

### *Talent Hunt History:*

The Talent Hunt Program of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. is one of several National Mandated Programs that is designed to identify and support the youth of our nation and the world. The original idea is credited to Brother J. Austin Atkins of Winston Salem, North Carolina, and Brother Dewey Duckett of Rock Hill, South Carolina. While the idea was conceived in 1945, the first District Talent Hunt Program was held in the Sixth District in Charlotte, North Carolina, on April 19, 1946. The Talent Hunt Program was developed to provide youth with a comparable platform due to in partisanship and limited opportunities to develop, express, and showcase their talents.

The success of the Talent Hunt Program, especially in the Sixth District, from the standpoint of community interest and scholarship assistance made available to the winners as a result of overwhelming public support, the national organization adopted the program. The Talent Hunt as a national program, made its grand debut in 1953 when the Fraternity featured winners of the local and regional contests on a public program at the Grand Conclave in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The original statement of the Talent Hunt idea included this expression: "Creative and outstanding capacities in any honorable activity should be eligible for consideration." During public presentations, all original displays were limited to the field of music. Since that time, the Talent Hunt Program has been expanded to include other forms of expressive arts.

It is significant to note that prior to 1969, all participants in the Talent Hunt Program were required to be high school seniors. In 1969, documents indicated revision in the guidelines for the Talent Hunt Program on every level. This revision expanded the level of participation to grades 9 through 12.

The Talent Hunt Program of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. has touched thousands of students, many of whom have gone on to make outstanding contributions to their communities and to our world. Many have earned scholarships, awards, and recognitions through exposure to this program. (For example, Debra Byrd worked with Barry Manilow and is now doing solo work, movie, and television work, and had the privilege to entertain with Eddie and Gerald Levert of the O'Jays and Levert Singing Group, both of whom were outstanding vocalists and recording artists of our generation. Vincent Phillips (former College Professor of Music in North Carolina); and Barbara Saxton (Violinist) formerly with Cleveland Women's Sextet now living in South Africa. It is our unyielding commitment to supporting our youth.