



Alpha Phi Alpha: The New Fraternity?

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There is a chance that a new fraternity will be joining the Ashland Greek Life family. That fraternity is Alpha Phi Alpha.

“For Alpha Phi Alpha to enter onto Ashland’s campus is a big step into bringing people of color to campus. I want this fraternity to come to life,” freshman Eric Thomas said.

Eric Thomas is in the process of forming a chapter here at Ashland. Thomas said that he is passionate about the Alphas coming.

“Alpha Phi Alpha can bring more people of color to campus,” Thomas said.

On the AU website, it is written that only 8% of undergrad students are minorities. Thomas sees this opportunity a way to “get diversity bigger on campus because Ashland is a [primarily white institution] and this will give black students something that they would be proud to have on campus and be proud to say that they had Alphas on campus and they’re here to stay.”

Thomas has some experience being involved with the Alphas. Alpha Phi Alpha has a mentoring group called the Alpha ESquires. Thomas was both president and a Step Master for his group’s chapter.

“I had to learn the history and what the fraternity was about and grew to love what the Alphas did in their fraternity and for others and because they were the first fraternity,” Thomas said.

From their official website, Alpha Phi Alpha, the oldest of the

African American Greek organizations, was founded in 1906 at Cornell University.

They are the cornerstone of the many black fraternities that came after such as Omega Phi Psi, Iota Phi Theta and Kappa Alpha Psi.

There are many well known brothers such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., musician Duke Ellington, actor Lionel Richie and former ESPN correspondent Stuart Scott.

With the possible coming of the Alphas, “there may be a chance to learn more about the black culture many people are not familiar with,” Thomas said. “It’s different because it will bring a different culture to the campus such as yard shows.”

Yard shows are parties that usually happen on the quads of college/university campuses and participants get together and have fun. “It is a way to showcase all of the black greeks in one weekend,”

Alpha Phi Alpha is one of the many ways Ashland is able to bring diversity to the campus.

Junior and Diversity on Campus intern, Ariana Graves, sees this as a major breakthrough.

“You need 5-6 members to start a chapter,” Graves said. “If there are less, the harder it will be. Freshman are very important to this because they are the ones who will start the legacy of the chapter.”

Graves sees the potential in black Greeks entering Ashland.

With a chance to work with the Pathways program, ACCA, Black Student Alliance, and the Admissions Office, black Greeks are hoping to make their way to the Ashland campus very soon.

Though, there is a slight struggle



FRESHMAN ERIC THOMAS LEADS THE ALPHA ESQUIRES IN A STEP ROUTINE.

with gaining people of color in Ashland alone.

Graves mentions the small amount of black students on campus, “have revealed feelings of isolation.”

Graves said that in order to combat that dilemma, Diversity on Campus has opened events to the public, such as Evening of Celebration, speakers, and get-togethers for “people of color to perform



Accused Ashland serial killer Shawn Grate begins trial

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The trial for suspected Ashland serial killer Shawn Grate began with the Jury selection on the morning of April 9 in the Ashland County Common Pleas Court.

Jury selection began under court judge Ron Forsthoefel.

Grate, 41, is facing a total of 23 charges, including aggravated murder of both Liz Griffin, 29, and Stacey Stanley, 43.

The bodies of both women were found in 2016 inside a home on Covert Court in Ashland.

According to preliminary autopsy, both women appeared to have been strangled.

Clothing was found around their necks at the home their bodies were discovered in.

Charges involving Griffin are two counts of aggravated murder, kidnapping, abuse of a corpse and burglary.

These offenses allegedly took place between Aug. 16 and Sept. 13, 2016.

Charges related to Stanley include two counts of aggravated murder, two counts of kidnapping, rape, aggravated robbery, abuse of a corpse and unauthorized use of a vehicle.

These offenses allegedly took place between Sept. 8 and Sept. 13, 2016.

If Grate is found to be guilty of aggravated murder, he could face the death penalty.

Besides these offenses, he is also facing charges of allegedly kidnapping and raping a woman multiple times, who prosecutors are calling Jane Doe.

Charges involving Doe include kidnapping, three counts of rape, robbery and burglary.

These offenses allegedly took place between Sept. 11 and Sept. 13, 2016.

Grate is also being investigated in connection to the killings of Candice Cunningham, Rebekah Leicy and an unnamed woman he reportedly confessed to killing back between 2003 and 2005.

His trial was originally scheduled for Nov. 6, 2017 but was delayed a year after defense attorneys filed a motion to give two expert witnesses more time to assemble.

He has tried to plead not guilty by insanity in the past but has been found competent to stand trial.

Jury selection is estimated to take about two weeks, with no witnesses scheduled to testify until April 23.

Jurors will not be able to go to the crime scene.

The trial is expected to last through the middle of May.

Pushing the conversation forward

The importance of unexplored figures in African American history

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On Christmas Day of 2016, the movie “Hidden Figures,” directed by Theodore Melfi, was released in the U.S.

Highlighting Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, three African American women who were behind the math that sent John Glenn into orbit in 1961, this movie was the next in many movie adaptations celebrating African Americans in history.

“The black community is full of unexplored figures and the time is overdue that we talk about them,” Ashland University student and Diversity on Campus intern, Ariana Graves, said. “The movie

“Hidden Figures” is just the beginning of pushing unacknowledged African American leaders to the forefront.”

Alongside other recent films such as “13th” directed by Ava DuVernay, “Hidden Figures” shines the spotlight on the achievements of African Americans in history that are often overlooked in history books, classes and retellings, Graves said.

Dr. Linda Joyce Brown, professor of English and of the African American Literature course, often has students who comment “on how little African American history they learned before coming to college.”

Beyond a few major figures, including Martin Luther King Jr.

and Frederick Douglass, most figures and everyday African Americans in history are overlooked, Graves said.

The African American community and its role in history is more vast than what is usually taught in schools, and while there is a focus on slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, “studying these alone does not offer a complete picture of the African American experience,” Brown said.

Inspiring African American figures in history include Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a journalist and civil rights activist; Audre Lorde, a poet; and Henry “Box” Brown, a slave who literally mailed himself to freedom, Brown said.

Graves mentions Angela Davis,

a 1960s activist and professor; Nat Turner, who led a successful slave rebellion; Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress; and James Baldwin, a writer and social commentator.

These influential and inspiring people are less recognized, but Graves offers a reminder of the “ordinary people” who also “risked their lives during sit-ins and marches.” These African Americans during this time endangered every aspect of their lives for justice and “did not live to see it, nor were they acknowledged,” Graves said.

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