



# THE ODYSSEY

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR  
AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER  
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

MAY 2023

## Presidential Press

Vol. 9

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Sorors, don't forget our  
**2023 Annual Chapter Photo**  
is at 9:00 a.m. on **Saturday,**  
**May 6** prior to our May  
Chapter Meeting at 10 a.m.  
Our in-person location is at  
**LBJ High School (7309 Lazy**  
**Creek Drive, Austin, Texas**  
**78724)**

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens. In this season of Delta Sorors, we have loved on each other, we have worked in the community, and we have placed recognizable footprints in the Austin area. As we bring this sorority year to an end, I charge you Sorors to take this time of respite to refuel your tanks and prepare for the upcoming Biennium.

If I spoke Spanish I would say Gracias, if I spoke French, I would say Merci, if I spoke German I would say Danke, and if I spoke Italian, I would say Grazie. But in my native language Sorors I will simply say Thank You! Thank you for all that you have done in this biennium to ensure that Austin Alumnae continues to make a recognizable footprint in this community. Thank you for allowing me to lead this chapter for this past biennium. And thank you, thank you, thank you for entrusting me to serve again as the Austin Alumnae Chapter President for the 2023-2025 Biennium. Thanks to all of the candidates that bravely stood up and said "I am willing to serve". Congratulations to all the sorors that have been elected to serve in this next season. I am looking forward to working with each of you. I have learned a lot over these past two years and have identified opportunities for us to grow. We will work over the next few months to prepare for the next sorority year.

Sorors, it is time to do your part to help us finish strong this year. Join us for "It is on and Poppin" Double Good Fundraiser as we work to raise funds for our programs. This fundraiser is only four (4) days from May 4 at 5:00 p.m. to May 8 at 5:00 p.m. Share with your friends, family, and social media networks (details included in this Odyssey). We will have our second **REQUIRED DID** training on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. (registration details forthcoming). **We must have a quorum.**

Sorors, we will see you at the final chapter meeting on May 6. Please be there at 9:00 a.m. so we can take the chapter picture at 9:15 a.m. We ask that you stay after for fellowship and recognition.

All of my love,

*Soror Robin Blackmon*



## Chaplain's Message

Shared by Chaplain, Soror Dedurie V. Kirk

### It's Your Call

There is a call on your life. It is a call to serve humanity. God called you and gifted you. God equipped you to serve those who will benefit by your service, those who can't reward you or pay you back for favors.

God called you to serve and gave you the passion filled heart to fulfill the call.

To serve this present age,

My calling to fulfill;

Oh, may it all my pow'rs engage

To do my Master's will!

You are called to: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)

There's a call on your life. But it's your call to answer.



## Prayer Corner

Members are encouraged to send cards, visit (if allowed by the family), or telephone sorors for additional courtesies. Sorors, please continue to lift the following in fervent prayer:

- Soror Delois Hall and family for the passing of her Brother-in-Law;
- Soror Lisa Newman as she recovers from surgery;
- The Husband of Soror Gloria Williams as he was taken to the emergency room and for continued health challenges;
- Soror LaKeisha Crenshaw and family as they continue to support and care for her Father;
- Soror Cathy Ellison and family for the passing of her Nephew;
- Soror Polly Street for general support and prayers;
- Soror Audrey Washington for ongoing health challenges;
- Soror Kerri Lang for health and healing; and
- Soror Sandra "FeFe" McCrary-Marshall for health and healing.

Sorors, tap the enclosed link to submit your prayer requests and bereavement notices,

<https://dstatx.org/contact-page/pb-request-form/>

## April Omega Omega Assignments

Soror Kennedy Thompson  
through Soror Kendra Wesson



# *This Month's Highlights*

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

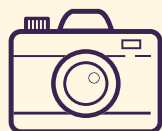
### Our 2023 Annual Chapter Photo!

**Please arrive at 9:00 a.m. for our annual chapter photo.**

Attire is Black with African Violet corsage. We will take our photo at 9:15 a.m. There will be opportunity to take your self-paid headshot, immediately following the May Chapter meeting.

#### Headshot details include:

- Will begin approximately at 11:45 (if meeting has concluded) or immediately following the Chapter Meeting;
- SignUp Genius available but same-day walk-up appointments accepted, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904094BADAA2DAAFB6-individual>;
- Headshot Steps: 1.) Complete headshot form on-site (name, email), 2.) Pose for 3 headshots, 3.) Pay Mr. Spivey, and 4.) Allow 2-3 days for receipt of retouched headshots;
- Photos will be taken with a crimson background in 2 minute intervals;
- Services Available: \$35 - 3 Headshots retouch;
- Payment due at time of services: Acceptable forms of Payment: Cash, Cashapp, Venmo or Zelle NO CHECKS;
- One-time, day-of Chapter meeting offer- No reschedules. 2-minute interval per headshot. Headshots only; no full body; and
- Contact Sorors Belinda Williams, Pam Sherman and Pam Dacus with any questions.



*Smile, sorors!*

# This Month's Highlights

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS



### Purchase Your 56th National Convention Scarf & Fan

Austin Alumnae will be accepting payments for the 56th National Convention Scarf and Fan set by May 6, 2023 (last chapter meeting).

The cost is \$35. Payments may be made three ways:

1. **Pay by Mail:** Make your payment payable to Austin Alumnae Chapter or AAC. Mail your payment to the Chapter's P.O. Box (Austin Alumnae Chapter of DST, P. O. Box 143381, Austin, TX 78714);
2. **Pay by PayPal:** <https://dstatx.org/buy-now/> (\$35 each plus tax and fees); or
3. **May Chapter Meeting.**



# *This Month's Highlights*

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

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### News from our Social Action Committee!

The Social Action Sub Committee is collecting new baby items for CommUnityCare Health Centers. CommUnityCare Health Centers serves pregnant women who have been identified as higher risk due to social determinants of health. CommUnityCare Health Centers works with several programs including GALS Austin and Black Mamas ATX. We are collecting new donations of onesies, bibs, mittens, swaddling blankets, newborn hats, breast-feeding supplies, breast pads, baby bottles, baby thermometers, newborn diapers, diaper cream and wipes and unscented shampoo, body wash and lotions. and other maternal supplies. **Purchased items can be dropped off at the Austin Delta Foundation House on Saturday May 20, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

We are Social Action - CommUnityCare Health Centers helps to provide doula services and are following legislation regarding maternal mortality and morbidity. In Nov. 2022 HB 465 was introduced and passed the House and is moving to the Senate. HB 12, which provides twelve months of postpartum care for Medicaid mothers. The year of care is recommended by the committee organized to help lower Texas's number of deaths among new mothers. Texas Medicaid mothers currently receive two months of postpartum care. Contact your Senator to support the twelve months of care. Additional legislation that has provisions for maternal mortality and morbidity in HB 1958 was introduced in February and would include a number of provisions aimed at addressing maternal mortality and morbidity in the state, including creating a Medicaid doula pilot program in the most populous county in the state, and the county with the highest maternal health support needs, as determined by the maternal and infant mortality rates and number of Medicaid funded births. The pilot would start no later than 9/1/2024 and conclude on 9/1/2029. The legislation includes a requirement for reporting and evaluation of the pilot. SB 71 relating to the expansion of eligibility for Medicaid to certain individuals under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Contact your Legislator to support these bills, which seek to expand services provided under Medicaid to women following pregnancy. **Please contact Soror Paulette Walls if you have any questions (512.663.5850).**

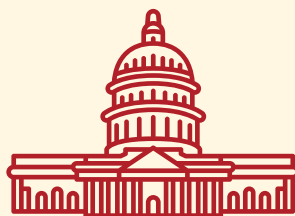
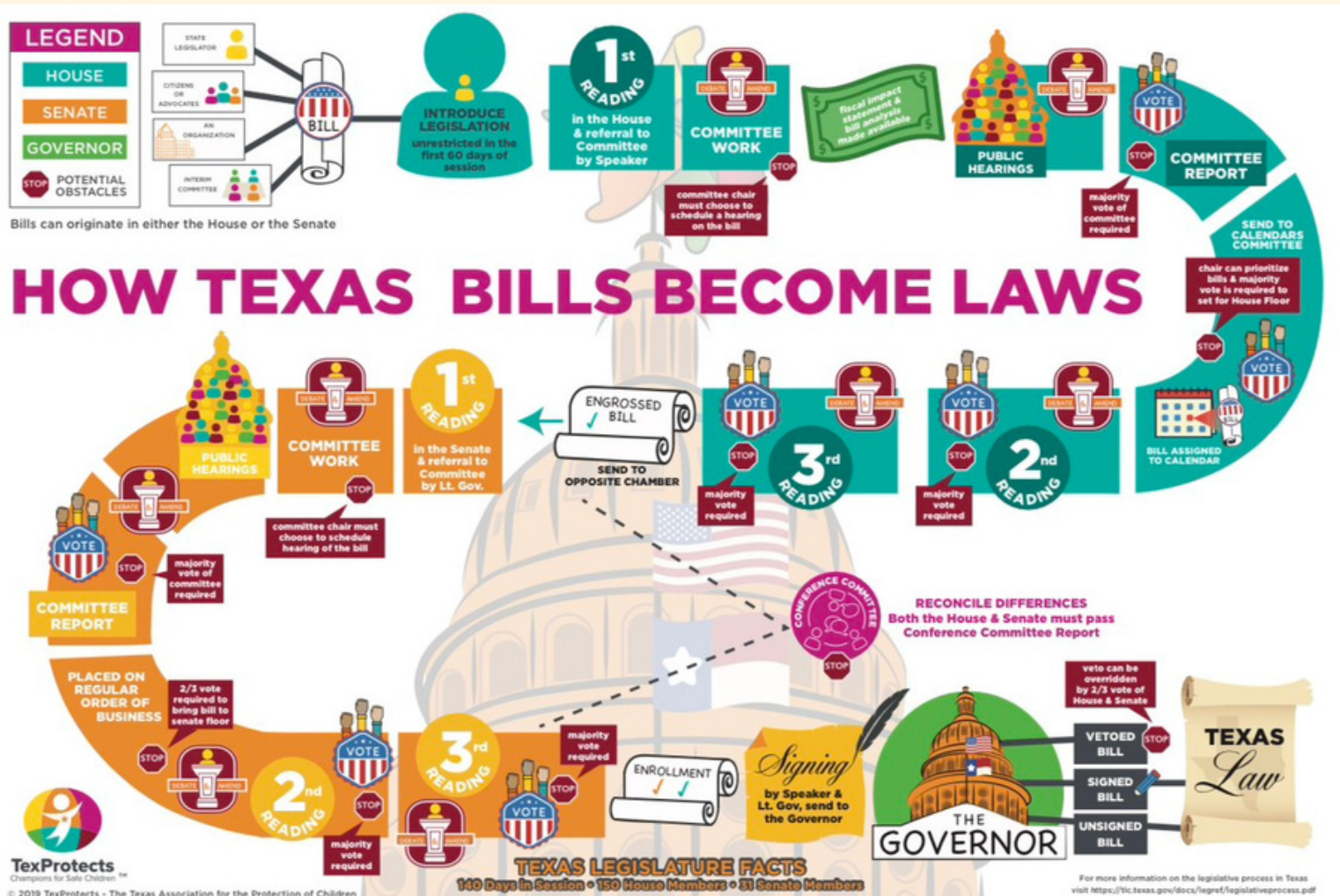
Sorors, can order needed items directly through the Amazon Wish List, [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/17E1Y90YS8MR1?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/17E1Y90YS8MR1?ref_=wl_share)

# This Month's Highlights

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

News from our Social Action Committee!

### The More You Know: How Texas Bills Become Laws!





# *This Month's Highlights*

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

### News from our Educational Development Committee!

The HBCU College tour hosted by the educational development committee was a resounding success! The partnership with the Gamma Eta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., was a great success as we were able to host both male and female youth on this tour. Congratulations on an incredibly impactful tour that culminated in several student participants receiving college scholarships and declaring their attendance at an HBCU, upon high school graduation! Thanks to the chapter and individual sorors for the financial support that made this trip affordable for all of the students. We are getting ready for 2024!



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!



## 2023 HBCU COLLEGE TOUR!



# *This Month's Highlights*

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

News from our Educational Development Committee!





# This Month's Highlights

## NEWS FROM OUR ARTS & LETTERS COMMITTEE

The May book selection is "**Black Cake: A Novel**" by **Charmaine Wilkerson**. The meeting is scheduled for May 20 at The Black Pearl Bookstore (7112 Burnet Rd.) from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.



### ABOUT BLACK CAKE

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Two estranged siblings delve into their mother's hidden past—and how it all connects to her traditional Caribbean black cake—in this immersive family saga, “a character-driven, multigenerational story that’s meant to be savored” (Time).

“Wilkerson transports you across the decades and around the globe accompanied by complex, wonderfully drawn characters.”—Taylor Jenkins Reid, New York Times bestselling author of *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, *Daisy Jones & The Six*, and *Malibu Rising*

In development as a Hulu original series produced by Marissa Jo Cerar, Oprah Winfrey (Harpo Films), and Kapital Entertainment

ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: Oprah Daily, NPR, BuzzFeed, Glamour, PopSugar, Book Riot, She Reads

**The Folktales Book Club will read the following books this summer:**

- 5/19 ALL THAT SHE CARRIED: THE JOURNEY OF ASHLEY'S SACK, A BLACK FAMILY KEEPSAKE – Tiya Miles
- 6/16 IN OUR SHOES: ON BEING A YOUNG BLACK WOMAN IN NOT-SO “POST-RACIAL” AMERICA – Brianna Holt
- 7/21 BLACK CANDLE WOMEN – Diane Marie Brown

To join the Folktales Book Club, email Peggy Terry at [folktaleslitsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:folktaleslitsociety@hotmail.com).

### **Austin African American Book Festival**

The 17th annual Austin African American Book Festival ([www.aaabookfest.org](http://www.aaabookfest.org)) is scheduled for Saturday, June 24 at the George Washington Carver Complex (Library & Museum).





# This Month's Highlights

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS



It's On & Poppin' fundraiser begins Thursday, May 04, at 5:00 p.m.  
and ends Monday, May 08, at 5:00 PM

### Instructions to create your store:

1. Download Double Good App on your phone for iPhones (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/double-good/id1401184723>) and for Android phones ([https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.doublegood.nativeapp&hl=en\\_US&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.doublegood.nativeapp&hl=en_US&gl=US)); and
2. Add Code LDM EWD

If 150 Sorors sell \$500 in popcorn AAC would profit \$37,500; and  
If 150 Sorors sell \$750 in popcorn AAC would profit \$56,250!

Prizes will be given to the Top 3 Sellers!



# *This Month's Highlights*

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

### Historical Heritage and Archives Committee Request!



Sorors, the Historical Heritage and Archives committee needs your help finding these two pictured items: (1) A similar street sign was removed from the ADF house and the sign has not been returned (top photo); and (2) It is a painted picture of our Delta Sigma Theta Sorority shield on a canvas frame. We don't know when the painting was removed, but it was previously hanging in the room where the metal shelving unit is located. The painting may have been used for an event and mistakenly never returned (bottom photo). HHA is requesting that you look to see if this painting is in your possession and return it to us. You can contact us at [dstatx.ha@gmail.com](mailto:dstatx.ha@gmail.com).



# This Month's Highlights

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

News from Membership Services, Membership Spotlight!

### *Congratulations, Soror Newman!*

*Nina Newman*



*Graduate  
Spotlight*

Major:

Master of Science in  
Biotechnology

Hometown:

New Orleans, LA

High School:

Liberal Arts and Science  
Academy (LASA)

Favorite Color

Purple

Favorite Artist:

Ariana Grande

Favorite Movie:

2 Fast 2 Furious

Favorite Animal:

Jaguar

What was your favorite class?

Advanced Nucleic Acids Lab with Dr. Ramos. Designing a project proposal was a fun way to test our scientific writing and research synthesis skills. It also allowed us to construct our own experiment from start to finish and explain why our project and methodology could have real world applications.

What are your career goals?

I am still figuring that one out! I'm interested in going into Research & Development sectors related to immunology and molecular diagnostic products since I've enjoyed doing research in those fields.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

Being an overpowered telepath like Jean Grey.

What Advice would you give the Incoming Freshmen?

Build a network among upperclassmen and freshmen who have taken previous classes! Navigating a challenging major is hard enough, but it helps to stay in contact with people who will inevitably be taking the same classes with you throughout your UTSA career. Connection and mentorship are long-term keys to success in school and in life!

**UTSA** Integrative Biology  
College of Sciences





# This Month's Highlights

## AUSTIN ALUMNAE CHAPTER NEWS

The poster features a background image of the Austin skyline with the Water Tower. Overlaid on this is a document titled 'S. 2048' with text about a bill to prohibit discrimination in employment. The document also mentions 'Mr. Downey, Mr. Wagner, Mr. Mr.' and 'introduced the following bill; which'.

**LDF** Legal Defense Fund 

# TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION PLANNING MEETINGS

HOSTED BY LDF IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TEXAS NAACP  
**EVERY 2<sup>ND</sup> THURSDAY AT 11AM**

**CASEY THOMAS**  
POLITICAL ACTION CHAIR  
IS INVITING YOU TO  
A SCHEDULED ZOOM MEETING

EVERY MONTH ON THE **2<sup>ND</sup> THURSDAY**,  
UNTIL **JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>**, 6 OCCURRENCE(S)

- Jan. 12th @ 11:00 AM
- Feb. 9th @ 11:00 AM
- Mar. 9th @ 11:00 AM
- Apr. 13th @ 11:00 AM
- May 11th @ 11:00 AM
- June 8th @ 11:00 AM

 **zoom**

Meeting ID: 894 1259 4317  
Passcode: 909696

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
EMAIL: CASEYT1911@GMAIL.COM | PHONE: 214-422-9710

NAACPLDF.ORG | TEXAS-NAACP.ORG | FOLLOW US:   

# *This Month's Highlights*

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY



Greater Austin Section  
**ncnw**  
commitment | unity | self reliance

You Are Cordially Invited To A

## *Membership Tea*

to celebrate & learn more about the

**National Council of Negro Women, Inc.**

**Greater Austin Section**

**Sunday, June 25, 2023 • 3:00 P.M.**

**Ebenezer Baptist Church Family Life Center**

**1014 East 10th Street Austin, Texas 78702**

**Program Theme:**

**“Reclaiming, Renewing, Rebuilding,  
For A Powerful Future”**

**Life Member Recognition • Scholarship Awards Presentation**

**Affiliate Table Decor Contest • Hat Parade • Vendors •**

**Door Prizes & More!**

RSVP by June 18th to [info@ncnwgreateraustin.org](mailto:info@ncnwgreateraustin.org)

For more information about this event or membership in  
NCNW Greater Austin Section, please contact Melinda Walker,  
2nd Vice President & Membership Tea Chair at (512) 293-6554.



# This Month's Highlights

## NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY



PRESENTS

# FRIDAY NIGHT FUN TIME

INVITING ALL GREEKS AND FRIENDS

**FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2023  
8:30PM**

**HOLIDAY INN MIDTOWN  
6000 MIDDLE FISKSVILLE RD  
AUSTIN, TX 78752**

**SUBSCRIPTION: \$20**

Food, Fun Games, Stepping and Struts

DELTA SIGMA THETA	ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA	ALPHA PHI ALPHA
PHI BETA SIGMA	SIGMA GAMMA RHO	KAPPA ALPHA PSI
OMEGA PSI PHI	ZETA PHI BETA	IOTA PHI THETA

## 2nd Annual Texas Iotas CookOWT!

Last year's CookOWT was such a success (sold-out) we didn't hesitate to run it back this year. Join us on Saturday, July 15, at Harker Heights Community Park from 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. This year's event will be more entertaining. The Who Run It Yard Show is a winner take all competition we're inviting all NPHC organizations to participate in. Following the CookOWT at the Killeen Civic Center is Polos & Sundresses: A Summer Soiree. Leave the kids at home and enjoy an evening for the grown and sexy. Proceeds from the CookOWT are used to fund the Brown & Gold Scholarship awarded annually to graduating high school seniors. Purchase tickets here, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-texas-iota-cookowt-registration-604768066567>

# This Month's Highlights

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Are you looking for a  
**SUMMER JOB?**



**FREE**  
for all  
High School  
Students



**REGISTER NOW:**

## SUMMER CAREER EXPO & JOB FAIR

*Developing our Future Workforce*



**THURSDAY**  
**MAY 18, 2023**  
4pm - 8pm



3001 Kalahari Blvd, Round Rock, TX

**COMMUNITY EVENT**  
CONNECTING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
WITH LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FOR MORE INFO:

[shatch@laddersforleaders.org](mailto:shatch@laddersforleaders.org) --- [www.LaddersforLeaders.org](http://www.LaddersforLeaders.org)

# This Month's Highlights

## NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY



LADDERS FOR LEADERS

SUMMER

**CAREER EXPO & JOB FAIR***Developing our Future Workforce*

Ladders for Leaders is hosting our 1st Career Exploration & Summer Job Fair at Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Round Rock on Thursday 5/18 from 4p – 8p. >>>>>Registration is **FREE** for all high school students!

### KEY NOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Octavious Bishop

- Former NFL athlete, Professor, Counselor, Entrepreneur, Consultant, & Inspirational Leader
  - Inspires students with hope and ways to avoid identity issues during major life transitions



### EMPLOYER BOOTHS

- Meet with local businesses who are looking to hire high school students for summer, part-time or full-time jobs
  - Network for future opportunities



### EXPERT PANEL DISCUSSIONS

- Learn about different careers from local professions working in various industries
  - Live Q & A



**REGISTER NOW**  
**FREE** for all High  
School Students



FOR MORE INFO:

[shatch@laddersforleaders.org](mailto:shatch@laddersforleaders.org) ----- [www.LaddersforLeaders.org](http://www.LaddersforLeaders.org)





# *Membership Spotlight*

## *Happy Birthday, Sorors!*

Happy Birthday to our May birthdays!

05/03: Syerra Cunningham & Shanteka Sigers

05/06: Celeste Williams

05/07: Carla Emery-Culberson, Kailee Norman, & Kimberly Whitlock

05/09: Regina Patridge & Nancy Thompson

05/11: LaTasha Dennis-Pickett, Christien Rawlins, & Lenora D. Waters

05/12: Jailyynn McCowan, Timesha Moten-Tibbs, & Tausha Robertson

05/14: Melinda Murphy & Sonja Prevo

05/15: Lisa Horton

05/19: Tiana Brockington-Robertson

05/21: Dominique Williams

05/22: Mary Jackson

05/24: Delois Hall

05/25: Cathy Ellison, Betty Hudspeth, Tanisa Jeffers-Bernard, &  
Carlisha Robinson

05/28: Stacey Cleveland

05/29: Demitra Alexander



# Soror Scrapbook!

A few of our favorite photos from this past month!  
Sorors, please email your wonderful photos to  
[dstatxphotos@gmail.com](mailto:dstatxphotos@gmail.com).



Beautiful



# *Soror Scrapbook!*

A few of our favorite photos from this past month!  
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# *Soror Scrapbook!*

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# *Austin Alumnae Leadership Team*

## 2022-2023 Committee Chairs

### Economic Development

Sylvia Holt-Rabb & Avis Gipson

### Educational Development

Tiffany Tillis-Lewis & Bethany Bell

### International Awareness & Involvement

Dena Bryant & Akeshia Johnson Smothers

### Physical and Mental Health

Courtney Nolan & April Brisco

### Political Awareness and Involvement/

### Social Action

Celeste Williams & Veronica Johnson

### Arts and Letters

Jonna LaGrone-Haynes & Stacey Cleveland

### Risk Management Coordinator

Dewi Smith

### Internal Audit

Julie Dixon-Cartwright

### Rituals and Ceremonies

Michelle Scruggs

### Technology

Kathryn Foster & Khaison Reed

### Emergency Response

Suzanne Piper & Tonja Walls-Davis

### Founders Day

Sheldy Starkes & Donna Jackson

### National Pan Hellenic Representative(s)

Kim Whitlock, Bre' Stafford, & Darralyn Johnson

### Nominating Committee

Tamela Saldana

### Parliamentarian/Chair of Policies and Procedures

Patricia Shorter

### Charitable Partners

Sonya Harry & LaTasha Dennis

### Protocol and Traditions

Cedel Evans & Sandra Marshall

### Records Management and Retention

Vacant

### Ways and Means

Alnita Foote

### Communications and Public Relations

Autumn Caviness

### Heritage and Archives

Nancy Thompson, Historian & Tashia Coleman

### Chaplain

Dedurie Kirk

### Strategic Planning

Courtney Robinson

## Officers

Robin Blackmon, Soror President

Jacqueline Habersham, 1st Vice President

Kacey Hanson, 2nd Vice President

Demitra Alexander, Treasurer

Deborah Shaw-Boatner, Asst. Treasurer

Janet Marshall, Recording Secretary

Tiffany White, Corresponding Secretary

Anita Daniels, Financial Secretary

Tennile Thomas, Asst. Financial Secretary

Kendra Wesson, Sergeant at Arms

Autumn Caviness, Journalist

Lisa Newman, Immediate Past President

*Sorors,*

Please don't forget our  
2023 Annual Chapter Photo is at  
9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 6 prior to  
our May Chapter Meeting at 10 a.m.  
Our in-person location is at  
**LBJ High School**  
(7309 Lazy Creek Drive,  
Austin, Texas 78724)



Sorors, please remember, we have several key documents available on our **Member Only Portal**. Please review the **Draft Chapter Calendar**, located under the Calendar Tab prior to May's Chapter Meeting – **we will be voting on this document at the meeting**.



Austin Alumnae Chapter  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
P.O. BOX 143381  
Austin, Texas 78714