



The Black Track

Office of African American Affairs

THE DIVINE NINE

Get to know the Divine Nine

The Divine Nine; whether you have never heard of them or just recently heard of "The Divine Nine," this article is for you. In this article, we'll attempt to compartmentalize the rich history of the Divine Nine and highlight the impact of The Divine Nine on the community. At the Office of African American Affairs, we recognize the benefits and pride that Black sororities and fraternities bring, and we want to celebrate their efforts and community support.

The Divine Nine is how Black sororities and fraternities are collectively referred to. The technical name is, The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC). The nine Black Greek-letter organizations are referred to as the Divine Nine. The nine organizations include Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., and Lota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. (History of NPHC and the Divine Nine: Sorority and Fraternity Life, n.d.)



"We are the living example of civic and political engagement in our communities"

Rev. Charles White Jr.

Black people in America have always needed space to be recognized and supported. Our experience of the consistent mistreatment against our people is a burden on the community. When something is too heavy to carry, you need someone or something to support you along the journey to carry the weight. No organizations or institutions in America was willing or wanted to support the development of the Black community. It is said that the birth of the Divine Nine came from the civil rights movement and the increased need to support Black college students in predominantly white institutions. We, as Black people saw a need and answered the call for advocacy and support.

The first Black female Vice-President of the United States of America is a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. Making Alpha Kappa Alpha the first of the Divine Nine to hold such a prestigious position. In the past, the Divine Nine have supported many civil rights organizations, such as, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (History of NPHC and the Divine Nine: Sorority and Fraternity Life, n.d.) The Divine Nine organizations focus on uplifting the Black community in servitude with a strong representation of the Black experience and story.

The Divine Nine is still relevant and needed in our community, providing support and advocacy for our young Black leaders as they move forward with the development of the Black community. The Divine Nine is about support and advancement but also fun. The Divine Nine is known for its expressive dance called "Stepping." The origin of stepping dates to Africa, a part of the African gumboot dance. (Hilbring, 2020) The Divine Nine uses the dance and song as a call and response for audience engagement. The Divine Nine is often known for its stepping performance. Members of the Divine Nine were selected to performed at the White House.

In conclusion, all Black sororities and fraternities play an important advocacy role in developing the Black community. There is a rich history that dates to December 4, 1906, when the first of the Divine Nine, Alpha Phi Alpha was founded. (King, 2022) The Black community has a long-lasting organization that focuses explicitly on our advancement. Remember, we should continually tap into those resources and support their advocacy in advancing and developing the Black community. The Divine Nine will continue to contribute to the Black community, and we will, as a community, contribute to their efforts.

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