



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:
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New Haven Alumnae Chapter

Dear Mr. Bass,

As the President of the New Haven Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., I feel compelled to write this open letter to you and your readers in response to the attacks on our great sorority that I have observed over the past few weeks in your publication. The New Haven Independent and you personally as editor are aware of our broad work in this community as we have partnered in the past. Your readers may not have such context.

Beginning with your article on November 16, 2017 entitled "Board Backs Birks; Parents Balk" you inserted Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. into the New Haven Public Schools Superintendent search process in a manner that was unfounded and unresearched. Based seemingly only on a mention in a community letter penned after the forum, you set in motion a series of references, innuendo and comments that have followed this and subsequent articles. I note that neither you nor your reporters have reached out to the New Haven Alumnae Chapter for comment, research or verification of your assertions. In light of this irresponsible journalism, I feel the need to offer some context to your references of our beloved Sorority.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded on the campus of Howard University on January 13, 1913 for the purpose of sisterhood, scholarship and service. Our service is organized around a Five-Point Programmatic Thrust that highlights Educational Development, Economic Development, International Awareness and Involvement, Physical and Mental Health and Political Involvement and Awareness. Our first acts over 104 years ago were fighting for women's suffrage amidst a movement that did not value the presence of African American women.

To this day, our membership of over 250,000 women throughout this country and abroad, has continued on the forefront of civil rights, women's rights, and community issues.

Our members include: Sadie T. M. Alexander, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Dorothy I. Height, Frankie Muse Freeman, Marcia L. Fudge, Ruby Dee, Angela Bassett, Cicely Tyson, Varnette Honeywood, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Judith Jameson, Natalie Cole, Aretha Franklin, Lena Horne, Leontyne Price, Nancy Wilson, Mara Brock Akil, Jacque Reid, Charlayne Hunter Gault, Melissa Harris Perry, Gwen Ifill, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, Johnetta Cole, Julianne Malveaux, Niara Sudarkasa, Melanie Campbell, Ingrid Saunders Jones, Joycelyn Elders, Alexa Canady, Regina Benjamin, Loretta Lynch, Marian Wright Edelman, Clara Hale, Patricia Roberts Harris, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Winnie Mandela, Vashti Murphy McKenzie and Betty Shabazz and so many more.

Locally our members hold positions and act in the fields of education, public policy, health care, wellness, finance, law, philanthropy and many more. We are a chapter of 100 dynamic and accomplished women. We are your neighbors, colleagues, friends and community members. We are part of an exceptional sisterhood and will always stand ready to protect the name and reputation of our Sisterhood.

Locally we have offered over \$450,000 in scholarships to high school graduates. We have hosted impactful youth mentoring programs that serve hundreds of students each year including our Delta Academy and GEMS programs. We host a series of Community Conversations aimed at bringing our community together around issues of importance- locally, regionally and nationally. We promote STEM learning. We advocate for healthy lifestyles, AIDS prevention, Breast Cancer awareness and mental health awareness. We host an annual "Delta Day at City Hall" that is open to the entire community. We are the first New Haven area African American organization to establish an endowment with the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven allowing for philanthropic giving that funds scholarships to young people. We strive to make a meaningful impact in our community.

We think it's important that your readers have this full context when making comments about this sisterhood. Our legacy is strong, we are proud of who we are and of the contribution that we make.

We invite your readers to learn more about our organization by visiting nhacdst.org or attending any of our upcoming programs.

Your Community Partner,

Karimah Mickens Webber
President - New Haven Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
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