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2021-22 Gamma Omega House Corporation

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Gamma Gab

Gamma Omega Chapter

of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity at Penn State



www.atopennstate.com

Fall 2021

2020-2021 PRESIDENT'S REPORT



March 11, 2020 was the day everything normal with our House Operations hit an iceberg...as the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic began to impact life in the United States. Penn State decided that day to initially go to three week online learning and a week later extended that through the end of the Spring semester.

Gamma Omega House Corporation made the decision on March 11, 2020 to remain OPEN for the students and worked to greatly revamp the meal plan operations for the second half of Spring 2020. This would not have been possible without the dedicated service of Donna Ray who kept Gamma Omega operating through some very difficult early pandemic days.

House Operations were severely impacted for 2020:

- Spring semester 2020 2nd half meal plan refunds were issued (May 2020)
- PPP loan approved through First National Bank for payroll (April 2020)
- In house students returning for Spring 2020 second half decreased by 50%
- In house students returning for Fall 2020 decreased by 25%
- Additional expenses for Covid-19 cleaning and sanitizing increased 25%
- State College Borough restrictions for our house to operate

Please consider supporting Gamma Omega at this time of Covid-19 crisis to "Make an Impact" for future generations of Penn State ATO's.

Respectfully,

Rich Goldbeck '89

President

Gamma Omega House Corp.

REMEMBERING GEORGE T. GEISER: ATO IN 1942

George Geiser Visited ATO 80 Years After He Pledged. Here's What He Had to Say.

In 2019, ATO lost lifelong brother **George T. Geiser '42** at the age of 98.

George graduated in 1942 with a degree in finance and commerce, and after graduation and WWII, he had a long career with Westinghouse Electric Corp. He spent the last 25 years of his career at Headquarters in Pittsburgh with responsibilities all around the globe.

Before he passed away, George wanted to come back to the fraternity house that had meant so much to him at Penn State. During his visit, he said things were in many ways different but in many ways the same.

In 1939, the house was new and unseasoned by 80 years of fraternity life. There were overstuffed leather chairs, oriental rugs and a grand piano that George played regularly as he accompanied fraternity



George with ATO undergrads shortly before his death in 2019.

socials. There was a housemother who kept an eye on the young men and oversaw dinners in jackets and ties. Brothers took their studies seriously, and their socializing as well! George told stories of the price of a keg and how they settled in with one regularly on the side porch in the springtime.

While walking through the house, he and the brothers ended up in the corner bedroom where he lived for three years. He told his young brothers that he had been on the top bunk studying chemistry when the word came that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Life changed for everyone that day. As they continued the tour, George went room by room, telling who lived in each room and in what capacity many of them had fought, and in some cases died during the war.

George married Jane Royer from Kane, PA, in 1947 and the couple had three children. The family followed his Westinghouse career with stops in Sharon, PA, Edgewood, PA, and Columbus, OH. They settled in the Upper St Clair suburb of Pittsburgh in 1960 where he resided until his death.



Playing the ATO piano.



The ATO brothers in front of the house in 1938 with their dog Tau.

THON

ATO and ZTA Winning at THON, Again

THON 2021 resulted in **\$11,696,943.38** "For The Kids." Shoutout to our THON chairs, [@j_brna](#) [@rj_ward36](#) and [@rschweitz3](#) for their unwavering commitment to this cause and for all the work they did all year long to help us reach our total of **\$322,346.80**.

Another shoutout to our amazing dancers, [@mayeslane](#) [@bennyboy_1](#) [@patwinch](#) and [@rschweitz3](#) for representing [@atozta_psu](#) so well this weekend!

ATO and ZTA teamed up for Families Day this fall as they prepare for THON 2022!



Greek Organizations

1. Alpha Tau Omega and Zeta Tau Alpha	\$322,346.80
2. Alpha Omicron Pi and Phi Kappa Psi	\$252,530.51
3. Pi Kappa Alpha and Kappa Alpha Theta	\$180,530.76
4. Gamma Phi Beta and Acacia	\$176,843.71
5. Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Phi Epsilon	\$142,890.15



ATO and ZTA dancers gather at the THON HQ in the Graduate Hotel

Send us your Reunion pictures!

ATO Alumni Reunion @ 2020 Penn State vs Iowa basketball game at the Palestra in Philadelphia. L-R: **Rich Kuegler '89**, **Rich Goldbeck '89**, and **Mike** and **Jake Walter** pictured with the Nittany Lion.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Over and over, we hear about how Gamma Omega made a lifelong difference for brothers. But we want to hear your stories. Represent your decade — tell us about your favorite restaurant, best campus memory, ATO friends you still see.

Your stories are what keep us connected. It's easy to submit an update — just head over to our alumni website at atopennstate.com and click the "Submit an Update" tab, or email us at alumninews@affinityconnection.com.

Cancer Survivor Tucker Haas '23:

"The reason I am walking on this earth today is because of ATO"

THON is a larger-than-life representation of the positive impact that fraternities and sororities have at Penn State. The largest student-run philanthropy in the world, THON boasts a grand total of \$180 million dollars raised by 16,500 student volunteers since its inception in 1973—all focused on fighting childhood cancer.

We've all heard the stories from students about why they dance, and from families affected by cancer, talking about the tremendous support they've received because of THON. But today, we are going to hear from three fraternity brothers who have an even more personal connection to THON: they fought childhood cancer and won.

Tucker Haas '23

The diagnosis: "I was diagnosed in 2002 at the age of two years old. My mom was rocking me to sleep and found a bump behind my right ear that was abnormally large. Within a few days, I'd been diagnosed with undifferentiated sarcoma. I was in treatment from 2002-2007, relapsing four times. I had 77 radiation treatments and hundreds of chemo treatments. I went into remission in February 2007, and hit the 14-year mark this February."

The THON connection: Tucker says that his first THON should have been in 2003, but he was too sick to go. The next year, he was adopted by an emergency medical service group, but he was very into sports ("and they just kept sending me fire trucks," he says with a laugh), so his family requested that he be paired with another group. In 2005, he was re-adopted by Alpha Tau Omega and Zeta Tau Alpha ... a move that he says saved his life.

"It was just such an awesome experience. ATO has been so impactful in my life and my family's life. The relationships with ATO's THON chairs is the reason that I decided to come to Penn State. Every major event in my life, they were there. Every birthday, they were there. Once a year, my parents would rent a huge slip and slide and 30-40 brothers would stay the weekend and we just had a huge party."

Tucker says that THON, along with ATO and ZTA, are the reason he's here today.

"Cancer makes you grow up fast. We've



Cancer survivor Tucker Haas '23 was adopted by Alpha Tau Omega and Zeta Tau Alpha for THON while he battled sarcoma as a child. He led his high school's miniTHON to its highest-ever totals before becoming an ATO brother himself. Photo provided by Tucker Haas.



Tucker Haas says that THON, along with ATO and ZTA, are the reason he's here today. Photo provided by Tucker Haas.

had to make lifelong decisions that other kids don't have to make. I was dealing with a lot that kids my age didn't understand. The ATO guys were there for me. They'd tell me, 'Even if I don't understand, I know what you are going through isn't easy.'

He says the ATO brothers made him want to get involved with THON himself. He started out with miniTHON at his high school, Central York. As a freshman,

their miniTHON raised \$49,000. Tucker kept telling his story, growing the event. By the time he was a senior and co-captain of communications, they raised \$143,000.

Pledging to ATO: When he graduated, there wasn't much question about his next step. He wanted to go to Penn State, and he definitely wanted to pledge to ATO. "I rushed ATO and I immediately wanted to be involved with THON," he says. He was asked to speak during family hour in 2020 and shared his story in front of 15,000 people. "Four Diamonds, THON, that's the reason I'm here."

Even though last year was 'very tough' due to being virtual, he was proud to be on the ATO/ZTA team in 2021. "We raised \$320,000, which was the highest of any organization at Penn State. We've been the top Greek fundraiser since 1996 and it was great to stay on top."

The lasting impact of THON and ATO: He says that ATO made a lasting impact on his life. "A lot of kids don't carry lasting physical effects from their cancer, but I do, and that was really hard growing up. Kids saw me as 'the kid with cancer.' THON really helped me with that. It was nice to have older people, college kids, who could see beyond that."

Because of the tremendous impact that ATO brothers had on his childhood, it's hard for him to hear people give fraternities a bad rap.

"It's very tough when people are negative. Yes, bad things may go on, but I've had a very different experience. The reason I am alive today is because of PSU Greek life and ATO. The reason I am walking on this earth today is because of ATO—it has saved my life. I wouldn't be the person I am today without them, and it hurts me when I hear bad things. There is so much good stuff coming out of fraternities and sororities that is going unnoticed."



Note: This is part 1 of a 2 part series. A story about Robbie Schweitzer will appear in the next issue of Gamma Gab.