

Mortar Board

National College Senior Honor Society



Initiation Ceremony Handbook

All chapters are encouraged to make their initiation special for new members, graduating members, families and friends. Please make the appropriate arrangements for a significant campus recognition ceremony.

www.mortarboard.org

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Mortar Board Initiation Preparation

This may be adapted to the individual needs of your chapter, or your chapter may write its own ceremony. For purposes of keeping a record, please submit a copy of any original ceremony that you create to your Section Coordinator.

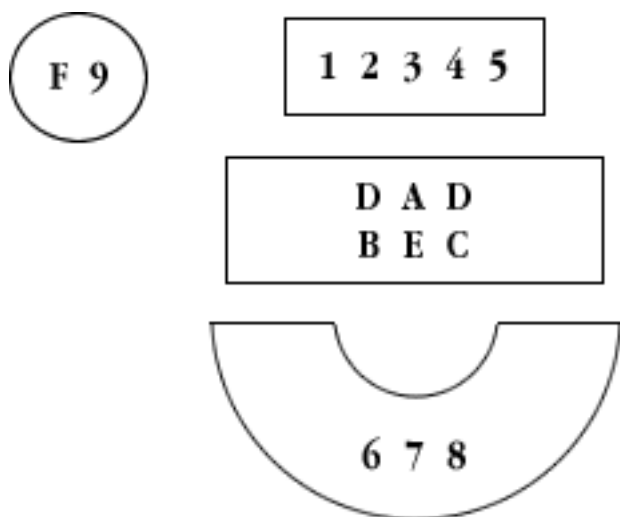
Participants

1. Chapter historian
2. Guest speaker or section coordinator
3. Chapter president
4. Chapter secretary
5. Chapter vice president
6. Initiates
7. Current members
8. Guests
9. Soloist or small choir

Paraphernalia

- A. Flowers or centerpiece
- B. Ribbons/pins
- C. Certificates, Member Guides
- D. Silver candlesticks, gold candles
- E. Chapter roll book and good writing pen
- F. Piano or other accompanying instrument

Suggested Preparation of Room



Recommended Attire

All members and initiates should wear caps and gowns. The chapter president wears a mortarboard with gold tassel and gold and silver roping, or stole around neck. (Finish one end of the roping with gold fringe and the other with silver fringe, if available. Buy 1 ½ yards of two-inch gold ribbon and 1 ½ yards of silver ribbon; buy 1/6 of a yard each of gold fringe and silver fringe. Tassel, 6 inches long - - can be slipped over black tassel of mortarboard.) A Mortar Board medallion may be worn by the chapter president - these are available from the National Office.

For each initiate, buy ½ yard each of ½ inch gold ribbon and silver ribbon. Join colors at back of neck; cross open ends and secure with Mortar Board pin, emblem or insignia. (To be put over head of initiate.) You can use these year after year.

Other Suggestions

1. The chapter president, as she/he calls each individual forward, may briefly tell why that candidate was selected for membership in Mortar Board.
2. The school Alma Mater may be sung at the conclusion of the Initiation Ceremony.
3. An outgoing chapter member may be appointed as official photographer for the chapter photo to go into archives and to be sent to the Mortar Board National Office.
4. A faculty mentor may be honored by standing with each new member.

Mortar Board Initiation Ceremony

Processional (Includes participants 1 through 6 of diagram.)

Current members sing the “Mortar Board Ode.”

We Mortar Boards receive you with welcome hearts and hands,
To represent the noble aims for which our college stands;
And this our aim, whate'er befall, respond to Alma Mater's call,
Be honest, loyal, true, and strong as future Mortar Boards.

Chapter President

President _____, Dean _____, _____ (names of special guests to be formally addressed), initiates and honored guests; As President of the _____ chapter of Mortar Board at _____, I _____ (name), welcome you. We are assembled here today to pay tribute to Mortar Board and to recognize this chapter's new initiates.

Mortar Board is a national honor society of college seniors. The society recognizes in its membership the qualities of superior scholastic ability, outstanding and continual leadership, and dedicated service to the college or university community.

The mortarboard is a symbol of ancient honor and distinction. In the earliest universities, students adopted the clerical or monastic robes as a sign they were devoting their lives to the profession of learning. We, too, wear a distinguishing sign, the mortarboard. In ancient days, students from many lands who spoke diverse tongues were able to meet on a common ground by using the classic language of learning. So we, students in many universities and colleges, are bound by the three Greek letters, Pi, Sigma, Alpha, representing the ideals of Mortar Board: scholarship, leadership and service.

The purpose of Mortar Board is set forth in Article II of our national *Bylaws*.

Chapter Secretary

We, the undersigned, recognizing the advantage of a national union of senior honor societies, do hereby unite to form a national society whose purpose shall be to facilitate cooperation among these societies, to contribute to the self-awareness of its members, to promote equal opportunities among all peoples, to emphasize the advancement of the status of women, to support the ideals of the university, to advance a spirit of scholarship, to recognize and encourage leadership, to provide service, and to establish the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas as individuals and as a group.

Chapter President

Will you strive earnestly to maintain these ideals and purposes? If so respond, “I will.”

All to be Initiated (respond in unison):

I will.

Chapter President

While it is an honor to be selected for membership in Mortar Board, it is that willingness of the selected individual to make the commitment to continue to serve that differentiates an honor society from an honorary. When the individual accepts membership, this acceptance indicates the person's agreement to accept the responsibility and obligation to be an active participant in the chapter. This commitment is an agreement to actively support the ideals of the society.

With this honor will you also accept the responsibility of active participation? If so respond, "I will."

All to be Initiated (respond in unison):

I will.

Chapter President

The chapter vice president will now present a brief national history of Mortar Board.

Chapter Vice President

At the University of Chicago in 1915, a wearer of a gold pin in the shape of a mortarboard met another wearer of a pin, not like her own but also in the shape of a mortarboard. Each one represented a group of senior college women striving to render service to their alma mater. The two talked together. If such an ideal existed on two American campuses, it probably existed on many other campuses of the country. Therefore, why were these groups with like ideals not united?

The group of one of the wearers of the pin worked for two years to interest similar groups in the idea of a national organization of senior societies for women, with the result that, in 1918, the delegates from four organizations met together, representing The Ohio State University, Swarthmore College, The University of Michigan and Cornell University. On February 15 and 16, they founded the first and only national honor society for senior women and established the badge, motto, ritual and constitution. The name for the new society was referred to the local groups, and "Mortar Board" was chosen in preference to a Greek-letter name.

Thus, the new honor organization began its life on American campuses. It represented at first a small section of the country. Two more groups in the Middle West joined the original four during 1918. It continued to spread throughout the Middle West, and in the East, and going to the South for one chapter until the end of 1922 found a chapter roll of 18. A banner year for Mortar Board was 1923: south to the Gulf, west to the Pacific - - and the society was truly nationwide. The chapter roll has grown steadily since then until now, in 2011, there are 229 chartered chapters in the nation.

In 1975 a historic event occurred when membership in the formerly all women's organization was extended to include men. This occurred at a Special National Conference which was convened to consider the ramifications of the regulations to Title IX (Title 9), which prohibited sex discrimination within organizations on campuses that are recipients of federal funds. As well as membership being opened to male students, the purpose was strengthened to include emphasis upon the advancement of the status of women. Delegates to the Twenty-third National Conference of Mortar Board in June, 1976, added to the purpose "... to promote equal opportunities among all peoples."

At the 1985 Conference in Columbus, Ohio, Mortar Board delegates passed a resolution to initiate a national project, to be chosen by vote of the delegates at national conference. The delegates selected organ donor awareness as the first national project. In 2002, "Reading is Leading" was selected as the permanent project.

Since 1973, Mortar Board has recognized outstanding contributions to humanity through National Citations. Those honored in the past have included American Red Cross Executive Director Elizabeth Dole, former New York City mayor Rudolph

Giuliani, cyclist Lance Armstrong, children's literacy advocate and actor Lavar Burton, and poet author Maya Angelou.

In 1993, chapters across the country celebrated the 75th anniversary of Mortar Board.

Since 1918 nearly a quarter of a million students have been initiated into Mortar Board. The history of Mortar Board must be a chronicle of national growth, a record of women and men accomplishing countless services to colleges, universities, and students, and a story of local chapters whose achievements have been the strength that is Mortar Board.

Chapter President

The chapter historian will now present the history of the _____ (local chapter) of Mortar Board.

Chapter Historian

(The chapter historian presents a brief summary of the local history.)

Chapter President

You have heard the history of today's Mortar Board, the way in which it developed from a thought to a unique senior honor society in the United States. You have heard the history of this chapter. You have learned of Mortar Board's ideals and purposes. Now you must add the next chapter in the history of Mortar Board.

You have been chosen as leaders to foster all that is noble in this college (university). You will not work alone. You will be bound in the loyalty of common ideals to other students in other institutions of learning who will strive with you to maintain and advance the ideals of Mortar Board.

The gold of our colors stands for achievement . . . the silver for opportunity. We charge you to promote the honor and welfare of your alma mater . . . not only by your own leadership, but also by your wise following of those in authority and by your continuing friendship with fellow students. We charge you to give in leadership and service of the best that is within you.

Having heard the purposes of Mortar Board and the responsibilities you are expected to assume, will you receive the certificate which makes you a member of Mortar Board . . . accepting from us the burden of its privileges? If so, respond, "I will."

All to be Initiated (respond in unison):

I will.

Chapter President

You, as new members, will recognize the stimulating opportunity of sharing interests among yourselves as a group of intelligent and concerned individuals. This is a vital and rewarding objective of Mortar Board, which only you can make a reality. Along with opportunity comes the responsibility to use your combined resources to lead and to initiate. From this kind of commitment can evolve the directions for your service to Mortar Board.

Now, as evidence of the trust we place in you, we ask you each to affirm our *Bylaws* by placing your signature on the Chapter Roll, receiving your symbol of membership, and accepting the Mortar Board Certificate of Membership.

(At this point, the Chapter President calls each initiate forward to sign the Chapter Roll. Each candidate then receives the gold and silver ribbon and the Membership Certificate from the chapter vice president. The chapter historian hands a small candle to the initiate, who lights it from the large candle(s) on the table.

After all initiates have signed the Chapter Roll, all present members and alumni come forward in turn to receive a candle and light it.)

Chapter President (or an appointed person)

I would now like to read "The Torch," a poem that symbolizes the spirit of Mortar Board.

The Torch

The God of Great Endeavor gave me a torch to bear.
I lifted it high above me in the dark and murky air,
And straightway, with loud hosannas, the crowd proclaimed its light
And followed me as I carried my torch through the starless night.
'Til drunk with the people's praises, and mad with vanity,
I forgot 'twas the torch that they followed, and fancied they followed me.

Then slowly my arm grew weary upholding the shining load,
And my tired feet went stumbling over the dusty road.
And I fell - - with the torch beneath me. In a moment the light was out,
When lo! from the throng a stripling sprang forth with a mighty shout,
Caught up the torch as it smoldered, and lifted it high and tall,
'Til, fanned by the winds of heaven, it fired the souls of all.

And as I lay in the darkness, the feet of the trampling crowd
Passed over and far beyond me, its paeans proclaiming aloud.
And I learned in the deepening twilight the glorious verity,
'Tis the torch that the people follow, whoever the bearer may be.

Chapter President

I now present to you these newly initiated members of the _____ (name of local chapter) of Mortar Board.
(Applause.)

Alumni Member (please make every effort to have an alumni member present to take this part)

Will the retiring members of the chapter please rise?

Although active collegiate membership in Mortar Board lasts only one year, the commitment to excellence in scholarship, leadership and service is one of lifelong duration.

Do you pledge to continue your commitment to the pursuit of excellence in scholarship, leadership and service?

All Retiring Members

I do.

Alumni Member

On behalf of Mortar Board, I thank you for your contribution to the organization and I initiate you as alumni members of Mortar Board. May you ever hold high the torch.

ALL sing "Thy Ideals"

Thy ideals, Pi Sigma Alpha, we are ever striving toward
As we seek to live thy motto in the bonds of Mortar Board.
And to you whom we have chosen, in the years both far and near
Comes the privilege of service to our Alma Mater dear.

Recessional

Reception

Mortar Board Ode

ed. W.G. Niederer

We Mor - tar Board, re - ceive you with wel - come hearts and hands, to

The first system of musical notation for 'Mortar Board Ode'. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'We Mor - tar Board, re - ceive you with wel - come hearts and hands, to'.

6 re - pre - sent the no - ble aims for which our col - lege stands. And

The second system of musical notation, starting at measure 6. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the accompaniment continues in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 're - pre - sent the no - ble aims for which our col - lege stands. And'.

10 this, our aim, what e'er be - fall, re - spond to Al - ma Ma - ter's call, Be

The third system of musical notation, starting at measure 10. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the accompaniment continues in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'this, our aim, what e'er be - fall, re - spond to Al - ma Ma - ter's call, Be'.

14 hon - est, loy - al, true and strong as fu - ture Mor - tar Boards.

The fourth system of musical notation, starting at measure 14. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the accompaniment continues in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'hon - est, loy - al, true and strong as fu - ture Mor - tar Boards.'.

Thy Ideals

ed. W.G. Niederer

Thy Id - eals, Pi Sig - ma Al - pha, we are e - ver str - iving toward. As we

The first system of music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The piano accompaniment starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3 and a quarter note B3.

6
seek to live thy mot - to in the bonds of Mor - tar Board. And to

The second system of music continues the vocal line with a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The piano accompaniment continues with a half note G3 and a quarter note B3.

10
you whom we have cho - sen in the years both far and near comes the

The third system of music continues the vocal line with a half note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The piano accompaniment continues with a half note G3 and a quarter note B3.

14
pri - vil - ege of ser - vice to our Al - ma Ma - ter dear.

The fourth system of music concludes the vocal line with a half note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The piano accompaniment continues with a half note G3 and a quarter note B3.