



“MU STATE MUSE”



Volume 13, Issue 2

2025-2026

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CALL TO MU STATE CONVENTION

This is your **official call** to Mu State Kappa Kappa Iota State Convention to be held on April 24-25, 2026. The Friday night meeting will be held in Mayhew, MS, and the Saturday convention will be held in Columbus, MS. Members of the Beta chapter are busy preparing to help Mu State Kappas continue to allow their Kappa friendships to bloom! A very special thanks goes to Convention Co-Chairs Pegan Carter and Mitzy Johnson-Mills and Registration Chair Diann Carter as well as Debbie McLaurin and Olivia Sansing for all the preplanning. Please make plans to join in the fun! Registration form is located on final page of this newsletter.

For this year’s State Convention, a Friday evening Welcome Reception and Dinner will be held at 6 p.m. at the **Honey House**
Address: 764 Mayhew Rd., Mayhew, MS 39753

The Stover Apiaries was founded in 1909 in Mayhew, MS by David Douglas Stover. He grew up in Strasburg, VA, but knew he would need a much warmer climate for his planned apiary. His dream was to supply queen bees and package bees for beekeepers who needed to replenish their existing hives or establish new hives. Mr. Stover was an avid beekeeper, a very successful businessman, and a highly respected leader in his chosen industry. Honeybees are vital to our survival because they pollinate many of our food crops. Mr. Stover promoted the importance of honeybees and the contribution of their delicious honey!

Kappa Kappa Iota will be visiting The Honey House at Mr. Stover’s Mayhew location. It is so named because the building was built for the purpose of extracting honey from the honeycomb. His granddaughter, Bess Yelverton Swedenburg, will provide more information about the apiary and honeybees.

Following the Welcome Reception/ Dinner, the Mu State Executive Committee meeting will be held at the Honey House, too. The meeting is to start by 7:30 p.m. and wrap up by 9 p.m.

Please see page 2 for more information about the 2026 Mu State Convention!



CALL TO MU STATE CONVENTION (CONTINUED)



For Saturday, April 25th, the Mu State Convention will be held at the Fairview Baptist Activities Building (Address is 127 Airline Rd., Columbus, MS 39702) with registration beginning at 9:30 am and the actual convention starting at 10 am. You are in for a treat for representation from the Lowndes County Master Gardeners, and Mu State members will be able to create their own terrarium to take home as a reminder of their Kappa friendships continuing to bloom. Several awards will be given out to include: Eudora Kemp Chapter of the Year, Mu State Magnolia Membership Awards, Top Recruiter of the Year, Mentor of the Year, Mu State Story Board Chapter Winner (Local chapters...share your story of the great things happening this year), election of the 2026-2027 Mu State Officers along with the election of the 2026-2027 Mu State Nominating Committee and delegates to attend the National Convention in Charlotte, NC. The finale of the State Convention will be the Installation Ceremony of our newly elected 2026-2027 Mu State Officers.

So in summary, the schedule is as follows:

• Friday, April 24, 2026:

- 6 p.m. “Welcome Reception/Dinner” at Honey House (764 Mayhew Rd., Mayhew, MS 39753)
- Following the Dinner (appr 7:30 p.m.): Mu State Executive Committee Meeting (includes Mu State Officers & State Committee Chairs) at the Honey House (same location)

• Saturday, April 25, 2026:

- 9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast—Fairview Baptist Activities Building (127 Airline Rd., Columbus, MS 39702)
(Bring Local Chapter Story Board and 2 silent auction items per chapter)
Local Chapters: Turn in completed Eudora Kemp Chapter of the Year form to Diann Carter at the Registration Table (pg. 28 of the 2025-2026 Mu State Handbook)
- 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Mu State Convention

Registration form is enclosed on the last page of this newsletter and is requested to be completed and mailed to Diann Carter, Registration Chair, along with \$40/\$45 registration fee by Friday, April 10th. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR BEING PROACTIVE TO REGISTER to assist in planning of meals and hand-outs.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: Reserve your hotel room at Holiday Inn Express & Suites—Columbus. Call the hotel directly (662-245-6133) and reference the Kappa Kappa Iota group block name no later than Friday, April 10th. The following link may also be used: [Kappa Kappa Iota](#) Address is 2000 6th St. North, Columbus, MS. King room rate is \$129 (plus tax) and Queen room rate (2 beds) is \$129 (plus tax). Free breakfast included. THIS IS SUPER BULLDOG WEEKEND—IMPERATIVE THAT YOU RESERVE YOUR ROOM EARLY. KAPPA BLOCK OF ROOMS WILL BE RELEASED AFTER APRIL 10 DEADLINE. Contact Jeremy Littlefield at 214-504-2621 if you encounter any issues with reservations.

SPRING 2026

Imogene Mauney Hardon



Mrs. Imogene Hardon of Iota chapter passed away peacefully on February 4, 2026, at her home at the age of 102. She was a member of Mu State Kappa for 54 years and was a past state president. She was instrumental in organizing the Blue Mountain Campus Kappa chapter.



On February 11, 2026, approximately 10 Mu State Kappa sisters, representing your Mu State Officers, Past State Presidents, Standing Committee Chairs, and Local Chapter Presidents met in Louisville, MS at Lake Tiak-O'Khata for the Spring Executive Committee/Council meeting. Plans were discussed for the upcoming State Convention, progress reports from each committee, and local chapter reports were shared. Attendees enjoyed the buffet lunch at the restaurant. Special Projects Co-Chair Karen Lott reported that money has already been raised for our State Special Project, a McCarty platter. Local Chapter Presidents, please be reminded to collect chances/payment during your meetings (pg. 30 in the 2025-2026 Mu State Handbook) and turn in at State Convention to Karen Lott at the Special Projects table for the drawing that will occur at State Convention.

The Nominating Committee (Olivia Sansing-Chair, Gale Taylor, and Kathy Shappley) proposed the following candidates for the 2026-2027 Mu State Officers:

- President: Emily Eaton (Iota)
- President-Elect: Pegan Carter (Beta)
- First Vice President: Jackie Martin (Rho)
- Second Vice President: Madeline Smith (Eta)
- Recording Secretary: Laura Livingston (Rho)
- Treasurer: Jan Eastman (Alpha Delta)
- Parliamentarian: Jerrie Jackson (Iota)
- Immediate Past President: Beth Byrd (Gamma)

As the Mu State Bylaws state in Article VII-Elections, Section 1-Nomination, Mu State President in a newsletter is to announce the proposed candidates to local chapter presidents so members will be informed prior to State Convention. Nominations may be made from the floor of the State Convention, provided consent of the nominee is provided. Many thanks to the Nominating Committee for their hard work and to the proposed candidates agreeing to be brought forth to the body at State Convention to serve in a state leadership role.



McCarty Serving Piece that will be given away at State Convention as this year's special project. Please be sure to collect donations toward this project. Tickets are available from each local chapter president.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



Martha Lee Wilson was a Kappa member of the MU State (Mississippi) Eta Chapter and resided in Walnut, MS until her death at the age of 81. She was a graduate of Mississippi University for Women and taught high school math for many years before retiring from the Corinth City Schools. Martha Lee was a lifelong Methodist and a member of Campground United Methodist Church, where she served as Lay Delegate to the Mississippi United Methodist Annual conference for many years. Martha Lee was an accomplished musician as a church organist and pianist. She was an avid Dulcimer player and member of Tippah County Dulcimer Guild. She loved traveling with the Dulcimer group and giving demonstrations of Mountain Dulcimer Music at Visitor Centers, Nursing Homes, and to various groups. She also did extensive work in Genealogy. Martha Lee Wilson had a kind and caring heart for she wanted her legacy to continue to help others through the Martha Lee Wilson National Kappa Scholarship for Kappa Members, Martha Lee Wilson Educational Grant for Non-Members, and the MLW Grant for Growing Minds (Classroom Grant Program). She was preceded in death by her husband William Odell Wilson who she loved dearly. She and Odell did not have any children but through Kappa and the Gideons, their legacy will be embraced forever.

Based upon her wishes in her Will, the following has been established at the National Kappa Headquarters and is to be awarded annually beginning in the 2025-2026 Kappa year:

- **Martha Lee Wilson Scholarship for Kappa Members**
- **Martha Lee Wilson Educational Grant for Non-Members**

It is imperative for Mississippi scholarship applicants to make sure to mark the box on application for the above two scholarship opportunities to ensure monies are coming from Martha Lee Wilson as she had wished the priority would be given to Mississippi first.

- **MLW Grant for Growing Minds (Classroom Grant Program) for Kappa Members or Non-Members**

Annually, up to six grants of \$750 each will be awarded to teachers or instructors to enhance their instructional program including: new projects or programs, program enhancement within the curriculum framework, expansion of an already existing unit, special academic events, professional development opportunities, parent involvement programs.

Eligibility: Any *full-time* public or private P-12 school teacher or school counselor who is an active member of Kappa a minimum of one year or a non-member who is encouraged to apply.

Reminder of the rotation for hosting the State Convention:

2026	Region 4	Beta-Columbus
2027	Region 2	Gamma-Booneville
2028	Region 1	Iota-Ripley
2029	Region 2	Eta-Corinth
2030	Region 3	Rho-Brookhaven
2031	Region 1	Alpha Delta-Ripley

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE 2025-2026 MU STATE YEAR

It has been an honor to have served as your Mu State President for the past 2 years. I have enjoyed traveling throughout the state receiving invitations to meet with local chapters, install local chapter officers, and initiate new members. I am happy to note that at the conclusion of my 2 years as state president, I will have been able to visit each of our local chapters in Mu State! —*Beth Byrd*



Gamma Members working on Personal Development through a Biscuit Making Workshop.



New Members Initiation—Iota Chapter. New members initiated by State President, Beth Byrd.



Beta Chapter Friends and Family Kick-Off



Joint Meeting of Alpha Delta and Iota

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE 2025-2026 MU STATE YEAR



Alpha Delta Members decorating cookies, Ripley, MS



Rita Long of Rho Chapter (Brookhaven)—presenting one of 17 bowls of Valentine candy from Rho members for 12 teacher lounges in local schools plus police, sheriff, and highway patrol Offices.



Eta members put together Christmas shoe boxes and donated bears to State Troopers.



“SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITES”



Local Chapter Reminders

(Page references included from the 2025-2026 Mu State Local Chapter President’s Handbook given out at Fall Workshop.)

The National Scholarships available to members of Kappa Kappa Iota are as follows:

- Mable Caldwell Scholarship
- Jean Terrell Scholarship
- Iva Duggan Scholarship
- General Scholarship

The above scholarships are established not only to help deserving teachers have additional opportunities for personal and professional growth but to honor persons who have made outstanding contributions to the development and extension of Kappa Kappa Iota.

- **Ruth Foster McClain Scholarship** established to help deserving educators pursuing professional growth in a doctoral program. (Admittance to a PhD program is required to be eligible for the Ruth Foster McClain Scholarship.)
- **Retired Educator Grant**...established to help deserving retired educators have additional opportunities for personal and professional growth and to honor members who have made outstanding contributions to the development and extension of Kappa Kappa Iota.
- **Scholarship Funded by Past State Presidents**...established to aid in furthering educational goals of an active member of Kappa Kappa Iota.
- **Sara Sunderman Campus/Collegiate Kappa Scholarship**...established by the Past State Presidents of Kappa Kappa Iota to help deserving active Campus/Collegiate Kappas to have additional opportunities for furthering their personal and professional growth. (\$1000-\$2000)
- **Martha Wilson Scholarship**...NEWLY ESTABLISHED Priority given to members of Mississippi chapters. Check box on scholarship application for MS members.
- **Educational Grant**...established to assist non-member educators in pursuit of professional and personal growth.
- **Martha Wilson Educational Grant for Non-members**...NEWLY ESTABLISHED Priority given to MS educators. Check box on scholarship application indicating a MS resident..
- **MLW Grant for Growing Minds**...NEWLY ESTABLISHED For both members and non-members. Priority given to those from the state of Mississippi. Must indicate on application that applicant is from Mississippi.

For an application and additional information, please see your local chapter president. An electronic version of the application is available at www.nationalkappakappaiota.org. (Click on the National Scholarship tab on the left, then click on the 2025-2026 National Scholarship Application OR 2025-2026 Educational Grant Application both at the bottom of the webpage). Please note that all National Scholarship application signatures must be handwritten, so please bring your National Scholarship Application to Mu State Convention in Columbus, MS on April 25th.

Mu State Scholarships: (Use the same application for national and state)

-**Christine Reeves/Nannie Whitten Scholarship**...this scholarship was established to aid in furthering educational goals of an active member within MU State (\$300). It was named in honor of Mu State founder Christine Reeves and Mu State’s first National President, Nannie Whitten.

-**Imogene Hardon Scholarship (Campus/Collegiate Kappas)**...this scholarship was named in honor of Imogene Hardon, Mu State Past President for her efforts in establishing the Blue Mountain Campus/Collegiate Kappa.

The completed State Scholarship application should be mailed to State Scholarship Chair, Jerrie Jackson, 940 CR 225, Walnut, MS 38683 postmarked no later than April 1, 2026. If you should have questions about the application, please contact Jerrie at 662-223-4827 or email her at jerriesjackson@yahoo.com. An electronic version of the application is available at www.nationalkappakappaiota.org

- Submit/email yearly Philanthropic Report to Chair, Emily Eaton 151 CR 226, Tiplersville, MS 38674 emilyroseeatong@gmail.com by April 1 (pg. 9)
- Submit/email Membership Report to Beth Byrd, 90 CR 1250 Booneville, MS 38829 bbyrd@nemcc.edu by April 1 (pp. 23-26)
- Submit/email yearly Empathy Report to Chair, Donna Geno 384 CR 7100 Booneville, MS 38829 dgeno1972@gmail.com by April 1 (pg. 16)
- Submit/email names of deceased members to Memorial Chair, Valeria Weatherly 631 CR 103 Walnut, MS 38683 vweatherly21@gmail.com by April 1 (pg. 17)
- Submit/email yearly Professional/Personal Report to Chair, Tommye Walker 105 Walker Lane, Ripley, MS 38863 by April 1 (pg. 12)
- Submit/mail signed Mu State Scholarship Applications to Chair, Jerrie Jackson, 940 CR 225, Walnut, MS 38683 by April 1 (Application available online on the national website)



State Convention 2026 Registration Form



(Please Print)

Name _____

Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Local Chapter _____

Check All That Apply:

Mu State Executive Committee _____

Past State President _____ Year Served _____

Mu State Standing Committee Chair _____

Local Chapter President _____

Local Chapter Member _____

First Time Member Attendee _____

Please check all the events below that you plan to participate:

_____ Friday night Welcome Reception/Dinner at Honey House

_____ Saturday State Convention (includes continental breakfast & lunch)

This is to assist the local planning committee on meal planning and seating arrangements.

REGISTRATION FEE IS \$45 for Friday & Saturday OR \$40 for Saturday Only

Mail completed registration form and payment promptly by Friday, April 10, 2026

**Make checks payable to Beta, Send check and completed registration form to:
Diann Carter, 751 Beersheeba Rd., Columbus, MS 39702**

Questions? Contact Beth Byrd via e-mail at
bbyrd@nemcc.edu or cell 662-720-4317