



# Gamma Theta Upsilon Initiation Ceremony



## **Setting of Ceremony:**

The setting of 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, a regular meeting of the Chapter, a formal banquet, or other gathering of the Chapter members.

## **Fluidity and Personalization:**

This document is meant to provide a basis for Chapters to conduct their initiation ceremony. However, it is suggested and advised that Chapters add to the ceremony so that it is more in line with their department/school/organization. Examples of this may include reciting Chapter history, recognizing events that the Chapter is known for/favors, or expounding upon tenets within the *Symbolism* section that align with the Chapters members. This is an opportunity to relay what makes your specific Chapter unique.

## **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 membership.*

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 AND/OR 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, goals, and symbolism."



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## 3. History of the Society, Goals of the Society, and 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 1949, Gamma Theta Upsilon became an International Geographical Honor Society.

Our local Chapter, \_\_\_\_\_ was founded on \_\_\_\_\_, with Charter Members:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### Goals of the Society:

The goals of Gamma Theta Upsilon are directed towards furthering the discipline of Geography, geographic excellence, and service. They are as follows:

1. To further professional interest in Geography by affording a common organization for those interested in the field.
2. To strengthen student and professional training through academic experiences in addition to those of the classroom and laboratory.
3. To advance the status of Geography as a cultural and practical discipline for study and investigation.
4. To encourage student research of high quality, and to promote an outlet for publication.
5. To create and administer funds for furthering graduate study and/or research in the field of Geography.
6. To encourage members to apply geographic knowledge and skills in service to humankind.



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## Symbolism:

The Gamma Theta Upsilon badge is a key that signifies the achievement of quality in a field of Geography. The badge also incorporates the Land, Water, and Sky, which serve to convey the interdisciplinary nature of Geography across these three spheres and anything that is connected to them.

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: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. These landmasses represent the physical and environmental world, as well as the primary zones of human habitation, which we study in conjunction with the physical world.

Spread across the base of the key are five wavy blue lines representing the five great oceans: the Atlantic, the Indian, the Pacific, the Arctic, and the Antarctic or Great Southern Ocean that served as barriers to travel, but also represent the majority of Earth's surface and the changing relationship that humanity has shared with the hydrosphere.

A white star above the waves symbolizes Polaris, the North Star, as a guide to travelers over the uncharted vastness of the world. We can even think of this white star as a constellation, representing the vast celestial network of satellites that now helps us navigate and measure phenomena across the globe.

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 spheres of interest to geographers and the dynamic nature of the world geographers study. They are symbolized as: 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.



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## 4. Pledge by Initiates

The Vice-President (or designated member) 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.”*)

“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 the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, I welcome you into Membership of Gamma Theta Upsilon with all of the rights and privileges that such Membership entails. I hope that your years in the organization and as a friend of Geography will bring you much pleasure and happiness.”