

SPEACONN

The SigEp @ UCONN Newsletter

A PUBLICATION OF SIGMA PHI EPSILON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

FALL 2024

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fellow Alphas,

I write to you as SigEp at UConn approaches an impressive milestone. This fall, the chapter celebrates the tenth anniversary of its return to campus in 2014. The past decade has been one of growth, challenge, excellence, and fun for the chapter. I'm grateful to have met countless incredible men and shared equally incredible experiences over the past ten years. And I look forward to what the next decade has in store for us.

A special thanks to all who helped us celebrate this achievement at our biennial reunion in September. And an even more special thanks to those who helped make the event possible. Whether it be by sharing stories, setting up tables, or simply showing up, you all make SigEp "worth it" to me and so many others.

On a personal note, I have moved (again) since you've last heard me. Having wrapped up a year of work in the Cincinnati area, I find myself in Washington, D.C. for the next ten months. Still a bit further from Connecticut than I'd like, but thankfully, a much closer ride. I'll be here through next summer, with the hopes of making my way northeast one day.

Lastly, I'd be remiss not to note the approach of a more somber milestone. This fall marks my third year as AVC President—and three years since the sudden passing of our dear friend Ed Kaplan, '88. I know I speak for many when I say that I continue to feel his absence in my life. That said, I find comfort knowing that if Ed were around to see the chapter close out its first decade back on campus, he'd be smiling. May we continue to make him proud.

In Phi,

Van Augur '20
Alumni & Volunteer President

CHAPTER UPDATE

2024 ANNUAL BROTHERHOOD RETREAT

We're happy to report another strong start to the 2024-2025 academic year for our CT Alpha Chapter! We welcomed 27 new brothers into the Fraternity, made a great showing with over 40 undergrads at the September Biennial Reunion Picnic in Manchester, and hosted a memorable chapter retreat in October. The alumni continue to be impressed with everything our chapter has accomplished so far this year. Well done, gentlemen!

Click [here](#) for a list of new brothers from the Fall 2024 semester.



The chapter is pictured here at this October's Annual Brotherhood Retreat in Moodus, CT.

TRAGOS QUEST TO GREECE SCHOLAR RECIPIENT

During Summer 2024, Kellen Paparella (pictured below), became the sixth CT-A brother to be selected as a Tragos Quest To Greece Scholar. This unique

experience allows a select group of SigEp undergraduates to study the influence that Greek philosophy, governance, and the arts has and continues to have in everyday life. Brothers explore Greek culture and reflect upon the origins of SigEp's values and the Balanced Man ideal. Congratulations, Kellen!



Kellen Paparella '25 speaking at the fall 2024 Biennial Picnic.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Brother Matt Matt Ucci '25, who just finished his term as Chaplain, exemplifies Virtue, Diligence, and Brotherly Love balancing multiple responsibilities serving his country and SigEp, and stewarding the Fraternity's Ritual. Read more [here](#).



Matt Ucci (right) seen here with a fellow Connecticut Army National Guard reservist during a recent training event.

CHAPTER INITIATES NEW RENAISSANCE BROTHER

When Alexander DeFrancesco attended the University of Connecticut in the late 2000s, Sigma Phi Epsilon seemed like it would have been an obvious choice. Alex's three older brothers, Joseph '97, Michael '00, and Darren '03, had each attended UConn and were initiated as members of CT-A. Unfortunately for Alex, by the time he made it to Storrs, the chapter was in the process of winding down operations after a period of underperformance. And by the time it reopened in 2014, Alex had already graduated. As a result, Alex missed out on the opportunity to be a part of our chapter's seven-decades-long legacy.

Or so everyone thought. At its first meeting of the year, the chapter decided it was time to welcome Alex into the fold. Over the past several years, Alex, a lifelong farmer and owner of Steward of the Land Farm Brewery, had grown

close with a number of chapter members. When he opened his brewery in fall 2019, several AVC members became regular customers. Over the past three years, Alex has graciously hosted the chapter's executive board at his property as part of their annual summer retreat. Recognizing Alex's contributions to CT-A, the chapter decided it was time to give Alex the opportunity that it couldn't in the late 2000s. After unanimously voting to invite Alex to join the chapter through the Renaissance of the Brotherhood Program, a group of alumni and undergraduate brothers traveled to Northford to perform the chapter's Ritual ceremony. The ceremony took place in a historic dairy barn, and was followed by a "SigEp for Life" program at Alex's brewery.

The Renaissance of Brotherhood Program provides men who live up to the ideals of Sigma Phi Epsilon to be part of the Fraternity even though they may not have had the opportunity during their college years. Alex is the chapter's first Renaissance Brother since we returned to campus in 2014. He joins an impressive roster of CT-A Renaissance brothers, including four-star Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr., who served as Chief of Naval Operations for U.S. forces during the Vietnam War.



Brothers gathered for Andy DeFrancesco's Renaissance of Brotherhood ceremony.

CT SIGEP CHAPTERS REUNITE

UConn and Quinnipiac chapters renew their common history. CT-A brothers

help launch reestablished Connecticut Epsilon chapter by conducting Ritual initiation ceremony for 27 execute and standards board officers. Read more [here](#).



Quinnipiac brothers gathered in front of the Ed Kaplan Chapter House in Husky Village following the Ritual ceremony.

ALUMNI UPDATE

SIGEP BIENNIAL ALUMNI PICNIC

This year's SigEp Biennial Reunion Picnic was a big success with over 100 alumni, undergraduates, friends, and spouses participating. Festivities included the renowned Sabbs Brothers, a great meal, several awards, merch for sale, and an alumni-undergraduate networking event. See below for a few pictures, and click [here](#) for additional 2024 Picnic pictures.



Over 100 alumni and undergraduate brothers gathered in Manchester, CT in September for the CT-A Biennial Reunion Picnic.



The Sabbs Band performing a resounding version of the #1 hit "I Saw Your Mother At The Keg Party." From left to right are Mike Gourdier '86, Vinny Piselli '86, Adam Adelfkoff '85, Mike Baldassari '87, and Bill Gunn '88.



Pictured here enjoying the picnic from left to right are Wade Medlar '80, Bill Jenkins '84, Steve Chaneles '83, Barry Musco '86, and Mike Baldassari '87.

CT ALPHA ALUMNI HALL OF FAME AWARD

In 2022, we established the CT-A Hall of Fame to honor chapter alumni who have distinguished themselves in a manner bringing credit and honor to themselves, CT-A, SigEp, and their communities.

We are happy to announce that Bill Gunn '88 is this year's inductee to the CT-A Alumni Hall of Fame.

At our 2024 Biennial Reunion Picnic in September, we added Bill's name to the list of honorees. He was recognized for his decades of service to SigEp and his community, both in song and heart. His achievements include three decades as SigEp's National Song Chairman, recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award, and most recently as a recipient of the City of Hamden, CT's Hamden Hero award for his work in the classroom. Bill has been an inspiration and mentor to generations of undergraduate brothers and middle school students. Former students of his, encouraged by his contagious passion, have gone on to continue their music education, pursue careers in the music industry, and have won Grammys, Emmys, and at least one Academy Award.

Congratulations, Bill. "Well done thy good and faithful servant."



Bill Gunn (second from left) pictured here with Chad Stewart (far left), Van Augur (third from left) and Steve Chaneles (far right).

SIG EP OUTSTANDING NEW VOLUNTEER AWARD

We are also happy to announce that Tom Birmingham '86 received SigEp's Outstanding New Volunteer Award for District 3. This award recognizes new volunteers who have made a significant impact on either the AVC or the undergraduate chapter with which they volunteer.

Tom spearheaded our inaugural AVC annual giving program and added the SPEaconn to his portfolio, reinvigorating the newsletter after the pandemic by introducing a unique alumni profile series and converting it from production by a third party vendor to self-production saving us thousands of dollars each year. He was a key part of the organizing committee for this year's Biennial Reunion Picnic and our 2022 gathering, and he leads our SigEp for Life initiative to strengthen the ties between our alumni and undergraduate brothers, to provide career mentoring and networking support, and promote our Cardinal Principles as a guide for living a full life.

Thank you, Tom, for your selfless contribution to the good of the order.



Tom Birmingham (left) pictured here with Van Augur.

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to Chad Stewart '88 for being named BDC Capital's CT Banker of the Year. Chad is currently First Vice President, Commercial Lending, Savings Bank of Danbury, which was also named CT Bank of the Year for volume of SBA 504 loans originated during fiscal 2024!

Click [here](#) for more on Chad's 2024 Banker of the Year Award.



Chad Stewart '88 seen here receiving BDC Capital's Connecticut Banker of the Year Award.

SEEKING ALUMNI UPDATES

We want to hear from you! This is often the most viewed section of our newsletter. Please send us updates about births, deaths, career, travel, hobbies, reunions, etc. to speaconn@gmail.com.

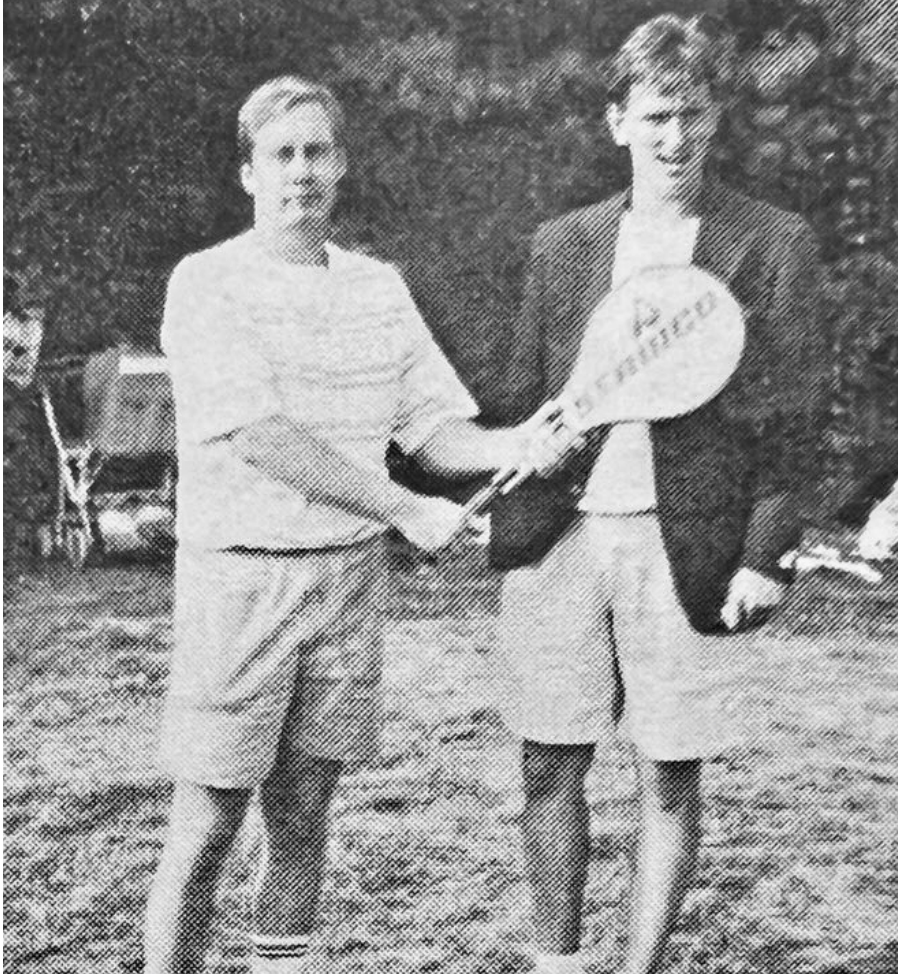
ALUMNI PROFILE

THE SIGEP GOLF TOURNAMENT - A Tradition Like No Other **By Tom Birmingham '86**

To help celebrate one of CT-A's most time-honored traditions, the Fall 2024 Alumni Profile is dedicated to the following four brothers most responsible for keeping this tradition alive: Dave Estes '84, Rick Baran '86, Paul Summers '87,

and Paul Langella '89. Please click [here](#) to read more about the tournament, its history, and what this event has meant to our brotherhood. An click [here](#) for additional 2024 tournament pictures.

Thank you Dave, Rick, Paul, and Paul and all the tournament players for enriching our brotherhood for nearly 40 years!



Circa late 1980's, Vic Tohak '81 (left) modeling the not-so-coveted tennis racquet and Dave Estes '84 (right) wearing the "fit-to-order" green jacket.



The 1998 SigEp golf tourney participants.



2024 - Bill Wivell '85 donning the coveted Green Jacket just to see what it feels like.



The 2024 SigEp golf tourney participants.

Donate

To donate by check, please make checks payable to "CT Alpha of Sigma Phi Epsilon Alumni" to:

CT Alpha AVC
78 Summer Lane
North Haven, CT 06473

LOST BROTHERS

Help locate "lost" brothers and keep your information current! This is critical to

being able to reach our brothers and is easy to do. Here's how:

- Click [here](#) to share any updated contact information for lost brothers on this list;
- Click [here](#) to update your own information.

OBITUARY

William Cutler

OCTOBER 31, 1936 - AUGUST 26, 2023



CHAPTER ETERNAL

William Grant Cutler '87, of Mystic, formally of Clinton, Connecticut, passed away on Saturday, August 26, 2023. Born on October 31, 1936, in Rutland, Vermont, he was the son of the late Raymond Roswell Cutler and Thelma Phillips Cutler and brother to the late Gary Phillips Cutler.

“Bill” as he was known to all, was a U.S. ROTC candidate at the University of Connecticut where he earned a degree in Psychology, served as the chapter president of the university’s Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, and received a formal commission as a U.S. Army Officer, assigned to the rank of Second Lieutenant. After serving out his commission with pride and honor in Anchorage, Alaska, he pursued a career in the trucking and transportation industry, holding management positions with Roadway Express and Jones Motor Company before establishing his own firm, Northern Transportation. Later in life, he became a Psychiatric Technician with various hospitals and private group homes throughout New Hampshire and Connecticut providing service and care to the mentally disabled.

In his free time, Bill enjoyed fishing, kayaking, singing in the church choir, and

routing for his UConn Huskies. He also was a fan of sunbathing, orange soda and orange popsicles. In his youth, Bill was an avid snow skier and an accomplished water skier and imparted a love of the outdoors to his family and friends.

He was a loving husband to the late Carol Ann Cutler. He is survived by his loving daughters Wendy Cutler Batchelor, Lisa Cutler Oden, and Kimberly Cutler Cisewski, all of Orlando, Florida. His grandchildren include Ariana Grace Slater, Willem Christian Slater, Cameron Abigale Cisewski, Ty James Cisewski, and Sydney Faith Oden.

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