



SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

# THE GOLDEN RAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE EPSILON IOTA CHAPTER

## GROWING STRONGER

### Epsilon Iota Celebrates Achievements and Prepares for Future

#### ► Alumni Golf Tournament

This year's golf tournament was a resounding success, bringing brothers together from across generations for a weekend filled with camaraderie, friendly competition, and a shared commitment to the future of our chapter. The event not only provided a great opportunity to reconnect and strengthen bonds, but it also served as a key fundraiser supporting our association initiatives, and we are grateful to everyone who participated, contributed, and made this event possible. The tournament reminded us that while our undergraduate years may be behind us, the brotherhood and spirit of PIKE last a lifetime. We look forward to building on this momentum and seeing even more brothers at next year's tournament!

#### ► PIKE Now Campaign

In September, Epsilon Iota will be launching the PIKE Now campaign to grow our chapter's endowment fund. The fund plays a vital role in providing undergraduate brothers with the opportunity to attend Pi Kappa Alpha's leadership conferences—experiences that strengthen their leadership skills, deepen their commitment to our values, and prepare them to lead both in the fraternity and beyond. This year, the chapter has set a goal of sending 60 undergraduate brothers to the Kansas City Leadership Summit in November. Their fundraising goal is \$10,000.

By supporting the PIKE Now campaign, alumni can directly invest in the future of our chapter and ensure our undergraduates continue to benefit from the programs that make PIKE a lifelong experience. Every tax-deductible gift, big or small, helps us reach our goal and continue building on the legacy of Epsilon Iota.

We invite you to join us in making an impact today. Together, we can ensure the success of the next generation of leaders. Scan the QR code to visit [pikenow25.funraise.org/team/epsilon-iota-southeast-missouri-state](https://pikenow25.funraise.org/team/epsilon-iota-southeast-missouri-state) to make your gift.



#### ► EI Wins Second AAB of the Year

During the Thomas C. Tillar Leadership Academy in Memphis this summer, which several alumni attended, an alumni reception was held to honor those associations that go above and beyond to help mentor their chapters. One of the highlights of the weekend was recognizing the hard work and dedication of our Alumni Advisory Board, which was honored with our second-consecutive Alumni Advisory Board of the Year Award. This distinction reflects their outstanding mentorship, guidance, and leadership that continue to elevate Epsilon Iota and exemplify the values of Pi Kappa Alpha.



*Undergraduates at PIKE Headquarters. From left: Zane West '23, Blake Fehr '24, Will Ladek '23, and Alex Schlitt, Missouri State '13*



*Brothers enjoying the Alumni Golf Tournament. From left: Rico Santacruz '04, David Prince '00, Josh Pennebaker '03, and Ryan Whitley '04*

#### ► 2024-25 Awards Summary

At the conclusion of the summer, Chapter President **Zane West '24**, External Vice President **Blake Fehr '24**, and Secretary **Will Ladek '24** traveled to Memphis for the Thomas C. Tillar Leadership Academy. The academy offers chapter officers and emerging leaders the opportunity to dive deeper into chapter operations, enhance personal development, and become agents of positive change on their campus and in their community—all while celebrating success with awards recognizing outstanding chapter and alumni achievements. The chapter received the following awards and recognitions:

- 100% Phi Phi K A Club
- 25 Man Commitment (PIKE University)
- Scholarship Plate (3.0-plus chapter GPA)
- Garnet Certification recipients: Zane West and Will Ladek

Fraternally,  
**Alex Schlitt, Missouri State '13**  
Epsilon Iota Chapter Advisor  
[schlitt1431@outlook.com](mailto:schlitt1431@outlook.com)

# Chapter Officers

PRESIDENT

**Zane West '23**

INTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT

**Charles Grunwaldt '23**

EXTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT

**Blake Fehr '24**

SECRETARY

**William Ladek '23**

TREASURER

**Tucker Hequembourg '23**

VICE PRESIDENT OF

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**Mickelson Otto '23**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

**Tanner King '24**

MEMBER AT LARGE

**Joseph Faulkner '23**

HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Jake Bishop '22**

HOUSE MANAGER

**Chase Showmaker '24**

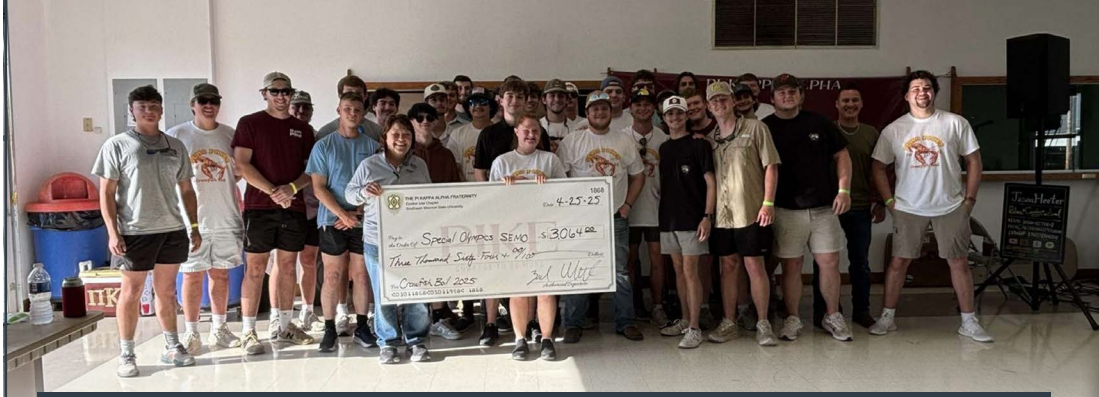
RECRUITMENT CHAIRMAN

**Ryley Styer '23**



## CHAPTER GOALS

- ✓ 3.2 GPA
- ✓ 30 men recruitment class
- ✓ Win Homecoming, Greek Week, and intramurals



*The inaugural Crawfish Boil donation check presentation to Special Olympics Southeast Missouri.*

## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

### PIKE Reflects on the Academic Year

The 2024-25 academic year was one of growth, achievement, and deepened commitment to the values of our brotherhood at Epsilon Iota Chapter. Through hard work and unity, we reached new heights in academics, campus involvement, and philanthropy.

Academically, our chapter maintained a 3.12 GPA, reflecting our collective dedication to academic excellence and accountability. Philanthropy was another area of tremendous impact. As a chapter, we raised \$10,412 for various causes, a record-setting total for Epsilon Iota. Our biggest fundraiser of the year, Kickin' for a Cause, brought together students from across campus in a friendly yet competitive soccer tournament that not only raised money but also strengthened our ties with the broader community. We were proud to take home first place in both the Tri Delta and Alpha Phi philanthropy competitions, a testament to our strong campus presence and commitment to service.

Epsilon Iota also demonstrated its competitive spirit by winning the campus intramural championship across multiple sports, including flag football and basketball. These victories highlighted our athletic talent and the brotherhood we foster both on and off the field.

We capped the year with several successful brotherhood events, including our annual Alumni Golf Tournament, which was highly attended and helped strengthen our relationships with alumni across generations.

Fraternally,  
**Zane West '23**  
Chapter President



*PIKE championship at Tri Delta's Triple Play baseball philanthropy event.*





# THE KUMMING FAMILY

## *Three Generations of Pikes*

By Russell Keene, *Beta Mu '80*, former Chief Communications and Alumni Officer for Pi Kappa Alpha

**F**amily legacies are a welcome rarity within PIKE, most generally a father/son or two or more brothers. The Kumming family, with St. Louis, Missouri, roots, are proud of their noteworthy and rare third-generation PIKE status.

This PIKE trifecta is composed of **Robert Kumming Jr. '64**, son **Rob Kumming III, Southern Illinois '93**, and grandson **Mason Kumming, Missouri State '23**.

Robert earned a BBA at SEMO and spent a successful career with MassMutual, retiring as executive vice president of its pension division. He fondly recalls Pikes reaching out to him in his freshman dorm and being duly impressed by the men. As a new member, Robert's Pike name was "Wobi," a nickname brothers still use for him. Epsilon Iota was a young chapter in 1964. Robert is pleased that the chapter has now operated continuously for 51 years since its founding.

Robert says PIKE membership has had a direct influence over his life, and he continues to meet PIKE members to this day. He is incredibly proud that his son and grandson are fellow Pikes. "Being present at Rob's initiation is certainly a favorite memory," says Robert proudly. Robert is a generous financial donor to the PIKE Foundation and is a member of its President's Club.

Rob transferred from New York's Hartwick College to Southern Illinois at Carbondale when PIKE was a newer fraternity on campus, just three years old. "As a legacy and hearing my father's stories from his experiences, it was something that I wanted to continue and share with him. The added excitement of building something and continuing the strong tradition of PIKE was something I clearly wanted to be a part of," says Rob. He chuckles, "Yes, like dad, my chapter also had nicknames. I am 'Wobus.'"

Rob's SIUC brothers stay in close touch. "During college, winning a Smythe Award was meaningful and a shared accomplishment. Since that time, for 25 years, we've held 'MAN UP' trips, and we'll be celebrating again soon on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail."

Rob earned two bachelor's degrees at SIUC, in journalism/mass communications and in consumer economics. He resides today in O'Fallon, Illinois, not far from St. Louis, and has built a rewarding 25-year career in recruiting. He is a senior talent advisor for Boehringer Ingelheim, a global, privately held pharmaceutical and animal health company.

Rob says of the fraternity, "When I went to SIUC, PIKE represented family and inclusion. Now, it's having a core group of lifelong friends. We have been together for all the marriages, kids, careers, divorces, surgeries, life accomplishments, and life's losses."

Mason is a sophomore studying for a degree in finance with the goal of becoming a financial advisor. He, too, enjoys his PIKE membership. As he considered fraternities, "Family history with PIKE and friends' knowledge of PIKE guided me to the chapter upon entering Missouri State in fall 2023." Mason says Pike brothers were very welcoming to his new member class, and the initiation ceremony was memorable. He looks forward to building a strong brotherhood in the years ahead, living in the PIKE house during this school year and future opportunities to serve in PIKE office (and someday adding to the fourth generation of Kumming men as Pikes!).

ROBERT KUMMING JR.



ROBERT KUMMING III



MASON KUMMING



# LAUNCHING **PIKE NOW**

GIVE BACK TO EPSILON IOTA

*Do you want to invest in the future of Epsilon Iota? Look no further than the PIKE Now campaign!* Launching in September, the campaign will help us grow our chapter's endowment fund, allowing our undergraduate brothers to benefit from PIKE programs.

Give to the campaign through September 30. Scan the QR code or visit: [pikenow25.funraise.org/team/epsilon-iota-southeast-missouri-state](https://pikenow25.funraise.org/team/epsilon-iota-southeast-missouri-state)



*Learn more about this campaign and our goal on page 1!*



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SEMO Pike Alumni

# Welcome HOME

We're Putting  
Out the  
Welcome Sign!

**Know Someone Who  
Should Be Here?**

**W**e're always looking for promising young men to bring into Epsilon Iota Chapter and would appreciate recommendations of men you know who would be a good fit.

Send their info to **Ryley Styer '23** at (573) 987-4928 or [ryley137@gmail.com](mailto:ryley137@gmail.com), or **Grayson Martin '23** at (573) 579-0861 or [graysonmartin16@gmail.com](mailto:graysonmartin16@gmail.com).



*From left: Zane West '23,  
Blake Fehr '24 and Will Ladek '23.*



*Epsilon Iota's trophy case.*