

## Remarks by Zeta Alpha Alumnus Kevin W. Krepinevich, CAE

Thank you, Brother Taylor.

University officers, Foundation Vice President and Brother David May, Representatives of Theta Chi International staff, Brothers, Fraternity and Sorority Representatives, Little Sisters, Greek Advisors, family members and guests.

For those of you who attended the recolonization ceremony less than six months ago, let me assure you, I did not bring with me a pack of matches! There will be no test today! I will let those who attended explain the significance of that comment to those who did not attend!

Let me start by saying something I have been waiting to say for over two years.

Welcome new brothers!

You have no idea how proud the Alumni members of the Zeta Alpha Chapter and I am of your efforts over these last 6 months. Today there are brothers all over the country wearing their Theta Chi badges in your honor. You have demonstrated on so many levels, and in so many ways, what it means to be a Resolute Man.

When I stood before you in September, I talked about the history of the Zeta Alpha Chapter and the young men who went before and whose shoulders you stand upon. I also attempted to challenge you to look to your future to realize that you had a choice about your design for this version of Theta Chi Fraternity at Slippery Rock University.

A choice to be a Burden or a Beacon or a Brother Paul so eloquently put it Weasels or Warriors!

Clearly you have chosen wisely.

You have not crept back you have stormed back!

For that, you should be very proud. Your accomplishments over this very short time are amazing. Most importantly, you did them together!

But some things will never change. You must always in the back of your mind every day, consider your actions as if you are on some version of probation as a chapter.

From this point forward, you will always be identified as a member of Theta Chi Fraternity. How you perform in class, on campus and in the community WILL define you as an organization and as an individual. People will be watching.

If I can share with you one simple thought, that I hope you may carry with you from today forward.

Virtually every person in this room carries with them one of the most dangerous weapons in society today.

(Pull out cell phone.)

Yes, a cell phone.

With Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and probably 12 other social media platforms that a 60 something like me cannot even find let alone use, there exists the possibility of someone recording, without your knowledge and then putting it out there, promoting their own agenda, out of context, that can bully, misrepresent or even accurately document that which you did not mean, or wish to have shared with the world. Society today requires us each to realize there are consequences to our actions.

For instance, I recall a certain Instagram video of a certain group of young men dancing on a stage during Greek week? That will be there forever gentlemen!

But seriously, I believe that is the uniqueness of an organization like Theta Chi Fraternity. It sets a standard and invites young men to join and live by those standards. Hopefully, from this day forward, no matter the situation, each of you will take a breath, and ask yourself before you act, "What would a Resolute Man do?"

Before you know it, as you continue in your collegiate career and move on to your career and build families and influence communities and politics the question, "What would a Resolute Man do?" will not require a deep breath. It will become second nature. It will guide you on your journey through life. Doing the right thing for the right reasons.

You have already embraced the Theta Chi Sacred Purpose program in many ways but most visibly by taking the lead with the campus-wide drug and alcohol awareness program you sponsored in February to a standing room only audience and most recently your program just this week with Kate Harding partnering with the Women's Center addressing the rape culture.

Young men taking a stand on the right side of issues behaving as leaders attracts young men who want to be leaders. It perpetuates a culture of change, understanding and responsibility. It changes the perception of what a fraternity is and what it can be.

But what does it really mean?

It means you have accepted the responsibility to help yourself, your friends your brothers and even strangers.

It means that there is no longer a doubt in your mind and without hesitation you WILL call 911 and accept the consequences because that is more responsible than hesitating and losing a friend.

It means you accept the responsibility to step into a situation and shorten your evening, rather than look the other way, to get someone, who may be in distress, home safely.

And it means it you may have to gather your personal courage to face someone and say "let's get you some help" when it is necessary.

That is YOUR Sacred Purpose.

But your work has just begun.

You are now the teachers. The standard bearers. The brothers who will share the ideals, standards and vision of this organization with those that will follow.

It is easy to start something.

What is hard is maintaining a standard. What is hard is resisting the urge to give in to the desire to let things slide “just a little this time.”

It is the lobster in the pot of water. He does not realize it is boiling until it is too late. Giving in on your standards just a little here and there over time and you will suddenly look around and find you have lost that which has made you special.

I challenge you to set your standards, live up to those standards and to maintain those standards. They will reward you in the long run.

You are the foundation of a new legacy of Theta Chi Fraternity at Slippery Rock University.

Hopefully in 54 years, you too will return to campus, at your college weight with the same amount of hair and perfect memory and meet the newest pledge class when they are initiated.

You will be able to share this moment with them like Brother Jack McMahon and Dr. Donald Hannon, who are with us, from the original charter class and are sharing the day with you!

For 25 years, the members of Theta Chi and more specifically the Theta Chi Pledges were known for their pledge boards.

This is a sample. (Show pledge board)

It is a wooden replica of the original Theta Chi Flag that hangs in the International office.

Now you may find it odd that 440 young men could become attached to a piece of wood but this one in particular is 44 years old!

I can guarantee you that there are many like it all around the country, some in places of honor and some carefully stored away.

Can you imagine being required to carry something like this with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, walking on campus, in class, when you ate, sleeping with it, at sporting events, at concerts, in the shower, everywhere, and it needed to be protected with your life!

Well today, I believe that would be considered hazing and probably a weapon!

But those were different times and I think you can see it was part of our way of teaching that you were now part of something that would be with you at all times and something you should protect!

And God forbid it would ever be taken from you!

Because, then there was one twice as long and twice as wide you would have to carry the next day.

And if you by some chance you might not keep that version in your possession the next one was painted in the exact same manner, but it was the size of a door!

Needless to say, most of us were very protective of our pledge boards!

When recolonization became a reality, we wanted to share the tradition but knew pledge boards could not be part of the culture and that is where the idea of wristbands originated. Much more subtle and acceptable. Even to the point that now Brother Eric Lehman's grandfather, who is in attendance today and is a member of Theta Chi asked if he could obtain one and wear it in honor of as his grandson as he pledged!

But I digress.

We have struggled with this tradition. We wanted to make a connection between the old and new and just could not find a way. And brother Gary Sablowski, better known as Saboo, who many of the Executive Board have come to know and love, just would not let the tradition fade. I cannot tell how many conversations we have had on this topic.

But we think we have found a solution! Unfortunately, Brother Saboo had to return home so would brother John Kreuzer come forward, and present President Sky our solution.

(Present brand-new Pledge Board with Zeta Alpha Chapter President on back wrapped in paper signed by all brothers in attendance.)

President Sky, from the 440 of us who carried our pledge board for 6 weeks, some as many as 8 weeks, we would like you to have this Presidential Pledge Board.

We would hope that you would consider it as a representation of the legacy of the Zeta Alpha Chapter. We hope as president you will protect and serve the fraternity as the 440 pledges before you protected and served the fraternity. We hope that you may be able to include this in some manner in the ceremony each year when you pass the mantle of leadership from president to president, passing the legacy of the chapter and its history and maybe consider making it part of the display at pinning ceremonies and share with the pledges it's significance.

Brother Riley, you started all of this. We could not have done this without you. And though we thought we might lose you... you found that SRU is where you belong, and you will be around for another two years! But in just a couple short weeks we will welcome you to the ranks of the Alumni.

I wish to thank Brothers Taylor, Ray, Mitch, Patrick and James... and Zack and JD who could not be with us and Executive Director Mike and his staff for their hard work over this 2-year period. Their guidance and leadership in the good times and challenging times have been outstanding. As expected. I also wish to thank the Zeta Alpha alumni association for their generosity to help get the chapter on its feet. Finally, I would like to thank the Chapter Advisory Board members who will continue to work with the chapter as needed to help guide you on your journey. Could the members of the Alumni Board and Chapter Advisory Board in attendance please stand?

In our first 25 years we did not have an alumni association and a Chapter Advisory Board to be there for us to help and guide when needed and keep us from sticking beans up our noses.

Hopefully, we can be there for you when you need us.

Well those are the serious realities as I see them.

But if you will indulge me for just a moment I would like to share with you what I believe to be the true meaning of Theta Chi Fraternity.

If you will all take your hand and do this (sweep your hand and grasp some air).

You have just grasped this moment in time with me. Hold on to it as tightly as you can and save it in your hand and in your heart.

Let it fill your senses. Smell it, see it and feel everything about it. It is a memory that will last a lifetime.

Before we began this process, there were brothers I had not seen in over 40 years and many I did not know. But the moment a phone call was made, or we walked into a room together that special thing you just grabbed opened like a special, beautiful, precious flower in our hearts and we were 19 again. We could smell the fresh cut grass in front of North Hall, recall every single score of the 3 on 3 basketball games on the court behind the house, hear the "clonking" on the pinball machines at the Neuman center, and the creek of the stairs of the house at 343 Normal avenue and remember taking yearbook pictures on the roof of that house, we immediately relive the fun and memories (that we cannot talk about here) like school buses and Happy Days lunch boxes but there are those special moments together that no one can ever take from us.

If I asked for help they did not hesitate, they asked me where and when and how much. They are here today!

That is the foundation on which everything else I have shared today is based. That is what you have pledged to be part of to embrace, to live to love. This special moment wrapped in a special bond of brotherhood.

We hope today by installing the Zeta Alpha Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at Slippery Rock University we have given you that opportunity.

The beginning of that special thing, that bond of respect, dignity, leadership, success, support, scholarship, friendship and brotherhood that for some reason can only come from a fraternal experience.

But don't expect it to be easy.

We will pick on you and love you like a little brother.

Because brothers, you are one of us now!