

# The Pledge Experience

"You have to be honest, have integrity, be able to cooperate and get along with other people. Sigma Chi is a great place to learn that and that's why it's a great thing to join this fraternity."

- ---Jim Palmer, ABC-TV sportscaster; previously American League's best pitcher for three years and recently voted into the Hall of Fame.



Jim Palmer

## Pledging Policies and Requirements

Pledging Sigma Chi is a process of learning, inspiration, and achievement; it

does not include hazing, degradation or humiliation. While each pledge must complete the learning process which leads to Initiation in Sigma Chi (as well as other fraternities), that is accomplished only in a positive and constructive manner. The Fraternity's requirements and policy on this subject are printed in full in the Governing Laws section of *The Norman Shield*, the pledge manual which each pledge is given upon his installation as a pledge.

Daniel William Cooper, one of the [Founders of Sigma Chi](#), stated: "I trust that the Initiation will never be belittled or disgraced by any unbecoming stunts or low, mean performances which endanger limb, life or morals. It is too good and splendid to be mingled with anything low or debasing. Those who became the Founders rejoice [that] we can leave the interests of Sigma Chi in the hands and minds and hearts of those who will watch over them with zealous care."



## Pledging Sigma Chi



"When I became a Sigma Chi it was great, because they were the people I enjoyed being with and I was very proud of the association. It was kind of an instant confidence builder for me---that what I considered the best fraternity on campus had actually wanted me. And I had always been very shy and without a lot of confidence. So it was a really good social experience and for me it was also a social maturation. It was a great benefit."

- --- David Letterman, host of *Late Night with David Letterman*

Completing pledgeship is the only way a man can become a member of Sigma Chi. There are no honorary memberships. The procedure for pledging Sigma Chi includes the rush period, receiving an invitation to

pledge (a bid), and installation.

**Rush.** A prospective Sigma Chi pledge (a rushee) attends rush parties and meets as many fraternity men as possible. By asking questions about any aspect of the fraternity, he expresses his interest; no one should join an organization he knows nothing about. By visiting the various fraternities on his campus, he can evaluate each and determine whether to join or not to join. If he decides to join, he can express interest to those groups with whom he feels most comfortable.

**Bid Sessions.** After rush parties are completed the active members of the fraternity meet for a bid session. At this time each man who has expressed interest in pledging Sigma Chi is discussed by the chapter. If the chapter decides to offer a bid to a rushee, he will receive an invitation to pledge at the appropriate time designated by the Interfraternity Council.

**Invitation to Pledge (a Bid).** An bid is a written invitation to pledge a fraternity. If a man chooses to accept the bid from Sigma Chi, from that point on he is considered a Sigma Chi pledge and may wear shirts, etc., with the words "SIGMA CHI" or "SIGS" but not the Greek letters Sigma Chi (a national regulation).



**Installation.** The pledge class is formally "installed" on a specified day soon after the close of the rush period. The installation ceremony is uniform for all Sigma Chi pledge classes throughout North America. After this ceremony a man is officially a pledge of the Sigma Chi Fraternity and joins thousands of men across the United States and Canada who have taken the same step he did!

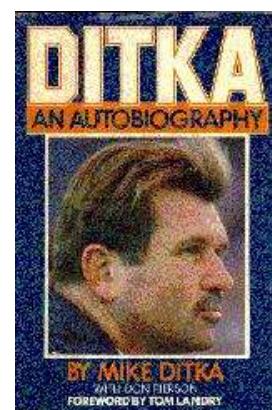
**"The key to our business is people skills. Sigma Chi helps you learn better people relationships, to get along with others, and also teaches the importance of honesty and integrity."**



- ---J. Willard Marriott, Jr., President of the Marriott Corporation, the second largest food and lodging firm in the U.S.

## Pledgeship

**"What you do in life by yourself doesn't mean as much as what you accomplish with a group of people. Sigma Chi was one of the greatest things that happened to me. I really appreciate what it has done for me in my lifetime, and I hope I can continue to give something back."**



- ---Mike Ditka, former Head Coach of the Chicago Bears, 1986 Super Bowl Champions.

## Purposes of Pledgeship

**Learning about Sigma Chi.** After installation the pledge is given a copy of *The Norman Shield*, the official manual published by Sigma Chi Fraternity. During pledgeship he learns about all aspects of the fraternity on both the national and local levels: the founders, its

history, its laws, its services to members and alumni, the chapter's officers and brothers, and the chapter's history. Periodic quizzes are given at specified pledge meetings over much of this material; at the end of pledgeship a "pledge test" designed by Sigma Chi Fraternity is administered and must be passed to qualify for initiation. The purpose of learning this information is to give the pledge more insight into the qualities and heritage of the fraternity.

**"Sigma Chi was a learning experience for me in personal growth, in finding out more about myself, in shaping my life more effectively, and in directing my energies more efficiently. All of those things were heavily influenced by my Sigma Chi experience. There is no question that that has had a tremendous impact on my career, professionally and on my life."**

- ---Merlin Olsen, TV actor and sportscaster, and former All-Pro football star.

Becoming a part of Sigma Chi. The pledge brothers work on projects together and with the active chapter to enhance the chapter on campus and in the community. There are few other occasions when he can work with his friends for the betterment of those around him and feel this sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Through these and other activities, each pledge becomes part of the whole. During pledgeship, he gets to know each active member and his pledge brothers and the sense of brotherhood which Sigma Chi exerts. He is able to evaluate the diversity of the members and create close bonds of friendship.

Becoming part of the Campus. Being a pledge of Sigma Chi opens up a world of friendships not only in Sigma Chi but also throughout campus. Participating in activities, such as intramurals, and attending all-college functions is beneficial to any college student. Sigma Chi members and pledges are encouraged to join other campus organizations in their major fields (such as the Finance Club or Physics Club) and to become active in campus-oriented groups (such as Student Senate and service organizations).

Making Grades. In order to be initiated, the Sigma Chi Constitution states that a Sigma Chi pledge must be in good standing with the university he attends. Although making grades is an individual endeavor, Sigma Chi attempts to aid all members and pledges by providing scholarship programs which could include study halls, tutoring, or other programs devised to aid all members and pledges achieve high scholarship.

Scholarships. Scholarships are available to active members of Sigma Chi both locally and internationally. There are also several loans available through the Sigma Chi Foundation.

- The Sigma Chi Foundation has assets of nearly \$7,000,000. Each year, the Foundation makes available more than \$150,000 in scholarship grants and awards, and provides support to the Sigma Chi Student Aid Loan program which makes available another \$100,000 in low interest student loans each year.

**"Sigma Chi, more than anything else, got me involved with the people who knew how to study, and they helped me. I learned from them. *The Norman Shield* is still quite applicable now."**

- ---Dr. William DeVries, the Louisville, Kentucky surgeon who performed the first four implants of the permanent artificial heart.

Big Brothers. Soon after formal pledging, each pledge will choose a Big Brother, who is an active member of the chapter. The relationship between Big Brother and Little Brother is unique within Sigma Chi, for this bond of brotherhood and friendship is one of the first the pledge experiences in the fraternity; he will find that it lasts for life. After the pledge becomes a member, he will also have the opportunity to be a future pledge's Big Brother.



Costs. All Sigma Chi members and pledges are expected to meet their financial obligations. Dues vary from chapter to chapter, so it is important for every rushee to find out the costs before he pledges. A portion of his dues is sent to National Headquarters for his pledge pin, his pledge manual (*The Norman Shield*), and matriculation costs. The remainder stays with the chapter for fraternity operations.

- The initiation fee is in addition to dues. This one-time fee is currently \$115.00 and is sent to General Fraternity Headquarters immediately after initiation. This fee pays for the badge, certificate of membership, and subscription to *The Magazine of Sigma Chi* while he is an undergraduate.
- Other costs which are in addition to dues are the costs incurred for the Fall semester's Christmas Formal and the Spring Formal. Both of these activities cannot be attended by every person due to various reasons; therefore, each person who attends is responsible for his own expenses.

## Overview

Therefore, the reasons for and purposes of pledgeship are:

- To prepare the pledge for Initiation and his obligations as a brother.
- To enable him to better understand and know his pledge brothers and the brothers in his chapter.
- To evaluate his merits further before Initiation and give him time to evaluate the chapter and assess his own desire for Initiation.
- To develop an appreciation for Sigma Chi by learning its history, heritage, ideals, programs, and traditions.
- To learn about the Greek System in general and explore its values and benefits.
- To work with the chapter in campus and community projects to enhance a spirit of cooperation and fulfillment.
- To experience fraternity activities, develop friendships, share experiences, and feel the bonds of brotherhood before obliging himself to a lifelong commitment.

Along with these benefits, Sigma Chi offers an atmosphere of fun and brotherhood not obtained elsewhere in the college. The college experience is not complete without outside activities, just as life itself is incomplete without participation and involvement in activities outside of job and family.

**Pledging Sigma Chi is the beginning of lifelong fraternity.**

### **Initiation**

**"Our initiations weren't a hell-raising type of thing---Sigma Chis were above that type of thing. They are interested more in what's inside your mind than in what's inside your gut. My Fraternity days in college were worthwhile and memorable."**

- ---Bob Griese, TV sportscaster and former Miami Dolphins quarterback.

Initiation is the ceremony which links all Sigma Chis together. The process of initiation is uniform throughout the chapters and is the most important and most eagerly awaited step in becoming part of Sigma Chi.

Initiation week is a time of retrospect and thought for the pledge. During this week he goes through the experience of Sigma Chi as set forth by [our founders](#) and those who followed. While the content of initiation is secret, the results of the experience stay with Sigma Chis throughout their lives.

**"I am proud to be a Sigma Chi. I have found over the years, in every Sig and Sweetheart I have met, one thread that runs through all of us, that God put us on earth to make the world a little better, and to have some fun in the process."**

- ---Charles C. Gates, Jr., Board Chairman, Gates Rubber Co. and Gates Learjet Corporation.

