

MEMBERSHIP SELECTION ISSUES

In parallel with societal challenges of inclusion, the Fraternity had a long ordeal in overcoming issues with its membership selection. For unknown reasons, the 1870 Fraternity Constitution included the word “white” for the first time as a condition for membership. By the 1940s the word “white” had become an issue for our host academic institutions and society in general.

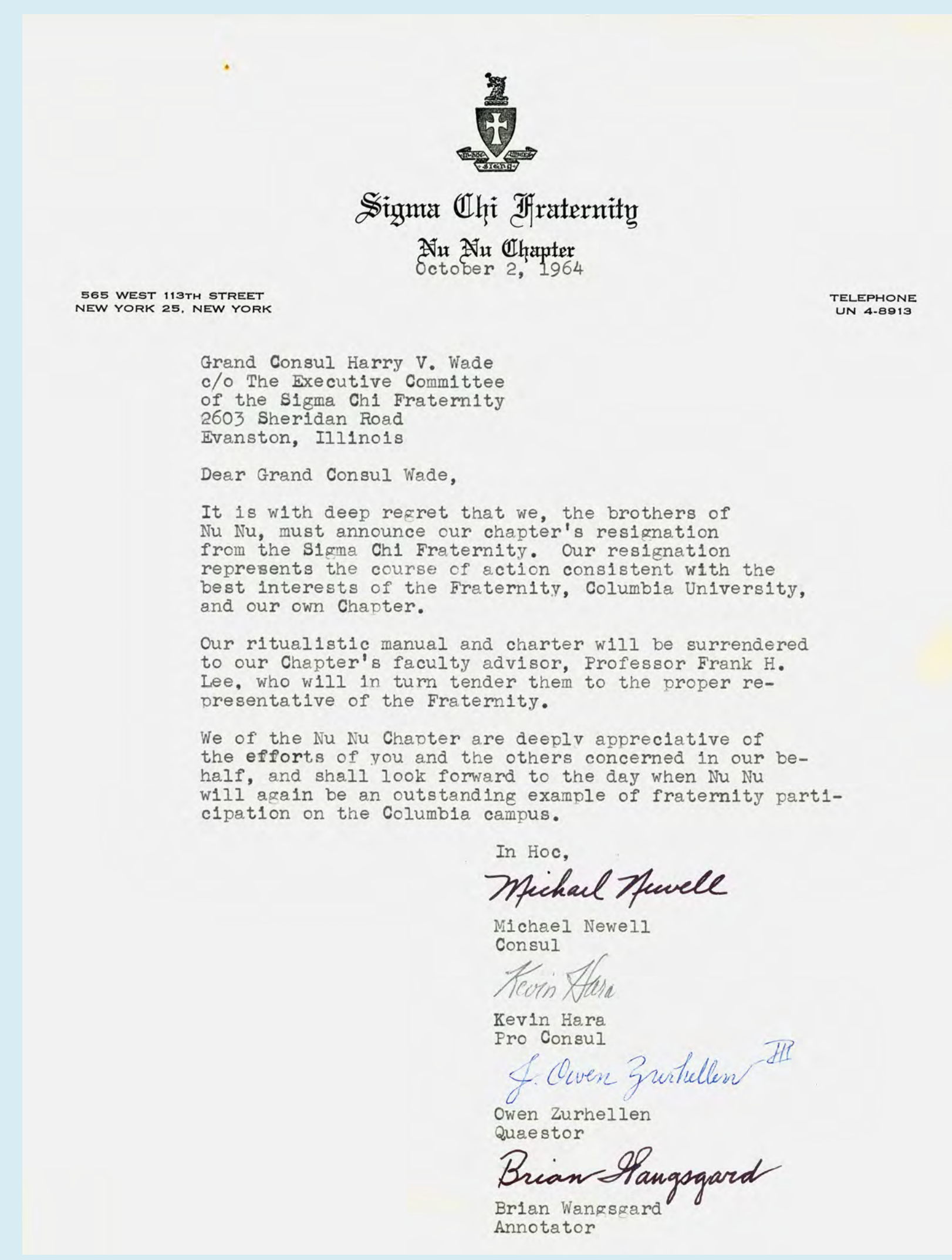


Article from the July 27, 1965 issue of “Look Magazine” covering the pledging of Kenneth M. Washington by Alpha Omega chapter, Stanford. The incident was one of several that eventually led to the suspension of Alpha Omega’s chapter that same year.

The word “white” was removed from the Constitution membership clause in 1961, but a procedure for approval of every Pledge of every undergraduate chapter by every member of the Grand Council (40+ alumni members) was put in place. This procedure was sidelined in 1971, following many years of rancor among leadership.

The decades of membership selection issues caused the loss of 15 undergraduate chapters and disillusionment by countless members.

Pledge forms in use from 1961 to 1971 that required photo submission to conform to the approval process in place at that time.



Letter of Charter resignation from Nu Nu chapter, Columbia University, due to General Fraternity issues with membership selection, October 2, 1964. The Fraternity lost 15 undergraduate chapters during the era of membership selection issues.