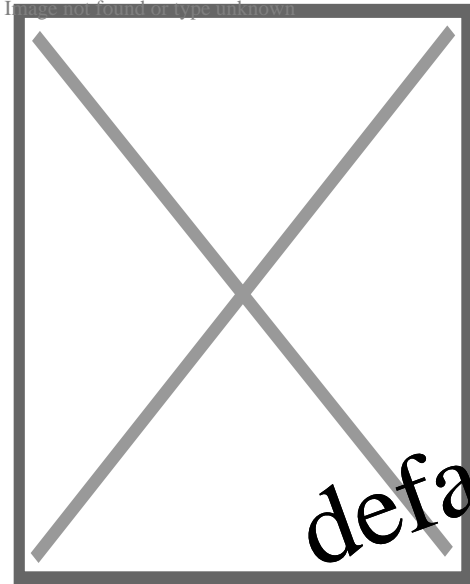


“The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi” at Albion College

Description



Sheet music cover from the
1923 edition

One of the most popular fraternity songs of all time, “The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi”, was written in 1911 by two Albion College freshmen. While in class, Byron D. Stokes penned the words for “The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi”. After class, he walked to the Chapel (now the Kellogg Center) and interrupted his friend F. Dudleigh Vernor, who was practicing the organ at the time. Stokes showed Vernor the lyrics and Vernor, a music conservatory student, immediately wrote the melody. The song was written as a pledge chore for the 25th Anniversary of their Alpha Pi Chapter. It began to gain popularity locally and so Vernor’s brother, Richard Vernor, began publishing the sheet music. One year later, it was topping charts across the county.

Contrary to popular belief, the song was actually written for the fraternity, not a particular “sweetheart.” In a 1966 interview, Stokes said “the old tear-starting, love inducing, nostalgia-making song was not written about a girl at all, but as a love song to his fraternity”. The “blue of her eyes and the gold of her hair” referred to the fraternity’s colors.

Since 1911, the song’s popularity has spread across the world. It has been performed by such well-known artists as Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and was also the title of two movies in 1933 and 1946. This year, Sigma Chi is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the song at its birthplace, Albion College.

This past fall, the college celebrated the 100th anniversary of “The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi”. In honor of the anniversary, archives student, Chelsea Denault, ’12, put together a photo montage. View it here:

[Sweetheart of Sigma Chi Photo Montage](#)

Category

1. College Archives

Tags

1. Byron D. Stokes
2. F. Dudley Vernor
3. fraternities
4. music
5. Sigma Chi

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