

Paris McBride interviewing Denise Hayman clip 1

Topic: Delta Sigma Theta

Interviewer: So take me back to more of your sophomore year in college you decided you want to pledge.

Denise Hayman: So actually, when we began there were 25 of us. We lived up in Christiana Towers, it was Christiana Towers East, Room 505 and I remember my roommate was actually my roommate my freshman year. Her boyfriend was a member of Omega Psi Phi, and so she along with one of my other sorority sisters who ended up marrying one of my cousins, they were connected to Omega Psi Phi, as a result of that, they found Agnes Green who was in the dean of students office, who was a Delta, and started working with her and some of the other advisors that mention from HBCUs to help us create a chapter on campus. So we pledged for 10 months, we started... We ended October 1975, 26th, when did we start, so if I go back 10 months, was it January, no it had to be—well, that's 10 months, so it was like December, January. We met through the summer. It started out with 25, ended up with only 11. Some of the people who were part of the 25, some of them graduated, some of them who didn't graduate ended up creating the second sorority on campus Alpha Kappa Alpha. So it was like all of us kind of wanting, you know, to do something, either Delta Sigma Theta or Alpha Kappa Alpha. I would not trade that experience in for the world. I think it really provided a sense of belonging, gave me and I think others a much better perspective of what it was like to be a Black woman, professional woman. They helped us with challenges with ourselves, I mean it wasn't easy but you know, kind of brought awareness of how we needed to, what we needed to do to be prepared for the world. Those relationships continued so we didn't like, they didn't just advise us and then, you know, go off into the sunset. And it probably, if I had to think of something that I've done that's been long lasting it's probably been the most long-lasting thing, because it's the same people that I pledged with has been over forty years now I'm still connected with today. One of the advantages of being part of that organization, I know fraternities and sororities sometimes get a lot of bad PR, Black fraternities and sororities are a lot different in the sense that our membership isn't just an undergrad, when we graduate we also become involved with alumni, you know. We have honorary members, like we just selected Joy Reid on MSNBC and some other people, so we continue that service and the objective service for the sorority. You know when women's suffrage back in 1919 was an issue, Delta Sigma Theta was the sorority that was there with that women's suffrage movement the challenge again, here was a race issue. They wouldn't let us march in the front part of the women's suffrage thing because the white females didn't want us in the front so they put us in the back. So we're still doing things in the community, that you know will always be a part of, I think, of who and what I am. So you know not everybody wants to pledge, you know, it's a lot different now then it was long ago, but I think once you gain membership into this is probably one of the few places that you can really see a diversity of Black women with a lot of strengths and we kind of work together to with one common goal.