

Interview with Martin Dolan faculty advisor?
December 14

MD: I'm not sure I would say about five years.

Int: OK this is about when Phi Alpha Theta was started ok when where you interested in starting the chapter on campus?

MD: Well I had come to Northern Michigan University from the University of Minnesota where we had had a chapter in the history department there and I had done my undergraduate work and graduate work there in Minnesota and Phi Alpha Theta offered us a form of intellectual discourse outside of the classroom. In a place like Minnesota which is so big it allowed people to get together in an informal setting. When I came to Northern and discovered they didn't have a chapter of Phi Alpha Theta it seemed to be that since Phi Alpha Theta was an honorary society that it would be a good thing to bring Northern if we could for the benefit of the students.

INT: What was involved with getting the group started? I noticed they had a petition.

MD: right, well that was a long time ago, 1968 about 20 years ago. I had to contact the national headquarters and I can't remember the fellow who was in charge of that now but there was somebody who sort of heads up the national office as executive secretary I think his title was, you probably have that on records somewhere.

INT: Donald Hoffman.

MD: Ok, Donald Hoffman, well I wrote to him. Well first of all what I did was I asked the chairman of the department who was Doctor Saunderigger and I brought the idea up to him and he checked around with some of the staff and they thought it would be a good idea and I was encouraged to take the initiative and the time and get it under way. And so I wrote to Hoffman and asked him how to go about setting a chapter up and he said you have to get to submit a petition and describe the school and etc, etc. So we went ahead and put the necessary reports together and got the approval of the admit vice president who was Dr. ??????? at the time and the support of the history chairman, Saunderigger, and we applied for a chapter at Northern. ???????

INT: This might be I don't know but, when you guys can have a chapter did they say you guys would get all the rules and name or did you guys get to pick it out or?

MD: No they didn't assign the name evidently the names were assigned based on how many chapters there were and they went through the Greek alphabet and I suppose there was Alpha chapter somewhere Ok. So we didn't have any choice at all in choosing the name of the chapter.

INT: How long were you their faculty advisor?

MD: I'm not sure I would say about five years.

INT: Why did you stop working with the group?

MD: Why did I stop working with the group?

INT: Yes.

MD: Well there were a couple of reasons, I hadn't, I needed more time for my own writing and research and other people in the department did express interest in taking over the advising of the chapter.

INT: What are your impressions as far as the importance of Phi Alpha Theta on the campus?

MD: Well I think that it can provide the vehicle for students to get together in a less formal setting with fellow history students and with faculty and then outside of campus some of the things we would do was we would attend regional conferences and often times have students deliver papers at the regional conferences and that gave them the opportunity to see another facet of the discipline. I think the big advantage that I saw to Phi Alpha Theta was that since it was an honorary society in the discipline of history that for students who were good students to graduate with a history major and then also be able to put down that they were a member of this honor society gave them something to add to their résumé which was special or different and create an asset because often time on applications what honors recognition etc, etc have you received and it gave something to fill those blanks in.

INT: When you were the faculty advisor did you have larger turn-outs for the events that ??? sponsored or were you just, maybe I don't know, I'm assuming you sponsored a lot of events was this true?

MD: Actually what happened initially in the first years was that the basic event was primarily the introduction of new members. It was, it's always been my belief that a student organization should be run and directed by students primarily for their benefit and that the faculty should primarily engage in advising past that. In the initial years of phi alpha theta there wasn't a great deal of interest in having a very active ????? so the primary activity we had every year was to contact people and let them know that they were eligible for membership in the society and then have the initiation party. Although there was a period in the seventies where we did have a couple, we did have a couple extra meetings where we ended up playing a ????? game, some historical ????? games. Which was great fun, I suppose we, we didn't check ids.

INT: Did the students seem to be real enthusiastic about the group as far as wow I'm in phi alpha theta or did?

MD: I think people recognized the advantage of a formal recognition for their academic ?????????? that phi alpha theta provided. I think that most of them had probably little sessions where they got together and played a couple of historical simulation games, they seemed to be the most enjoyable. But we also had some sessions where people came and talked about the research of their studies.

INT: During the time that you were on faculty advisor, did you notice the difference between the phi alpha theta history program to the history program?

MD: Well there were some faculty members at the time who felt that phi alpha theta was too exclusive and too snobbish and too elitist. Evidently they had some students who weren't eligible for phi alpha theta who wanted to include in some sort of a form and so there was an impatist to develop a history club separate from phi alpha theta. I suppose looking back I can see that would be a natural revolution because phi alpha theta did exclude some people, but it wouldn't necessarily exclude them from meetings and things. But they wanted to get a history club going and then incorporate phi alpha theta's as part of the history club. It was at that point where I think there may have been some bit of difference in opinion and that may have come around about the time that I decided to step aside and let other people ???????? since they had a lot of ideas, a lot good ideas.

INT: You said that the group decided they wanted to be ?????? and active?

MD: Yes.

INT: Would you have liked to see them more active?

MD: Well I'm a great one who believes in self-determination so whoever wanted to be active or inactive was really up to them. I think there are times when you get certain students together and there's a certain mix of hemisphere and interest in activity and some people are really good at organizing and they put it together and have togetherness in the program. I think there is other times when the thing is probably maybe almost dormant. So I really think that, I really believe that when you're dealing with young adults it really is what they want to make of it. I don't think you have to, well I don't think there's things that says here's the history club or here is phi alpha theta and by God, you know, it'd be good for you people to come to that. I admit enough in class I don't ?????? admission to running people's social lives. So I really believe in self-determination ?????????????? extra-curricular activities. One thing that I often thought and maybe we didn't take enough advantage of is that since half the ?????? on the history club all organized with

the student activities we probably ought to learn to work ASNMU more for fun.

INT: Yes. What were the initiations like? I was talking with Dr. Meyer and he said that they changed quite a bit. ?????? started to what we had ????? Dr. Berens

MD: Well we followed I guess what I would say an adapted form of the rituals I can recall the initiation format. Since we that for people, people did totally different roles. Then we had the pledge, the initiation pledge. We pretty much followed the format that the national society handed down. What was the last one then or didn't you read it?

INT: It took I guess about 5 minutes, we were sitting in Dr. Berens living room, Dr. Magnaghi says will you and he says yeah and that was about it.

MD: We tended to go through the format like many honor societies sometimes the forms theological in their overturns and there might be a lot of people that aren't comfortable with that I don't know. We always went through the

INT: Where were the initiations usually held?

MD: We usually had them on campus, in the university center, sometimes they were at people's houses. Probably mostly on campus.

INT: When were the introductions?

MD: In the spring of the year.

INT: Did they go during the school year, four year?

MD: No, we had one a year.

INT: And how large was the number of students involved?

MD: Oh, usually 30 to 40 students it seemed to meet every year. ??????? you know you know we whipped out some operation and definition regarding?? I don't exactly recall what they were you had to have a minimum number of credits I think they followed the national guideline.

But we also contacted history minors also, both majors and minors. And I think the minors had to have something like 12 semester credits had to be in. But once again I think there were national guidelines on that. I think people had to be at least sophomore status.

INT: Did you receive a lot of support from the university when you were trying to get the chapter established?

MD: Do membership, do a membership card.

MD: Yeah I think everyone was very supportive, there was a lot of individual encouragement, Dr. Saunderberg was very encouraging, the Dean and Graduate School, Dr. [redacted] was very encouraging. I had the full support of Dr. [redacted] who was the academic vice president at the time. He was very pleased to see that an honor society in the discipline was being started up, he thought that Northern could benefit from that as well as the present institution that being the honor society and that it would also be a distinct advantage for Northern students.

INT: How would you on a scale from one to ten would you rate the chapter when you had it?

MD: ten being most active and one being most ????

INT: ten being probably [redacted] and one being probably nonexistent

MD: I would rate it maybe nine in terms of the interest in people in joining it. When we contacted people and told them they were eligible to become members of this group and that this group recognized them for their academic achievement there was a [redacted] in becoming a member of that because as you know once your a member of that you are a member for life you don't necessarily have to keep the annual dues up and the initiation fee takes care of a lifetime membership in the organization. In terms of program and activity I would have to rate that more of a three. So but like I say those were different times and students were occupied with a lot of other things. You know those were the late 60s and early 70s, people were interested in causes that went far beyond, there was interest in the vietnam war and there was tremendous issues of civil rights yet, there was interest in amnesty for people who were ready to draft in vietnam. So there was lot of issues that transcended more traditional than academic that people were involved in.

INT: OK, last question, can you remember any of the names of earlier officers that came, it seems that our records have disappeared [redacted] in the past. Anything you could add would be helpful.

MD: Oh boy, Do we have any lists of the early initiates?

INT: All that I know of is a list that probably the original initiates. I think it is like 1969-1970. And then like the next one we have is like 1976 that we have been able to find.

MD: What about membership cards?

INT: I don't know about that.

MD: Do membership, do a membership card.

INT: A lot of them ??????

MD: There not dated. Well I can remember I think one of the officers was a fellow by the name of Tom Carsen, 69 or 70. Jeff ?????? would have probably been another officer there was a series of students at the time they were members Linda Green, Abigail ???, all these people with double majors this group political science, ??? Tripele major political science, economics and history. ??? was political science and history and then there was this other guy that I am trying to think of, hold on a minute, her father is in charge of the at at Lake Superior State. I know in fact they were some of the people that began to get some program going, but as I say I think there is over the years has evolved primarily around initiation and then around the 70s about 1970-71 you did do some historical simulation and played some games

Int: What were they like?

MD: What were they like? Well there was a game called ??? it really had to do with the coming of the American Revolution and of course we were getting ready for the revolution about that time and we began to play that and it also tied in with the developed in the history department the historical thinking and writing . And I was given American Revolution for a topic for that and in that course. And the students used to come over to the house and divide up into teams and spend the whole evening playing could have various roles; colonel merchants some were british officials, judges and there were other people running the government trying to figure out what to do with these colonists that didn't want to pay taxes, it was a very nice game and it really I think produced a lot of cohesiveness. The only problem to the game was be on the colonist team, the british government team was the more frustrating. In that it was much more exciting to be a colonist merchant and to and that was one of the more exciting to be a merchant. But they were fun games and I think people would talk about them after and probably be fun ,that would be something to look into maybe do it again but historical simulation games but now a days I suppose everything is on the computer, right?

INT: I would think so.

MD: but they are fun to do, fun to play. It was a big board game.

INT: Well thank-you for your time.