

Gamma Theta Upsilon Initiation Ceremony

The setting for the ceremony for initiation to Gamma Theta Upsilon may be as formal or as informal as a Chapter desires. The initiation might be in conjunction with some out-of-doors event such as a field trip, with a regular meeting of the Chapter, with a formal banquet, or other gathering of the Chapter Members. The ceremony that follows is a short version, including only the “solemn oath” of the Initiates.

1. Welcome by the President of the Chapter.

This can be an informal and extemporaneous expression or formal statements of welcome by the presiding Officer. Each Chapter may determine its own form.

2. Introduction of Initiates by the Chair of the Membership Committee

The Initiates should be pre-arranged in the order in which introductions will be made. It is suggested that they be separately grouped and introduced as Initiates for Honorary and Regular

Then the Membership Chair shall say:

“President _____, I take pleasure in presenting to the _____ Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon the following persons for Honorary Membership _____; the following persons for Regular Membership: _____. All of these Candidates have met the requirements for their class of Membership and each Candidate is eligible for induction.”

Then the President shall say:

“I am glad to receive the petition of this group for Membership in Gamma Theta Upsilon. Before proceeding with your pledge to service in Gamma Theta Upsilon, we shall acquaint you briefly with its history and symbolism.”

3. History of the Society and an Explanation of the Symbolism

These may be read by someone appointed by the President.

"A Brief History of Gamma Theta Upsilon:

On May 15, 1928, a local professional fraternity, under the name of Gamma Theta Upsilon, was organized at Normal, Illinois, under the leadership of Dr. Robert G. Buzzard. Prior to that time, it had been known as the Geography Club of Illinois State Normal University. After three years of successful functioning, letters were sent out to other Geography clubs suggesting that a national fraternity be organized. The national organization, with four Chapters, was announced on May 15, 1931. Gamma Theta Upsilon, with ten Chapters, was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois as a professional fraternity in Geography on March 5, 1936. In January, 194_9, Gamma Theta Upsilon became an International Geographical Honor Society. Our local Chapter, _____ was founded on _____, with Charter Members: _____.

Symbolism:

The Gamma Theta Upsilon badge is a key that signifies the achievement of quality in a field of Geography. The base or body of the key is a seven-sided shield, with each bevel bearing the initial of one of the Earth's great landmasses. Beginning with Europe at the top, there are the continents of the Old or Eastern World: Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, On the left side of the key are North America, South America, and Antarctica, the three continents brought into recorded geographic knowledge as humanity expanded westward from the Old World to the New World.

Spread across the base of the key are five wavy blue lines representing the five great oceans that have carried voyagers to all the lands of the Earth: the Atlantic, the Indian, the Pacific, the Arctic, and the Antarctic or Great Southern Ocean.

A White star above the waves symbolizes Polaris, the great guide to early travelers over the northern hemisphere's uncharted vastness.

At the key's top are the letters Gamma, Theta, and Upsilon, the initials of three Greek words, Ge (Earth), Thalassa (sea), and Hypaithrois (atmosphere), to serve as a reminder of the three environmental domains of concern to geographers.

The colors of Gamma Theta Upsilon symbolize these three geographic domains: brown for the Earth, light blue for the sea, and gold for the sunlight or sky.

Gamma Theta Upsilon is an honor society in the field of Geography. There are no secret signs, words, or handshakes. Gamma Theta Upsilon Members wear the Society's badge as a sign to the World of their interest and achievement in Geography and their pledge to support and promote the discipline."

4. Pledge by Initiates

The Vice-President shall say to the Initiates:

"Having become acquainted with the meaning of Gamma Theta Upsilon, are you willing to take the Pledge of Membership? If so, answer "I am."

The Initiates shall so answer.

"I am."

The Vice-President shall then continue:

"Then repeat after me:

I do hereby pledge myself...

to service in Geography...

throughout my lifetime...

in whatever capacity I may find,...

and to use Geography...

to the service of humanity'."

5. Acceptance by the President

The President shall say:

"As President of _____ Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, I welcome you into Membership of Gamma Theta Upsilon with all of the rights and privileges which such Membership entails. I hope that your years in the organization and as a friend of Geography will bring you much pleasure and happiness."

Following this ceremony, there may be a formal program (banquet, speaker, or other event) or an informal activity (out-of-doors perhaps) as part of the initiation program.