



## **Dorothy Bennett Robinson, Pi**



When Dorothy Bennett Robinson accepted the office of National President, she fully realized the responsibility of continuing the quality of leadership set by her predecessors. Although she too left us a rich heritage, most of it is in accomplishments never acknowledged. She disliked writing, speaking, and making personal appearances before large groups, but her philosophy is well expressed in her message to the membership in the first organizational issue of *The Anchor* in 1952:

*"Every few years we like to review the whole picture of Alpha Sigma Tau, compare the structure of today with that of former years, evaluate its program of activities, and discover whether or not we are traveling along the road our Founders dreamed of for us. If we find that we have been faithful to our purpose we can be proud of our achievements; but we cannot say, 'This is fine; we have arrived; now we can rest!' In our satisfaction with results, however, we are encouraged to make even greater efforts for success.*

*Let us hope that our success and usefulness will be measured by an increasing number of members who find the answer to their need for close companionship, devotion to mutual interests and goals, and loyalty to a cause in Alpha Sigma Tau.*

*The organization is the means, not the end. Strength lies in the personal touch sparked by the organization's program."*

Alpha Sigma Tau has been fortunate to receive Dorothy's personal touch.

As soon as the establishment of the Central Office in St. Louis had been completed, Dorothy and Lillian Schippers, National Editor, began planning an organizational issue of *The Anchor*, a project completed in 1952.

Another goal set by Dorothy and the National Council was the preparation of a National Sorority Directory, a project completed in 1954. An issue of *The Anchor* was dedicated to the National Alumnae Representatives, *"those devoted members who serve as a link between the local and national aspects of our ever-widening sisterhood."*

Preparation of the Directory required the cooperation of all the Alumnae Representatives and many volunteer workers in the Central Office. Continued maintenance of the complete files was a major project, but without this thorough beginning and the volunteer assistance of many St. Louis alumnae to keep the files updated, the Central Office would have been unable to provide many of the services which we have come to accept as routine.

One of the original members of Rho Phi Gamma, a local sorority at Harris Teachers College, Dorothy became a charter member of the Pi Chapter when it was officially installed in 1930. During her senior year, Dorothy was selected as May Queen, a distinctive recognition on campus. She graduated with honors. As an active member of the collegiate chapter, Dorothy was equally involved in the organization of the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter and accepted her first appointment to the National Staff as National Program Chairman in 1938. Two years later, she was elected National Vice President of the Southwestern District and served for two years. She was re-elected in 1944, serving until 1949 when she became National President.

During these terms as National Vice President and Organizer, as well as National President, Dorothy was actively involved in the establishment of several collegiate and alumnae chapters. Collegiate Chapters installed in her district during this period include Phi, Omega, Alpha Gamma, Alpha Delta, and Alpha Epsilon. Following her retirement as National President, Dorothy served on the National Council as Executive Secretary until 1959.

Dorothy's personal life as well as her sorority life was filled with service activities. Three years following her college graduation, she married Carl Robinson. The Robinsons were active members of St. John's Methodist Church, and Dorothy served as President of both the Woman's Society of Christian Services and the Mothercraft Class. With both parents accomplished musicians, it was natural that their three children also became proficient instrumentalists and music lovers. The family involvement in the St. Louis Philharmonic Orchestra was the topic of an article in *Time* magazine from November 1959:

*"Whole families often play with the Philharmonic. S. Carl Robinson, vice president of the St. Louis transit system, plays the second flute while his wife is timpanist and their 23-year-old son a French horn player."*

Dorothy also served as ticket manager and Stephen, their youngest son, later joined the orchestra. Although Susan did not play with the Philharmonic, she was an accomplished pianist and frequently played with the family.

On May 12, 1970, Dorothy died after a brief illness. The memorial announcement in *The Anchor*, spring 1970, served to recall her influence on Alpha Sigma Tau:

*"Those of us who were privileged to know and work with Dorothy will remember her for her warm affection, keen sense of humor, and complete dedication to the service of mankind. All*

*Alpha Sigma Taus can be prouder and happier in their membership because of the example she set. Her influence ... her ideas... her ideals have been projected toward the future to live forever in the lives of others. We are grateful for the privilege of her friendship."*

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*Positions held:* Planning Committee for Nationalization (1924 - 1925); National Treasurer (1925 - 1934); National President (1934 - 1949); NPC Representative (1947 - 1967); National Secretary (1952 - 1960); Director of Publications (1960 - 1976); Board of Trustees (1990 - 2001)

*Honors received:* Ada A. Norton Award Recipient (1949); President Emerita (1970); Alumnae Top Tau (1990)