

## PHI SIGMA IOTA INITIATION RITUAL FOR NEW MEMBERS

Chapters may augment the following initiation text with presentations by student speakers on what being a Phi Sigma Iota member means to them, personal experiences with language study or study abroad, reports about significant authors, particular historical or cultural events, or any other topic which supports the Phi Sigma Iota ideals.

**CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE:** Mr./Madam President and Phi Sigma Iota members, I present these candidates for membership in \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of Phi Sigma Iota, the International Foreign Language Honor Society. They have been selected by virtue of academic distinction in their general college course, and particularly as students of one or more foreign languages. They know the aims and ideals of Phi Sigma Iota, and they wish to adopt them in becoming members.

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** Since you wish to become members of Phi Sigma Iota, and since you qualify under the Society By-Laws, you may now share a knowledge of our ritual which explains our symbols and defines our purpose and goals. First of all, I wish to acquaint you with a statement of our common beliefs and the obligations that we assume with membership in Phi Sigma Iota. We believe:

1. that a discerning and sympathetic understanding of the peoples of the world is essential to the welfare of humanity;
2. that peace among nations and international amity are dependent upon an altruistic willingness to appreciate the character, the ideals, and the culture and civilization of other countries;
3. that the study of foreign languages is one of the best means of contributing to such an understanding;
4. that a broad study of foreign culture is also essential to an adequate comprehension of other races and peoples;
5. that it is our duty as world citizens to learn all that we can about foreign peoples and to strive to judge their achievements objectively, fairly, and tolerantly;
6. that it is our obligation to disseminate our knowledge and informed judgment of foreign peoples as widely as possible to further international understanding; and finally
7. that it is incumbent upon us to attempt to inspire in others a desire to study the language, literature, and other cultural manifestations of foreign peoples.

Are you willing to uphold this statement of beliefs and maintain an active interest in the objectives of our Society?

**CANDIDATES: WE ARE.**

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** It is now my privilege to invite our representative of the languages of the world to explain to you the meaning and history of the Phi Sigma Iota key.

**THE LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD:** (The Advisor has in front of him/her a large candle that he/she lights.) Phi Sigma Iota was founded in 1922 at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania by Dr. Henry W. Church, faculty members of the Department of Languages and advanced students of language and literature. The key was designed in 1935 by Robert E. Dengler, Professor of Classics at the Pennsylvania State University, and since 1935 was the bimillennium of Horace's birth, Professor Dengler put an ivy wreath in the design to recall Horace's famous ode to his patron Maecenas, in which the poet wrote:

*Me doctarum hederæ præmia frontium dis miscent superis...*(As for me, I want the ivy, the crown of learned brows that unites me with the gods above...)

The pentagonal center of this star represents the Languages of Antiquity, the source of the modern languages we study. You are doubtless familiar with Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and Hebrew, the literary languages of classical antiquity through the Bible and the works of many famous authors. Although writers no longer compose their works in some of these tongues, they live on today in spirit, furnish the foundation for many modern languages, and transmit to the western world the basis of much of our culture. Latin originally formed the foundation of our star and was symbolized by the ivy wreath which surrounds the star on the Phi Sigma Iota key. Each of the five points of the star represented one of the five Romance languages.

Today our Society represents not only the Romance languages, but all the languages of the modern world. The five points of the Phi Sigma Iota star are now symbolic of the many rays of learning which emanate from the world's great linguistic and literary traditions. The Greek letters Phi, Sigma, Iota Super-imposed on the five-pointed star are the initials of our motto: "*Philotes, Spoude, Idioma,*" which means "Friendship, Research, and Languages."

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** And now, in the name of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter, I welcome you into Phi Sigma Iota. Members of the chapter will offer you their personal congratulations.