

HALL COUNTY ALUMNAE CHAPTER

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
North Georgia Community Foundation
340 Jesse Jewel Parkway, Suite 600
Gainesville, GA 30501**

**Minutes of the December Chapter Meeting
Held on Saturday, December 21, 2024**

Pre-Meeting Safety Briefing: Soror Erica Glenn presented the safety briefing via PowerPoint as prepared by the ERT Chair Soror Melanie Floyd.

Chapter Members Present: Denise Arnold, Vallorie Coley, Sue Davis-Westmoreland, Erica Glenn, Natasha Iszard, Sheriah Johnson, Patricia Lee, Denise Livingston, Gloria Maddox, Whitney McDowell-Robinson, Angela Middleton, Alisha Moore, Audrey Simmons, Sheila Tabron, Deborah Washington, and Lisa Williams (A quorum was present for the transaction of business.)

Visiting Soror: Charmelita Royster, Brunswick Alumnae Chapter

Call to Order: Soror Sheriah Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. The meeting proceeded with the ritualistic opening.

Adoption of Agenda: MOTION: Soror Alisha Moore moved to add 2025 Georgia State Cluster under new business. **SECOND:** Soror Sue Davis-Westmoreland **ACTION:** Motion carried with no opposition.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: The previous minutes were approved as printed. (General Consent)

Teachable Moment: Soror Lisa Williams presented information on fire safety. She gave a demonstration on how to use a fire extinguisher. She shared the acronym PASS, which stands for Pull, Aim, Squeeze, and Sweep. She advised sorors to inspect extinguishers yearly. The green indicator means that the extinguisher is full. Soror Lisa Williams suggested to get a smaller extinguisher such as Fire Stop, which is easier to use. Getting a fire blanket was suggested also. Soror Natasha Iszard mentioned the importance of having fire ladders for multi-level homes.

OFFICERS REPORTS

President's Message: Soror Sheriah Johnson stated that she hopes that everyone had time to fellowship with family members, and that everyone enjoyed the holidays. She reported the following information from the November 19, 2024, Exec Check.

- Regional Updates: Soror Noel Seymour gave the updates for collegiate members.
- Collegiate Updates: Soror Amaris Johnson gave updates concerning the **2025 Renaissance of the South State Cluster registration** release dates. The Georgia State Cluster registration release date was November 20, 2024, at 4 p.m. EST.
- National Scholarship and Standards Committee: Soror Sabrina Polote gave reminders concerning **nominations and election season**. She is encouraging sorors to ask members to read the chapter policies and procedures, especially the duties of the Nominating Committee. It is important for the committee to stay abreast as to what is to occur. The committee needs to understand the duties of the elected offices and leadership positions in Article III. Article IV outlines duties and

responsibilities. Committee members should understand the timeline and campaigning matters under Article IX. The **Nominating Committee Chair** should remind sorors of the duties and requirements. Soror Sabrina Polote plans to have a separate webinar for the region. As soon as date is scheduled, the information will be sent out. Soror Amaris Johnson reminded members to enter into the election season with good sisterly positive attitudes, and to be respectful of each other. Soror Amaris Johnson said bring one's best self to the process as chapters tend to fall out over membership intake and elections. There will also be office hours for the region to make sure everyone is all clear on roles and responsibilities. This will be a support to the webinar. Soror Sabrina Polote relayed that **policies and procedures** should be completed by November 30, 2024, for the chapters that made submissions. Soror Amaris Johnson shared that she will still allow everyone to apply for **advisor training** during the cluster cycle, but Soror Sabrina Polote and her will do the review to select members that will be approved for training. They want to be sure to select members who are not trying to apply for resume building.

- National Nominating Committee: Soror Katrina Myricks shared that the 2025 guidelines for running for office was sent out. The guidelines are located in the member portal.

Positions Available for National Office/Committees

International President and Chair of the National Board of Directors
National First Vice President
National Second Vice President
National Secretary
National Treasurer
Chair, 2027 National Nominating Committee
Chair, National Finance Committee
Chair, National Audit and Corporate Compliance Committee
Alumnae Member, National Audit and corporate Compliance Committee (2 Positions)

Collegiate Positions Available for National Committees

Collegiate Member, National Scholarship and Standards Committee
Collegiate Member, National Finance Committee
Collegiate Member, 2027 National Nominating Committee
Collegiate Member, National Audit and Corporate Compliance Committee (2 Positions)

Awards and Recognition: Soror Denise O'Connor relayed that preparations are being made at this time and the categories, etc. will be released shortly. There is a new category for **Advisory Council of the Year**. The committee wish to have a complete slate for each state and would like for collegiate and alumnae chapters to apply. Proof to substantiate evidence of responses to questions and charts must be uploaded. The application release date was November 25, 2024. Activities and programs submitted should have taken place between July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. There are no categories or sizes. The committee will select the best of the best. Awards will be given to one collegiate member and one alumnae member per state/or country. The submission deadline is December 21, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. EST. **2023 – 2024 Awards**: Advisor of the Year (Collegiate), Advisory Council of the Year (Collegiate), Arts and Letters Award (Alumnae & Collegiate), Chapter of the Year (Alumnae & Collegiate), Collegiate member of the Year, Highest of Five Community Service & Partnership (Alumnae & Collegiate), Innovation in Communication & Technology Award (Alumnae & Collegiate), May Week (Alumnae)/Delta Week (collegiate), Membership Services Award (Alumnae), Outstanding Delta DEAR (alumnae), Outstanding new member (Alumnae), Social Action Trendsetter Award – Chapter (alumnae & collegiate), Social Action Trendsetter Award – Individual (Alumnae & Collegiate)

Social Action: Soror Alfreda Coward presented information of lessons learned and takeaways from the election concerning Republicans and Democrats. The election was not all losses. Black women were elected to Congress. Sorors were elected and re-elected during the election cycle. Issues to watch going forward are voting rights, economic justice, education, health equity, and public safety.

DDAC Cycle 2025

STATE	DATE	LOCATION	HOST CHAPTER(S)
Tennessee	February 17-18, 2025	Nashville, TN	Nashville Metropolitan Alumnae
Mississippi	February 24-25, 2025	Jackson, MS	Madison County alumnae
**Georgia	TBD	Atlanta, GA	Decatur Alumnae
Bahamas	April 2-3, 2025	Nassau, BS	Nassau Bahamas Alumnae
Florida	April 6-8, 2025	Tallahassee, FL	Tallahassee Alumnae
**Alabama	TBD	Montgomery, AL	Montgomery Alumnae

**Pending HQ Approval

Communications from the Social Action Committee Connections reflected on the Super Tuesday newsletter updates that were issue focused, and the content was streamlined. Social Action Committee Chairs need to have direct engagement and a redistribution of chapters' Jotform.

National Finance Committee: Soror Chante Obazee reported that budgets must be approved by November 30, 2024. No business should be transacted on January 1, 2025, without an approved budget. The 2024 Annual Financial Report (AFR) is due by February 28, 2025. Chapters should be close to completing their Excel spreadsheet that is used to start the process for the AFR. A webinar will be scheduled for the AFR sometime in December. As soon as date and time is available, communication will be sent out.

Please note that all Exec Check recordings are emailed to chapter members.

Soror Sheriah Johnson submitted a detailed report that is on file.

First Vice President/Membership Services (Hospitality and Courtesies): Soror Denise Arnold reported that there are currently 35 financial members in the chapter. She recognized Soror Charmelita Royster as a visiting soror. The December birthday celebrants are Soror Shirley Vereen (13th), Soror Natasha Iszard (27th), and Soror Jennifer Simmons (30th). Soror Denise Arnold thanked everyone who attended the **Thanksgiving luncheon**. The chapter's **Founders Day celebration** is a closed event for sorority members. Please invite an inactive soror or a member-at-large to join the chapter on Friday, January 10, 2025, for a social hour at 7 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. The celebration will take place at Recess on 118 Bradford St, NE, Gainesville, GA 30501. Wear casual attire with a strand of pearls. RSVP by Sunday, January 5, 2025, to firstvp@hallcountydyst.org. All attendees are asked to bring a wrapped elephant for the white elephant gift exchange. The elephant should be new, have a value of no less than \$20, and should not be a gag gift. Prizes will be awarded for the best elephants. The **Reclamation Challenge** is ongoing. The committee is asking each chapter member to help reclaim at least one soror. For a soror to count as reclaimed, she must be nonfinancial for both the current and the prior fiscal year. The rules for the Reclamation Challenge are as follows:

1. Sorors participating in the Reclamation Challenge must be current Hall County Alumnae financial members.
2. The reclaimed soror must pay her dues during the contest period, which is September 10, 2024 – March 31, 2025.
3. Once the reclaimed soror becomes a Hall County Alumnae member, she will receive a Welcome Home form and asked for the name of the Hall County Alumnae member who invited her. Only the soror listed on this form will receive credit for the Reclamation Challenge.

4. The Hall County Alumnae member who reclaims the most sorors will be the winner of the Reclamation Challenge.
5. The winning soror will have her local dues paid for the 2026 fiscal year by the Membership Services Committee. In the event of a tie, the tied sorors will have their names entered into a drawing. The soror whose name is drawn will be declared the contest winner. Members must sign in when they attend a chapter event as this ensures that they will receive a step in the **Joy in Our Sisterhood Program**. Committee chairs, please email your monthly attendance reports to firstvp@hallcountydst.org.

Soror Denise Arnold submitted a report that is on file.

Second Vice President (Program Planning and Development): Soror Erica Glenn gave a review of the events calendar for December and January by noting upcoming meetings, Santa's Helpers, Founders Day gathering, and MLK events. The committee meeting for December 3, 2024, was cancelled. The **Physical and Mental Health Committee**, chaired by Soror Sue Davis-Westmoreland, is planning a "Let's Get Moving" initiative that will begin on January 1, 2025. The initiative will help members focus on a healthy mind, body, and spirit for an overall physical and mental well-being. The goal is to do 10,000 steps per day, which is an equivalent of two miles per day. Use an Apple Watch or Fitbit to record hours by using Map My Run or Map My Walk app. Instructions will be posted in BAND. The **Economic and Development Committee**, chaired by Soror Lisa Williams, planned the chapter's participation in the **Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign** that took place on December 14, 2024, at Kroger on Limestone Parkway in Gainesville, Georgia, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. **Santa's Senior Holiday Helpers'** signup has been emailed. The committee will collect and pack the items after the chapter meeting today. The delivery date for Forsyth County will be December 26, 2024. The delivery date for Hall County is on Monday, December 23, 2024, at the Senior Life Center on Prior Street in Gainesville. More details are forthcoming. Members are asked to sign up for at least two committees to ensure that HCAC meets the program requirements. Program chairs need to extend invitations to Soror President and the Program Planning and Development Committee Chair to program committee meetings. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

Soror Erica Glenn submitted a report that is on file.

Corresponding Secretary: Soror Deborah Washington reported that she received a SouthState Bank statement, fundraiser donation from Soror Sue Davis-Westmoreland, and correspondence concerning a Sister Circle Summit. Soror Deborah Washington relayed certain participation costs for the event.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Secretary: Soror Denise Livingston presented the financial secretary's report covering the period November 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024, which shows the general funds receipts for the current month and the year-to-date total receipts. The report shows that there are 35 financial members for FY 2024, and 34 financial members for FY 2025. Soror Denise Livingston submitted a report that is on file. The report is posted on the chapter website under financial documents.

Treasurer: Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson presented the general funds account and fundraising account. The report shows deposits, transfers, expenses, balances, and restricted funds that covered the period November 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024. The CD investment account was noted as well. Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson submitted a report that is on file. The report is posted on the chapter website under financial documents.

Soror Vallorie Coley shared her concern for the cost of the Thanksgiving luncheon, where the amount of \$340 was collected from seventeen members, and a reimbursement check for the luncheon was written for

\$560.96. She shared her concerns of certain reimbursement checks that were written to members instead of the persons of service, i.e., DID trainers, and the New Georgia Project Action Fund. Soror Vallorie Coley also noted that she believes the Audit Committee Chair should not have any connection with financial reimbursements since the committee audits financial documents.

STANDING COMMITTEES REPORTS

Arts and Letters: In the committee chair's absence, Soror Sheriah Johnson relayed that Soror Melanie Floyd is suggesting for the chapter to participate in the **Delta Red Carpet** event from home by watching Netflix on December 20, 2024, to see the written and directed film by Tyler Perry, *The Six Triple Eight*. The film tells the inspiring true story of the incredible and brave women of the first and only Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) unit of color to be stationed overseas during World War II. Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams (Earley), a Delta soror, served as the highest-ranking Black woman officer during World War II. The Arts and Letters Committee will highlight things to do in the upcoming *Down the Hall*. Soror Vallorie Coley shared a Delta connection with the movie. Soror Charity Adams Earley, who was portrayed by actress Kerry Washington, was initiated into the Beta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. while attending Wilberforce University. Soror Mary McLeod Bethune, who was portrayed by Oprah Winfrey, was inducted as an Honorary Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. at the 5th National Convention in 1923. Soror Melanie Floyd submitted a report that is on file.

Budget and Finance: Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson reported that the Annual Financial Report (AFR) has been completed and will be submitted by February 28, 2025. Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson has created a new budget template. She presented the proposed budget for Quarter 1 (January 2025 – March 2025) with explanations.

Soror Vallorie Coley inquired about the \$200 budgeted for new member welcome packets. Soror Denise Arnold shared that an introduction letter, a copy of the chapter policies and procedures, and the ABC's of parliamentary procedures will be included in the packet. Soror Vallorie Coley expressed that she believes no funds should be used for postage and printing. She stated that introduction letters can be emailed, and all chapter documents are posted on the chapter website.

MOTION: Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson moved to recommend on behalf of the Executive Board and the Budget and Finance Committee to approve the 2025 Q1 Interval Budget (January 2025 through March 2025) for \$4,956 for general expenses.. **SECOND:** N/A **ACTION:** Motion carried fourteen (14) in favor; Zero (0) opposed.

Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson submitted the first quarter proposed budget, which is posted on the chapter website.

Emergency Response Team: In the absence of the committee chair, Soror Sheriah Johnson read the following: Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) is a type of depression that is provoked by seasonal change. Usually, symptoms begin in the fall or winter. The condition affects between 0.5 and 2.4 percent of people in the United States. It can be treated with medication that is prescribed by a doctor. She asked for us to get ready for the holidays by keeping our car with a full tank of gas and by being aware of our surroundings. Use appropriate home warming devices, not ovens or stoves; be careful with space heaters; do not overload power supplies; do not carry large sums of cash; do not flash any cash; and be careful shopping online by using secured sites. It might be time to change passwords. Soror Melanie Floyd submitted a report that is on file.

Fundraising: Soror Denise Arnold reported that the chapter hosted a Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser on Thursday, December 5, 2024, through Monday, December 9, 2024. All chapter members were asked to contribute at least \$300 from popcorn sales and/or donations. The fundraising proceeds will be allocated as follows: administrative budget at 95%, and community service initiatives at 5%. Members were asked to submit their fundraising proceeds by today, December 21, 2024. Please follow up on outstanding donations and submit them to the financial secretary as soon as possible. The final fundraising report will be given at the January chapter meeting. Soror Denise Arnold submitted a report that is on file.

Risk Management: Soror Audrey Simmons gave the National Program Planning and Development Committee's Risk Management Committee December 2024 update that concerns adding a federal criminal search to InfoMart background screening. Effective November 1, 2024, the background screening for Risk Management via InfoMart will also include a federal criminal search to foster an even more comprehensive background screening process. With this additional service, an additional \$15.50 will be added to the background screening process. This will be in addition to the current \$19.50 state fee and any mandatory fees assessed by each individual state and/or county. The new fee structure is forthcoming from InfoMart. This change is consistent with the background screening required for Membership Intake. Soror Audrey Simmons submitted a report that is on file.

Scholarship: Soror Audrey Simmons reported important information and due dates concerning chapter scholarships that are listed below.

- Friday, January 31, 2025: Last day for consideration of applicants of the scholarships for children of chapter members. Chapter members must notify Soror Audrey Simmons.
- Saturday, February 1, 2025: Electronic distribution of scholarship application information to high schools and churches within the chapter's service area
- Friday, April 18, 2025: Deadline for scholarship letter from children of chapter members (Each potential recipient must request the scholarship money by submitting a letter that must include the name of the attending high school, a brief description of extra-curricular activities and community service, as well as a copy of an acceptance letter from the chosen Institution of Higher Learning.)
- Friday, April 18, 2025: Deadline for return of scholarship packets
- All application materials must be submitted by 5 p.m. EST.

Soror Audrey Simmons submitted a report that is on file.

Social Action/Political Awareness and Involvement: Soror Erica Glenn reported that the **Gainesville-Hall County Pre-King Week Celebration** planning is underway. The Newtown Florist Club is seeking volunteers to serve on this committee. If you are interested in joining, please let Soror Erica Glenn know, and she will provide the organization's leader with your contact information. The 2025 MLK March will be held on January 18, 2025, which is the chapter's meeting date. The MLK program is scheduled for January 19, 2025. The time and location will be given later. The **Butler Center** will provide 1,000 toys to children that reside in Hall County on December 14, 2024, from 12 noon until 2 p.m. If you would like to participate, please contact Kendra at 770-799-8689. The Social Action Committee would like to partner with The Butler Center in 2025 on this effort. Thanks to everyone for all of your Get Out To Vote efforts. President Sheriah Johnson will complete the final grant report. Soror Erica Glenn submitted a report that is on file.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Minerva Circle: Soror Denise Arnold reported that Soror Myesha Davis, the Georgia State Membership Intake Coordinator, required the Chapter President and the Leader of the Minerva Circle of each chapter to

schedule an appointment to meet with her to discuss the membership intake calendar sample we were assigned. We were asked to create a preliminary membership intake budget. The membership intake calendar and revised membership intake budget were presented to, reviewed by, and approved by the Minerva Circle.

MOTION: Soror Denise Arnold moved by recommendation of the Minerva Circle that the chapter approves the membership intake calendar and budget as presented. **SECOND:** N/A **ACTION:** Motion carried thirteen (13) in favor; Zero (0) opposed.

Soror Denise Arnold submitted a report that is on file.

Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

New Business

- 2025 Georgia State Cluster: The purchase of a digital chapter ad for the cluster was discussed.

MOTION: Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson moved to purchase a \$150 full-page ad if funds are available. **SECOND:** Soror Audrey Simmons **ACTION:** Motion carried ten (10) in favor; Zero (0) opposed.

Announcement

- Proposed amendments for the Chapter Policies and Procedures are due by December 21, 2024. The proposed amendment form is posted on the website. Soror Sabrina Polote has relayed that the release date for the updated P&P template will be the first quarter of 2025.
- The website will be updated for FY 2025.
- A city-wide revival will be held at the First Baptist Church on January 6, 2025, through January 8, 2025, beginning at 7 p.m. The church is located on 1810 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Gainesville, GA 30501.

Adjournment

- **MOTION:** Soror Whitney McDowell-Robinson moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m. **SECOND:** Soror Audrey Simmons **ACTION:** Motion carried with no opposition.

Soror Sheriah Johnson closed the meeting and proceeded with the ritualistic closing.

Respectfully submitted,

Vallorie Coley, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: _____

Sheriah Johnson, President

DATE: _____