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History of the Beta Phi Mu, Beta Psi Chapter at The University of Southern Mississippi

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History of the Beta Phi Mu, Beta Psi Chapter at The University of Southern Mississippi

Carol Green, University of Southern Mississippi

The Beta Phi Mu International Library & Information Studies Honor Society was founded in 1948 by a group of leading librarians and library educators to recognize and encourage scholastic achievement among library and information studies students. Beta Phi Mu was formally admitted to membership in the Association of College Honor Societies in 1969 and became an affiliate of the American Library Association in 1998. Our name comes from the initials of the Greek words *Bibliothekarios philax mathesis*, meaning “librarians are the guardians of knowledge” (Beta Phi Mu, 2012). The motto, *Aliis inserviando consumor*, meaning “Consumed in the service of others” was selected by the founders based on the concept of the dedication of librarians and other information professionals to the service of others (Beta Phi Mu, 2012). The insignia of Beta Phi Mu is the dolphin and anchor, mark of the Venetian printer Aldus Manutius, who endeavored to create beautiful editions of the Greek and Latin classics and dedicated his life to making his works accessible to many.

In October 1980, Dr. Onva K. Boshears, Dean of the School of Library Service petitioned Beta Phi Mu for the formation of a chapter at The University of Southern Mississippi. The Beta Psi chapter was formally established on June 9, 1981. Thirteen graduates were initiated as charter members with an additional thirteen members initiated in absentia. Nineteen national Beta Phi Mu members were also inducted into the chapter (Beta Phi Mu, 2012).

Membership in Beta Phi Mu is open to graduates of accredited and approved graduate level programs in library and information science (LIS). Criteria for membership in Beta Phi Mu essentially has three elements:

- All nominees must have at least a 3.75 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.
- All nominees must have the endorsement of faculty from their program regarding their

potential for professional leadership and contributions to the field.

- No more than 25% of the annual graduating class may be nominated for membership (National Headquarters, 2015).

Today there are 38 active chapters. Over 35,000 graduates of accredited library and information studies programs in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom have been initiated into Beta Phi Mu. The Beta Psi chapter presently has 163 active members and a total of 265 inductees.

Beta Psi chapter members work to support the profession in many ways. A contribution is made annually to the Beta Phi Mu organization. Each year at the Mississippi Library Association conference, the chapter sponsors a program that is open to all conference attendees. From 2000-2005, the chapter partnered with the MLA New Members Round Table and the School of Library and Information Science to hold a student research competition where winners had the opportunity to present their research at the MLA conference.

The Beta Phi Mu organization sponsors a number of awards and scholarships. Similarly, the Beta Psi chapter awards an annual scholarship in the amount of \$500 to a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science. Although financial need is considered, recipients are chosen based on their academic achievement, leadership, exemplary character and evidence of commitment.

Beta Phi Mu, Beta Psi Chapter Scholarship Recipients

1987 – Roy Meador

1988 – Clarence Hunter

1989 – Donna Davis

1992 – Kenneth B. Raigins

1993 – John Stringer

1994 – Cindy Moore

1995 – Julie Sass

1996 – Nan Crosby

1997 – Mary Hamilton
1999 – Mary Hamilton
2000 – Tracy Caradine
2001 – Verble Gorman Alexander
2002 – Tessa Minchew
2003 – Julie Atwood
2004 – Sharon Doshier Davis
2005 – Heather Weeden
2006 – Julie Dunn
2007 – Janet Boswell
2008 – Naomi Hurtienne
2009 – Abigail Slattery
2010 – Linda Matthews
2011 – Johnnie Pace

2012 – Jennifer Nabzdyk
2013 – Callie Wiygul
2014 – Elizabeth La Beaud
2015 – Rebecca Houston

References

Beta Phi Mu. (2012). *Beta Phi Mu headquarters*. Retrieved from <http://beta-phi-mu.org/>.

National Headquarters. (2015). *2015 Beta Phi Mu Handbook*. Retrieved from <http://beta-phi-mu.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2015-Handbook-rev1.pdf>.

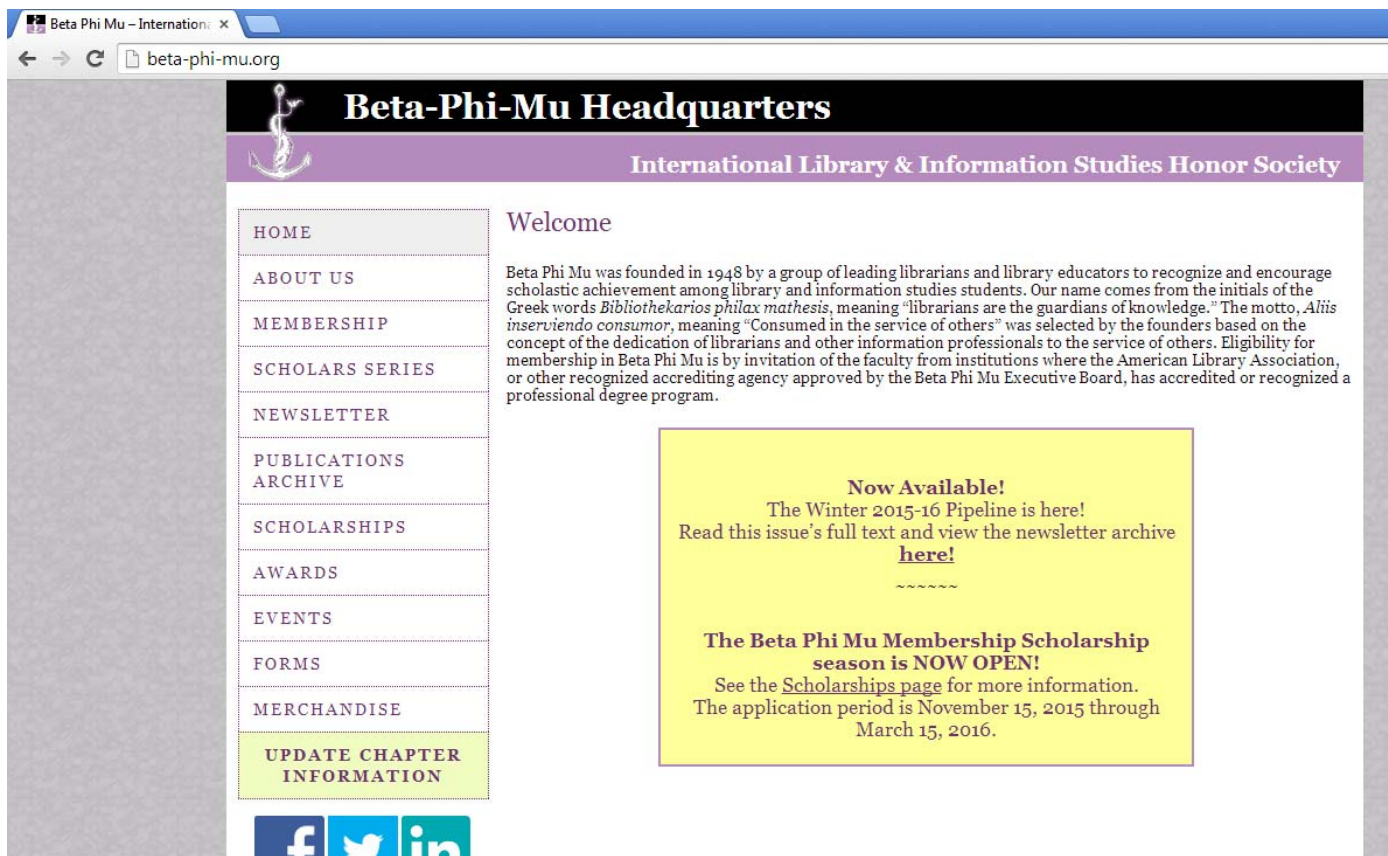


Figure: Beta Phi Mu Website