

# Memorial Ceremony of Tau Beta Sigma

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Tau Beta Sigma National Honorary Band Sorority  
2003

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Kappa Kappa Psi & Tau Beta Sigma, National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 849, Stillwater, OK, 74076-0849  
Telephone: (800) 543-6505 - Fax: (405) 372-2363 - E-Mail: [kkytbs@kkytbs.org](mailto:kkytbs@kkytbs.org)

Commissioned by the 2001-2003 National Council:  
Sylvia Halbardier, Debbie Baker, Johnnie Vinson, Kathy Godwin, Kimbi Sigle

Written by: Kris Wright, Tau Beta Sigma Life Member

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## INTRODUCTION

This ceremony was written and presented to the 2003 national delegation in the hope that, when faced with the loss of a sister or brother, the members of Tau Beta Sigma would have a resource to guide them in recognizing and celebrating their friend. In that spirit, these pages are offered as a guideline, a ceremony that can be used by chapters, districts and the national delegation when needed. May it serve to honor all those who have gone before us.

## Recommendations:

- 1) Use this ceremony as you see fit. It is not a ritual and can therefore be used in its entirety or in parts. Use it to reflect the personality of your chapter and to honor the people for whom you perform it.
- 2) This ceremony can be open to anyone who wishes to attend. Consider inviting the family of the person you honor, their friends, other band members, brothers of Kappa Kappa Psi, or anyone you feel would like to participate.
- 3) Choose an appropriate time and place to perform this ceremony. If people outside of the Sorority are invited, consider providing a place where they can meet afterwards to talk with the members.

# THE CEREMONY

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In this bond we have joined ourselves together as sisters and brothers. More than simple friends, we rely on each other for comfort and companionship in all things. We have chosen to make ourselves family, one to another. This is our truth, the beginning and end of all our promises.

Today our family grieves, for one who we call sister (brother) has been taken from us. No longer can she/he aid us in our work, share in our successes, or travel with us on our journeys. Or so it now seems.

Yet her/his presence is felt here still. We who honor her/him will each take a part of her/him with us. We will take her/his memory with us as we walk the paths laid out for us. Today, those paths have led us here.

We have gathered today to mourn the passing of (our Sister/Brother). She/he has traveled beyond the sound of our voices, the boundaries of our sight, and the touch of our hands. She/he cannot wander beyond the call and reach of our love.

Our loss has affected us deeply. We feel

Leader conducts the ceremony from the front of the room and to the right of the table. If a podium is used, it is placed to the right of the table.

The room should be dimly lit or completely dark so that the candlelight is bright.

sadness and sorrow. We miss our friend. The mystery of death has come upon us, and we find that we cannot answer the questions that overwhelm us: Why did She/he die? Why now?

How can we go on without her/him?

You have been invited here to share with us in this confusing and difficult time because (our Sister/Brother) affected your life too. Let us remember her/him today, and begin a process of healing together.

Gathered here are people who knew (our Sister/Brother) by many titles. She/he was a daughter (son), a sibling, a cousin, a mentor and a friend. She/he worked with us and shared herself/himself with us. As members of her/his sorority chapter it was our duty to support her/him in her/his goals and lend our assistance whenever we could. It now becomes our duty to recognize her/his achievements and to consecrate her/his memory.

(Someone may read a prepared obituary or biography that tells more about her/his life; i.e., what their major was, where they were from, how long had they been in the chapter, etc.)

If having people come forward seems too formal, Leader may walk among the assembly and pass around a microphone, or just recognize people who wish to speak.

I invite you now to come forward and share a memory or a story, a song or a poem, or anything that you feel you would like to share about (our Sister/Brother).

We have heard about the impact that (our Sister/Brother) has made on each of us. Each of us found something different in

this person: inspiration and friendship, laughter and devotion. Just by living life day to day she/he created a legacy that will continue to affect us long after we leave this room. At the end of the day, this legacy is what we shall all leave behind us. We build ideas and we create joys that leave imprints on the people we meet. We form an inheritance that will pass from us to each person we meet in this lifetime. (Our Sister/Brother's) gift will resonate within us all of our days. To honor (our Sister/Brother) and to express our gratitude for her/his life, we have set as a tribute symbols of appreciation and love.

Before you are tokens of our Sisterhood. (Our Sister/Brother) brought us together, and so her/his picture holds the place of honor at the center of the symbols, as today she/he is the center of our thoughts and emotions.

To accompany her/him, we have placed thirteen candles to give us their light. They stand for the five integral qualities and eight essential factors of character by which a Sister/Brother of Tau Beta Sigma lives her/his life. They include Honor, Intelligence, Courage and Integrity. We praise these virtues in all people in whom we find them.

Point to each item as it is described. Another member of the chapter may do this instead of the Leader.

Four candles stand watch around the table. These four remind the Sisters and Brothers assembled here of four elements that are secret and known only to us as brethren. We hide them in our hearts to guide our daily conduct and guide us into the future.

White roses surround (our Sister/Brother) to mark our sorrow. They are still fragrant and sweet, but they are empty of color, as today our lives are empty of joy and laughter because of our loss.

Beside (our Sister/Brother) we have placed one red rose. It is the hallmark of sweetness, affection and love. It is also the symbol of our Sorority and reminds us that we shall one day be healed of our sorrow.

At the very last you see a chair left vacant and covered in black. Upon it sits a(n) (*instrument that the member played*), a token to recall the music (our Sister/Brother) made with us in her/his life, that will echo throughout time. Today this instrument sits silent, because our Sister/Brother will no longer sit with us in the concert hall of life. She/he will no longer lend harmony to the music of our efforts. Though we will always be aware that one member of our ensemble is absent, we will take her/his memory along with us, and

If a specific instrument cannot be found, or the member was an auxiliary member, a trumpet may be used on the chair. For large instruments, consider using an instrument stand and place it close to the chair.

she/he will always be a part of our strength and our bond. In this way, the gift of her/his life will resound throughout the lives of those who witness this today.

Please stand and join me in a moment of silent prayer and remembrance as we celebrate this Sister/Brother and remember her/him with joy.

We will close this ceremony of grief with words of gratitude. We thank you for joining us and sharing in our celebration of (our Sister/Brother's) life. We have heard many things that may touch our hearts after we leave this place. May our sadness inspire in us compassion and sympathy for each other, and may we continue to be grateful for the people and events that we find along our Life's path. May the Sisters and Brothers of Tau Beta Sigma gathered here always find our best comfort in each other, and may we continue to strive for excellence in every way.

Please feel free to stay here for a time of quiet reflection if you wish. When you are ready, we invite you to join us outside for a time of fellowship.

The chapter may choose to give each person a candle as they enter the room. As the people stand, candles may be lit at this time.

To end the moment of silence the Leader may choose to have the guests sing a pre-arranged song or listen to a recording of a song that was important to the person being remembered.

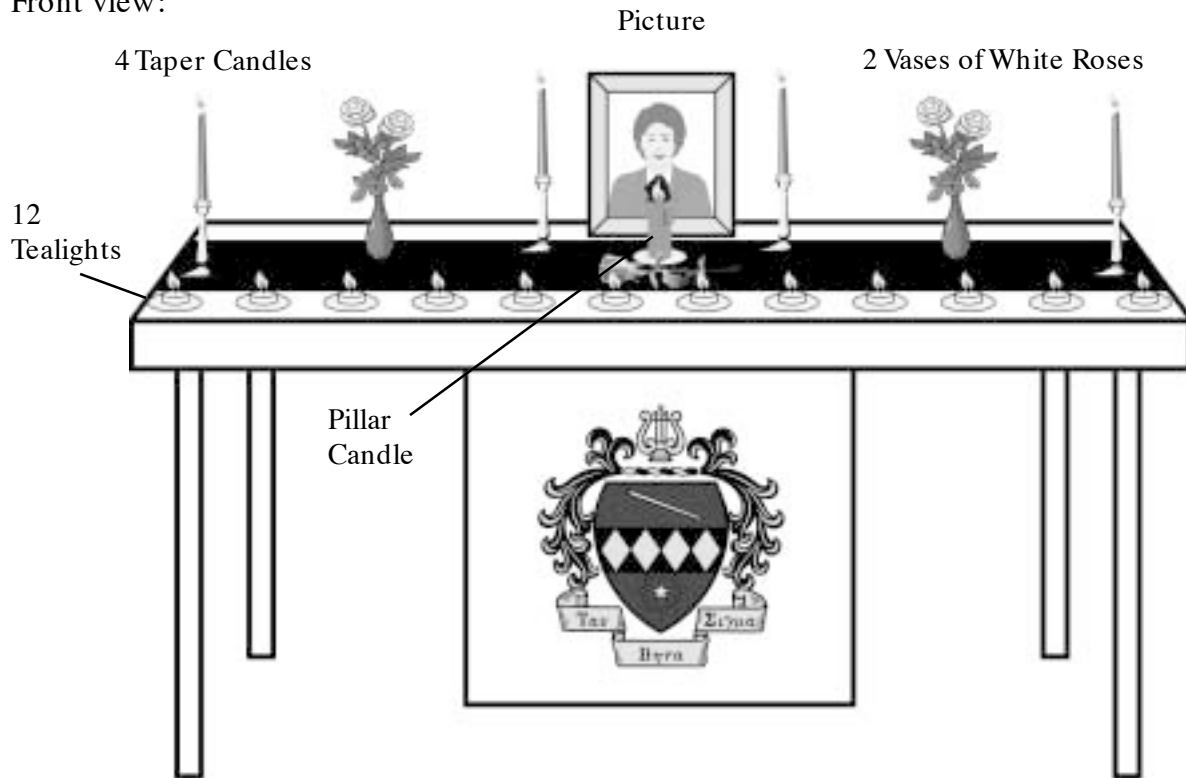


## Items needed for the Table:

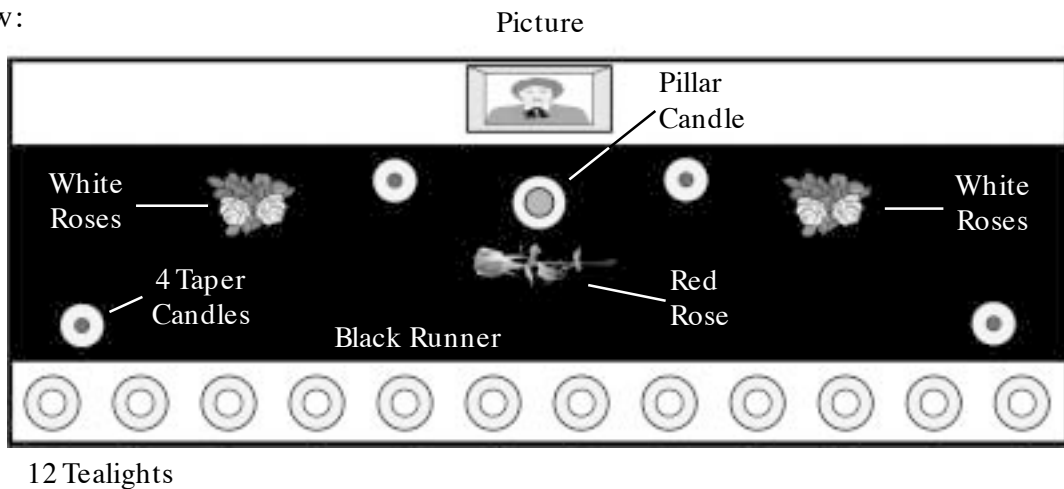
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|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 Table                                  | 4 Taper candles with holders       |
| 1 White tablecloth to cover entire table | 1 Picture of the remembered Sister |
| 1 Black table runner                     | White roses, enough for two vases  |
| 12 Tea Lights                            | 2 Vases for the white roses        |
| 1 Pillar candle                          | 1 Red Rose                         |

### *Diagram of the Table*

Front view:



Top view:



## Items Needed for the Chair:

- 1 Chair
- 1 Black drape to cover chair
- 1 instrument (one that the Sister played, or one to represent music in general, such as a trumpet)
- 1 Instrument stand or an extra chair (optional as a place to set the instrument after the Leader brings the picture and candle over to the chair)

### *Diagram of the Chair*

Beginning of Ceremony:  
Chair covered with black drape



Instrument on chair  
(or beside chair on stand)

After Leader moves picture  
and candle from table:



## “Come, memory...” Memorial Program

### Suggested activities for mourning a loss:

- Perform the Memorial Ceremony
- Wear the Badge of Mourning.
- Perform Third Degree, having an active member go through the ceremony in honor of the lost person.
- Hold a fundraiser and donate proceeds to the Trust Fund in their honor.
- Host a recital in their honor and invite non-members to participate.
- Host a reception.
- Honor them with a Tau Beta Sigma Tribute to be published in *The PODIUM*.
- Host a memorial forum, where Sisters & Brothers and friends can come together and share stories, memories, and anecdotes.
- Have a day where the chapter dresses up in their honor.
- Create a scholarship in their name.
- Make a donation to a library in their name, either donating a specific book or donating money to the library for purchase of a specific book.
- Memorialize them with a plaque, donation of artwork, or other contribution in your school's band room or music building.
- Invite another chapter to participate in a Sisterhood ceremony or Sisterhood day in their honor.
- Invite their parents to become honorary members and go through the Ritual so they can more fully understand Tau Beta Sigma any what it meant to their lost child.
- Collect money and purchase their Life Membership posthumously from the National Headquarters.

The 2003 Programs Committee felt strongly that everyone understand these activities can be performed not only by the chapter who has lost an important person, but also be nearby chapters, districts, and individuals who wish to contribute to that person's memory and support the grieving chapter.