased the outstanding, new recipient and have often provided updates on former recipients. Frequent and generous contributions to the scholarship from our loyal Chi Sig alums not only sustain this impressive legacy but have significantly increased it.

Producing the sorority newsletter has been a rewarding, collaborative effort, and we're so happy to feature multiple photos of our 110th anniversary celebration in this expanded edition. We've been blessed to have willing and capable alums create the newsletter's content and the University's Alumni Association print and mail out the 450+ copies these many years.

Our XEO website, the Alumni Association, and the UAlbany Foundation will continue to be helpful sources of information for our sorority alums. We encourage you to use them to stay connected to the University, XEO and each other.

MEETING - 11:00 a.m.
COCKTAILS - 12:00 noon
LUNCHEON - 1:00 p.m.

VALLE'S STEAK HOUSE
SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1974
\$5 - (incl. tax & grat.)

chi sigma theta



alumnae news

Fall 2000/Spring 2001



CHI SIGMA THETA

2025 ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Historian

Stef DeSimone Bollam '67
UAlbany Liaison

Donna Baffino O'Higgins '66
Newsletter Coordinator

Kay Hotaling '67
Advisor



On Friday afternoon, many sisters enjoyed a guided tour of the impressive state of the art Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC), opened in 2021.

2025 Chi Sigma Theta Newsletter

Website: chisigmatheta.com | Facebook: Chi Sigma Theta