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**Post in the chat your  
initiating chapter, university  
and location!**

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# FrEd Session #1 Objectives

- To discuss the founding of SAI
  - To discuss earliest SAI activist measures
  - To discuss prejudice in SAI
  - To review the SAI purpose, mission/vision, national objectives, and national/regional/province officers
  - Plan 11/15 FrEd Session
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# Genesis: The Founding of SAI

- Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia was founded in 1898; University of Michigan chartered their chapter June 2, 1902. No organization that served as a social society for women music students existed; thus, creating an organization for women with the same kinds of aims began to develop immediately.
  - Two versions of the founding of SAI exist:
    - Because of PMA, Fredreka Howland (the wife of the Head of the Vocal Department) approached women in the school of music
    - Minnie Davis Sherrill approached interested young faculty members and took that idea to Mrs. Howland.
    - However it was started, Minnie Davis Sherrill was then selected to approach Albert Stanley with the idea.
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## **June 8, 1960 Interview with Minnie Davis Sherrill on Founding**

“I remember my interview with Professor Stanley very clearly-- he was slow in giving his consent-- for he feared it might be ‘just another sorority’ and that he did not want. His consent was finally given in these words-- ‘if you will promise to do something really to advance the art of music, I will say yes-- but if you intend to be another sorority only, then I will say no!’ After I explained what our cause for founding would be-- ‘Music-- its advancement for the Art,’ then he finally said, ‘Yes’-- which was a great joy to all of the seven founders.

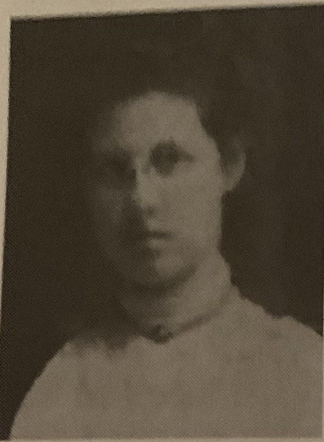
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**While only 7 Founders were named, 1 decided to remain unnamed as a founder. This person wrote the first ritual ceremony. What was her name?**

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## OTHER KEY PERSONNEL



**Elsa Gardner  
Stanley**

### **Elsa Gardner Stanley**

Elsa, the daughter of Albert A. and Emma Bullock Stanley, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on 26 November 1878. Her early childhood was spent in that city, where her father worked as a church organist. When Elsa was almost ten, Mr. Stanley accepted a teaching position in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan, and the family moved to Ann Arbor. There Elsa attended public schools and also studied music at the Ann Arbor School of Music (later the University School of Music) of which her father was Director.

Elsa was an outstanding student in high school. She excelled in literary studies and in music, and matriculated in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan from which school she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1906.

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## June 12, 1903

The seven founders met at the home of Elizabeth Campbell and “solemnly pledge themselves to help each other with sisterly affection, to stand for the highest musical scholarship, for nobility and uprightness of character and the maintenance of friendly and unselfish relations among women in the music profession.”



Members of Alpha Chapter, the picture being taken in June 1904. Standing, Leila Farlin (Laughlin), Elsa Gardner Stanley, Mary Storrs (Andersen), Minnie Davis (Sherrill), Frances Caspari, Mabel Ross Rhead, and Blanche Abbott (Mullen). Seated, Esther Seltzer (Wilson), Elizabeth Campbell, Ella Butler Babcock, Ruth Martin, Nora Crane Hunt, and Emma Fischer (Cross). Not pictured was Founder Georgina Potts.

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# The First Convention, 1907



First National Convention at Ann Arbor, June 4 and 5, 1907. Final Evening, Reception and Dance. Four chapters, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, with guests and chaperones. First row, fourth from left, First National President, Edna Lowry; third from right, Mrs. Kelsey, Friend of fraternity, Second row, seventh from left, Professor Albert Stanley, Mrs. Stanley at his right, chaperones. Third row, second from left, Founder Minnie M. Davis, and third from right, Founder Nora Crane Hunt. Fourth row, third from left, Founder Leila H. Farlin. Founders not pictured: Elizabeth Campbell, Frances Caspari, Georgina Potts.



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**Post in the Chat: How many  
conventions have you  
attended? Where?**

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## SAI Activism: WWII

- Under the leadership of Gertrude Evans, each chapter was sent a book containing one “Defense Stamp”. Each chapter and each member of the fraternity was asked to “pledge themselves to buy as many stamps and war bonds as possible”.
  - President Evans sent out a letter in May 1942 that members 1) help supply guns and planes 2) protect and keep going the things we have going 3) study hard and gain everything from college training
  - In June 1942, Gertrude resigned as national president to accept a position with the US Army. Kathleen Davison took over as president.
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# 1968 Convention: “A Year of Involvement”

- In commemoration of the 65th year of its founding, SAI leadership hoped to “remember and celebrate the past, take stock of the present and plan for the future” (207)
  - President Jeanette Kirk made an impassioned challenge to the delegates to not “alter but to adapt the meaningful ideals of SAI to the changing cultural, campus, and community scene” (208). She said, “Let us be comprehending, visionary, and creative by planting the needed seeds of change”. Her speech at the Dinner of Honors was entitled, “We Dwell in Possibility”
  - The keynote speaker Ruth Sickafus, whose topic was “The Larger View- Opportunity and Challenge”, presented a survey of what had been done and what needed to be done through music:
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**“Someone must lead the way. Why  
Sigma Alpha Iota? Why NOT Sigma  
Alpha Iota?”**

**-Ruth Sickafus, 1968**

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**Did you participate in a life  
changing activism activity  
with your chapter?**

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# First Incident of Prejudice in SAI: 1917

- At the 1917 Convention, the matter of whether SAI was going to admit members based on religion (both Jewish and Mormon faiths were called into question). Both received answers of “No”. In the national bylaws from 1918-1926, it stated very specifically that either religion could not be initiated. As of 2020, no chapter in Utah has applied to charter a chapter.
  - In 1950, several chapters initiated “colored girls” (as it was termed then). The Professional Panhellenic Association (of which SAI was a member) told organizations that they should exclude Black people from membership. Epsilon chapter initiated a Black woman in May 1950 and refused to comply. The president at the time Kathleen Davison supported the chapter.
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## **Chapters at HBCUs (Historical Black Colleges and Universities)**

- Delta Nu became the first chapter established at a Historically Black College and University in 1965, followed by Delta Psi at Lincoln University (MO) in 1966.
  - Jessye Norman, charter member of Delta Nu, was one of the first Black collegiate members to perform at successive conventions.
  - Since then, 21 Chapters have been chartered at HBCUs with the bulk (13) being chartered from 1995-2008 (7 are inactive)
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**Was your initiating chapter  
diverse? What are your  
thoughts on that now?**

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# 7 Purposes of SAI

- TO FORM chapters of women college students and alumnae who have a sincere interest in music.
  - TO UPHOLD the highest standards of music.
  - TO FURTHER the development of music in America and throughout the world.
  - TO GIVE inspiration and encouragement to members.
  - TO ORGANIZE the cultural life of Sigma Alpha Iota members as a contributing factor to their educational growth.
  - TO SUPPORT the ideals and goals of the member's Alma Mater.
  - TO ADHERE to the highest standards of citizenship in school, community and fraternity life.
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# Mission and Vision of SAI

**The Mission of Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity is to encourage, nurture and support the art of music.**

- Supports and encourages women musicians of all ages, races, and nationalities
  - Supports and promotes successful and innovative educational programs in music for all stages of life
  - Cultivates excellence in musical performance
  - Promotes programs and activities that stress the love and importance of music in our lives
  - Recognizes technological advances in the field of music
  - Dedicates financial resources that ensure the continuation of programs necessary to support the objectives of the fraternity in perpetuity
  - Has as its members people who exemplify professional and ethical behavior in the spirit of the Sigma Alpha Iota founders
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# 2018-2022 National Objectives

- Foster a lifetime commitment to Sigma Alpha Iota.
- Prioritize music in all aspects of chapter programming.
- Honor the founders through respect for our ritual.
- Nurture sisterhood.
- Develop strong women leaders.
- Promote women in music.
- Increase knowledge and support of SAI Philanthropies, Inc.

## National Executive Board

Region 1 Officer: Mayalisa Bordenkirtcher

Province Officer (Xi C): Megan Nugent

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## **SAI, Race, and Sisterhood (11/15)**

- We will begin the process of diving deeper into how race has shaped Sigma Alpha Iota since 1965.
  - Please be open to discussing in small groups your experiences with race as an SAI. Also, determine a goal you would like to see accomplished in our work together as a chapter.
  - We will review the 2018-2022 National Objectives and share specific ways we can approach these objectives with DEI lense.
  - Wear your college shirt or anything that represents where you have lived as an SAI!
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