I Caught the Fire

1991 Southwest Regional Conference, Kansas City, Missouri

Ruth Johnson, International Research Committee Member

(Each participant should have a candle and a large candle in a holder representing the Founders be placed on a front table. The text can be cut to accommodate anywhere from one to six readers.)

Speaker 1:

I Caught the Fire

I caught the fire from those who went before,

The bearers of the torch who could not see

The goal to which they strained. I caught their fire

And carried it, only a little way beyond;

But there are those who wait for it, I know,

Those who will carry it on to victory.

These lines are from a poem called, “The Torchbearers” by Alfred Noyes. “I caught the fire from those who went before.” Frequently, we women of the 1990s (can be updated) assume that we have little in common with our 12 founders whose lives revolved around the decades of the 20s and 30s. How do we “catch the fire from those who went before?” when six decades separate our lives from theirs? The eleven women who accepted Dr. Annie Webb Blanton’s invitation on May 11, 1929, shared many interests—both professionally and personal---just as we today are drawn together in our membership in Delta Kappa Gamma. Of course, we realize that we all share the common title of “educator” just as the founders did, but even more specifically, let us discover today in what individual ways each of us is like our founders. How natural is it for us to perpetrate this fire when we today share so many characteristics and experiences with these women.

Speaker 2: (This is very unlikely so you can skip this part).

With all of you who had the good fortune to actually know one of our twelves founders please stand How privileged you were to have “caught the fire” directly from your personal association with these women. Pick up our torch, and from the flame symbolizing the 12 founders, catch that fire and remain standing.

Speaker 3:

Those of you are now or have ever been teachers of grades 1, 2, or please stand. You share the professional experiences of five of our founders. Mamie Sue Bastian, Ruby Cole, Cora Martin, Lella Odom, and Lela Lee Williams. Stand if you taught grades 4, 5, or 6 for you have a professional bond with Mabel Grizzard and Ray King.

Helen Koch coordinated a nursery a school. Join those standing if you are or have been a Kindergarten teacher shared with our founders.

Speaker 4:

Just as many of us are not limited to membership in professional organizations, neither were our founders. Stand if you share Dr. Blanton’s and Ruby Lomax’s interest in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mabel Grizzard was honored with a Life Membership in the P.T.A. Join those standing if you too have this honor, and light your torch from one nearby.

Several of our founders taught on the secondary level of education. Stand if you have shared any of these teaching fields with the founders: Dr. Annie Webb Blanton taught English, Ruby Lomax and Sue King taught Latin, math was the specialty of Lella Odom, both Kings were teachers of history. By adding the light from your torch, notice how the glow of shared experiences has intensified,

Speaker 2:

How did some of the founders fill their leisure time? Stand if you, too, enjoy hobbies- as Ruby Cole and Sue King did- or if you enjoy playing the piano as Helen Koch did – or if you studied violin as Ruby Terrill Lomax did.

Look around you! Do you see how many of us have similar personal experiences with these seemingly impersonal individuals—our founders?

Many of you have experienced professional growth and led to leadership positions, and so did our founders. Please stand if your advancement matches any of the founders” Ruby Cole and Mabel Grizzard became elementary principals, Ray King, Sue King, and Lalla Odom became chairman of their respective departments. AS a counselor Ruby Terril Lomax served as a collegiate Dean of Women.

Stand and “catch the fire” if you share with the founders their love of leadership and the value, they placed on friendships fostered by Delta Kappa Gamma.

Speaker 1:

We are united with our founders because of our shared experiences. Notice how the original soft glow representing the 12 founders has intensified into a powerful flame which we must use to ignite the torches of our successors in Delta Kappa Gamma Society.

I caught the fire

And carried it, only a little way beyond:

But there are those who wait for it, I know,

Those who will carry it on to victory.

As we remain standing, extinguish your symbolic torch, we realize that Dr. Annie Webb Blanton’s original torch of unity will forever burn brightly. (Continue to stand)

George Bernard Shaw understood this symbolic idea when he wrote:

Life is no brief candle to me.

It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got bold of far the moment,

And I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to

Future generations.

(It was suggested that the song Founders, Lead Us Onward, by Rosalena C. Neumann be sung at the end. Not sure if this song is still around. Ceremonies Chairman does have a copy of the music and can send to you upon request.)

Relationships Create the Heart of the Society

A Founders’ Tribute

Bess Church McDonald, Iota Pi, 1992

(There are many ways to showcase the names of the founders. One suggestion is a heart shaped box. In the box is a white rose with a streamer for each founder. Each streamer has a name of one of the founders. Another idea given was a circular wreath. When each founder is presented a red or white rose is added to the wreath.)

1. Vision: Dr. Annie Webb Blanton

Dr. Blanton’s vision and dream were to see women in roles of leadership in the field of education. Dr. Blanton made wise choices in selecting those who would help in organizing a Society for women educators. All were leaders in their localizations and each had her own value.

1. Victory: Mamie Sue Bastian

An elementary principal with a warm, outgoing personality, a sense of humor, and her ability to make friends made her victorious in dealing with common problems.

1. Justice: Ruby Cole

An elementary principal who gave dedicated service to committee work. She set an example of thoroughness in everything she did.

1. Sacrifice: Mable Grizzard

An upper elementary grade teacher and principal, she was rated by her pupils as an outstanding, understanding, and giving teacher.

1. Unity: Dr. Anna Hiss

Professor of physical education at the University of Texas she was tall, graceful, charming, and cultured. She had a special ability to work with others.

1. Hope: Ray King

She was a fifth and sixth grade teacher, a woman of great poise and composure. She gave hope t those who looked to her for guidance.

1. Faith: Sue King

As a teacher of history and Latin, she was an excellent scholar and a good leader. She showed faith in her students’ abilities.

1. Love: Dr. Helen Koch

A teacher of psychology, she was known as a teacher who learned along wither students. Hereby, giving the ultimate …. Love of knowledge.

1. Growth: Ruby Terrill Lomax

Educator of classical languages and Dean of Women at the University of Texas, she was known as a warm, understanding and scholarly professor. She inspired growth and integrity.

1. Courage: Dr. Cora M. Martin

She was an elementary educator. She was known to have the courage to bring out the best in every child. She wrote several children’s books.

1. Loyalty: Lalla M. Odom

As mathematics and music teacher, she maintained a long, loyal vigilance to preserve the essential characteristics of the Society.

1. Patience: Lela Lee Williams

An elementary educator of speech, she welcomed different opinions. She honored other people’s view point sand used patience in working with groups.

1. Dr. Eula Lee Carter, Honorary Founder

She is known to us as The Skipper. She was a Spanish teacher at TCU for many years. She gave inspiration, Encouragement leadership and service. As she was the State Expansion chairman for many years. She was responsible for over 200 of our Texas Chapters.

1. Dr. Clara M. Parker, Honorary Founder

She sought to acquire and give knowledge and understanding. Thus, setting an example for us to follow.

These 12 Founders and 2 Honorary Founders make our circle complete; this is our circle of unity. Dr. Blanton’s dream has come true in many ways. We have these virtues, and I will name each again:

Vision, victory, justice, sacrifice, unity, hope, faith, love, growth, courage, loyalty, and patience. May they ever be instilled in each of hearts as we pay special tribute to them.

(Close with the singing of the Delta Kappa Gamma song)