



6TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

New Orleans, Louisiana

July 13-16, 2023

HERE IS THE TRUTH

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WELCOME LETTER, NATIONAL PRESIDENT

To the Gamma Family,

Welcome to the 2023 National Convention of Gamma Xi Phi, the nation's leading fraternity for artists and creators. It is my delight to welcome you back to New Orleans, the city of a million dreams. Six years ago here in New Orleans, the sole delegates made decisions that would both save the fraternity from the double-headed scourge of apathy and burnout, and correct the fraternity's course so that it could grow into the internationally known and locally respected collective of creative minds that we know today.



Since we were last in New Orleans, the fraternity has grown from 41 members to 165 members, and from six chapters to 23. We have established a permanent national program, I SWEAR. We have written an official history and compiled it with our policies, procedures, ritual, and membership directory to make *Mnemosyne*—likely the first such publication among arts fraternities. Very importantly, we have become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Not only does this make donations to our fraternity tax deductible, but it is an essential step toward being able to receive grants for our important work. Among the first grants that we've won is a donation from Friends Meeting of Washington to build a Little Free Library in Conway, North Carolina.

All of these accomplishments happened because we bet on our own success. We came to New Orleans in 2017 determined to keep Gamma Xi Phi alive, despite our small numbers. We allowed New Orleans to be our backdrop as we worked to build the Gamma Xi Phi that our descendants deserve. We awoke in this city of a million dreams then, and we awake again now, from three committed delegates in 2017, to over twenty.

Our strong registration numbers—the highest for an in-person convention in our history—are a testament to our greatest accomplishment: our sodality. We have come together fraternally with a staunch belief in our timeless values. Because we believe in these values, we believe in each other. Because we believe in each other, we are friends.

And that's what I am proudest of.

Enjoy New Orleans with old friends and new friends, and never forget that the meaning behind our letters is the essence of who we are.

Artistically and Fraternally,

Brother Rashid Darden
National President

AGENDA

*Host Hotel: Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette French Quarter Area Hotel
817 Common Street, New Orleans, LA 70112*

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

Attire: Come as you are

8:00 p.m. **INFORMAL RECEPTION** Meet and greet fellow members and pick up
Host Hotel your registration materials.
Executive Director's Suite
Check GroupMe for Room
Number

FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2023

Daytime Activities: National Convention T-shirt

Evening Activities: Ritual Attire

9:00 a.m. **SERVICE PROJECT** In partnership with:
Xavier University Art Department
Xavier University Art Village
3520 Pine Street
New Orleans, LA 70125

Noon **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

1:45 p.m. **CULTURAL EXCURSIONS** **Group One:** JamNola (Joy, Art, Music—
Meet in the lobby of the Host Nola's Cultural Funhouse)
Hotel **Group Two:** New Orleans African
American Museum
Group Three: Backstreet Cultural Museum

8:00 p.m. **OPENING ACTIVITIES** Formal Opening
Mahalia Jackson Room Ritual of Initiation
New Member Celebration

SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2023

Business Attire

Mahalia Jackson Room

9:00 a.m.	BUSINESS SESSION I	Icebreaker Minutes Treasurer's Report National President's Report Strategic Conversation: National Programs
Noon	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN	
2:00 p.m.	BUSINESS SESSION II	Icebreaker Communications Update Strategic Conversation: Membership and Expansion Election
	BREAK	
3:30 p.m.	BUSINESS SESSION III	Icebreaker Ritual Legislation Honorary Member Resolution Time and Place Formal Closing
6:00 p.m.	THE AMETHYST HOUR <i>Royal Frenchman Hotel & Bar</i> <i>700 Frenchman Street, #1614</i> <i>New Orleans, LA 70116</i> <i>Courtyard All Black Cocktail Attire</i>	Introductions Appreciations Farewell Address from 3rd and 5th National President Introduction of National President Fellowship

SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2023

Gamma Casual Attire | Fraternal Colors Preferred

10:00 a.m. EST/ Noon PST	NATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING <i>Mahalia Jackson Room</i>	2023-25 National Program Theme
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The Lambda Chapter of Gamma Xi Phi



WELCOME

TO *New*
Orleans

ENJOY OUR CITY



ARCHDIOCESE OF
NEW ORLEANS



Office of Black Catholic Ministries

HONORARY MEMBER BIOGRAPHY

SHAYNA HAYES



Shayna Hayes is Head of Content, Entertainment & Initiatives at the National Football League (NFL). She pilots the editorial and creative vision around all content for the NFL's social justice and social impact initiatives, as well as entertainment content for tentpole events such as the Draft and Super Bowl. She was previously a Senior Producer at BNC and a Producer at ESPN. Prior to that, she worked as a Senior Producer for KLAS in Las Vegas, Nevada, and a Producer at WTVM in Columbus, Georgia.

She is an alumna of American University in Washington, D.C., where she was President of the American University Gospel Choir and was active in campus media and residence life. Her hometown is Mobile, Alabama.

Shayna believes, "effective communication is the pathway to identifying actionable solutions that can be used to create a more accepting society." She has spent nearly 20 years as an expert at coaching, training, and supporting creators through their processes, living out Gamma Xi Phi's principle of Elevation through creative connections.

Shayna is excited to join Gamma Xi Phi at its first in-person convention initiation of an honorary member since the first National Convention in 2013. Her service interests include connecting artists and creators to the fraternity and in supporting west coast expansion.

We are deeply honored that Shayna Hayes has accepted our invitation to honorary membership and is joining us here in New Orleans.



*Best Wishes to Gamma Xi Phi as you convene for your
largest National Convention to date!*



*Congratulations to
Executive Director and
Nu Chapter Charter Member
Trenile Tillman, Esquire*



*We love you and are incredibly proud of you and your
accomplishments.*

Love, Mom and Dad





From Left to Right: Trenile Tillman, Tiffany Lezama, Alicia Walter, Nsenga Burton, Justin Anderson Sr., Alexian Jennings

Introducing the **NU CHAPTER**

Introducing Nu Chapter, shining bright,
A vibrant addition to Gamma Xi Phi's light.
Based in Atlanta, Georgia, it stands tall,
Embracing artistry's captivating call.

Where creativity dances, music takes flight,
Visual art blooms, literature ignites,
Theater weaves tales, and dance enchants,
Nu Chapter joins, in harmony, the grand chants.

Artists united, with passion aflame,
Nu Chapter embraces Gamma Xi Phi's name.
A beacon of talent, diversity, and grace,
Together we thrive, in this artistic space.

In Atlanta's heart, a new chapter unfolds,
Where dreams are nurtured, and stories are told.
Nu Chapter, a haven for artists to thrive,
Philanthropy, service, and excellence drive.

MEMBER UPDATES

Brother Abe released an album, "Darling Child," in November 2022.

Brother Justin Anderson began a new position as a Digital Content Writer for a Fortune 50 Company.

Sister Nsenga Burton was presented with the Unsung Heroine Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women (Metro Atlanta Chapter). She was named Southern Regional Director of the Howard University-PNC National Center for Entrepreneurs; a role where she will curate content, programming and resources for media and arts entrepreneurs.

Brother G Clausen designed six shows in 2022 and was an associate designer on two shows with a Tony Award-winning sound designer. Thus far in 2023, he has designed six shows and released three EPs (Orbnoir Vol.1,2,3) with more shows to come.

Sister Alexian Erby-Jennings graduated with her Master of Arts in Education from Piedmont University in Demorest, GA in July 2023.

Brother Jaquair Gillette's performance art film/documentary, "Defiance & Desperation," was officially selected into two film festivals: The Garden State Film Festival and The Hamilton Arts Festival. He was featured in a museum exhibit honoring poets from the city of Paterson at the Paterson Museum. Lastly, his book, "Defiance & Desperation," was added to the New York City Public Library System.

Sister Melanie S. Hatter moderated a panel discussion between two debut novelists at the Gaithersburg Book Festival in May 2023 and was a panelist at the Washington Writers Conference that same month discussing, "Building Your Writing Community." She also was a judge in the adult fiction category for the annual Bethesda Magazine Short Story & Essay Contest, which appeared in the July/August 2023 issue of Bethesda Magazine.

Brother Chris Hill was a participant in Art Conservation workshop at MoMA, Fire Ensemble Member, Afribembé Festival Volunteer, NewFest Film Festival Production Assistant, Urbanworld Film Festival Production Assistant, Art of Brooklyn Film Festival Production Assistant, Brooklyn Comic Con Volunteer, National Black Theatre Volunteer, Flame Con Volunteer, and The Actors Theatre Workshop Production Volunteer.

Sister Tiffany Lezama wrote and recorded the suicide awareness pledge for the GXP national campaign in 2022. She was invited to speak and share an original piece entitled, "Homecoming" at the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Atlanta regional launch of 2023.

Sister Tiffany Lezama and **Brother Champ Kilpatrick** co-wrote the short film, "No Tears Allowed."

Brother E. Ethelbert Miller's book *Black Men are Precious* was nominated for a 2023 Grammy for Best Spoken Word Album.

Sister Jennifer Samson's non-fiction book, *Self-Publishing for Canadians*, has been an Amazon Canada bestseller in multiple categories in 2022 and 2023. In addition, her novel, *Bayou Bound*, was selected for the 2022-2023 North Shore Authors Collection, which showcases authors from the area in local libraries.

Brother BJ Simmons married Alexis on October 7, 2022.

Sister Trenile Tillman and her business partner officially formed and registered their Event Planning Company, Right Way Events, LLC.

Brother Carlos Walker has sold over 4,500 books between 2022 and 2023. He is also writing another book called, *The 11 Keys to Open the Doors of Success*.

Sister Alicia Walter was featured in *Shoutout Atlanta*, hosted intimate paint sessions to encourage self-worth with the youth and began an internship in Creative Placemaking at CHACE (Chattahoochee Hills Arts and Culture Ecosystem) FARMS. She has also recently published three books *The Self-Care Mindfulness Journal: Intention, Attention, Attitude*; *The Plant Heaux: Plant Journal*; and *Liberation Within: Empowering African American Women on the Journey to Fibroid Wellness*.

Brother Markell Williams aka Buddah Desmond released his fourth project entitled, *shifting from the inside out: love poems* in February 2022. He won 1st Place in the Yecheilyah's 5th Annual Poetry Contest with, "Ghosts, Ghostbusting History + Visible / Invisible Lives (Freedom is Ours)" in December 2022. His fifth project, *Everything I Miss(ed) At Home*, was published by Liquid Cat Books in January 2023. He was a featured poet and author at a variety of events.

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We are grateful for your support!



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Chris Rutledge
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CLEANSEHIVE SENDS BEST WISHES TO GAMMA XI PHI ON YOUR 2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Congratulations to Brother
Rashid Darden as he
concludes his term as
Fifth National President and
continues his service as a
Charter Member of Phi
Chapter



Congratulations and Special
Acknowledgment to
National Executive Director
and Nu Chapter Charter
Member, Trenile Tillman,
Esquire



"First of all, Servants of all - We shall transcend all!"

ALL ARTISTS DESERVE CLEAN AIR AND A NON-TOXIC HOME
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congratulates GAMMA XI PHI on your
National Convention!



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Specializing in the *Appropriately Extra!*

HAPPY 2023 GAMMA XI PHI NATIONAL CONVENTION!

FROM GXP IOTA CHAPTER

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Thank you to outgoing
President Brother
Rashid Darden,
and congratulations to
President-elect Sister
La Toya Hankins!





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GAMMA XI PHI FRATERNITY



MALCOLM Q. MINOR

FOR HIS WORK IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

“If you have a purpose in which you can believe, there’s no end to the amount of things you can accomplish.”

– Marian Anderson