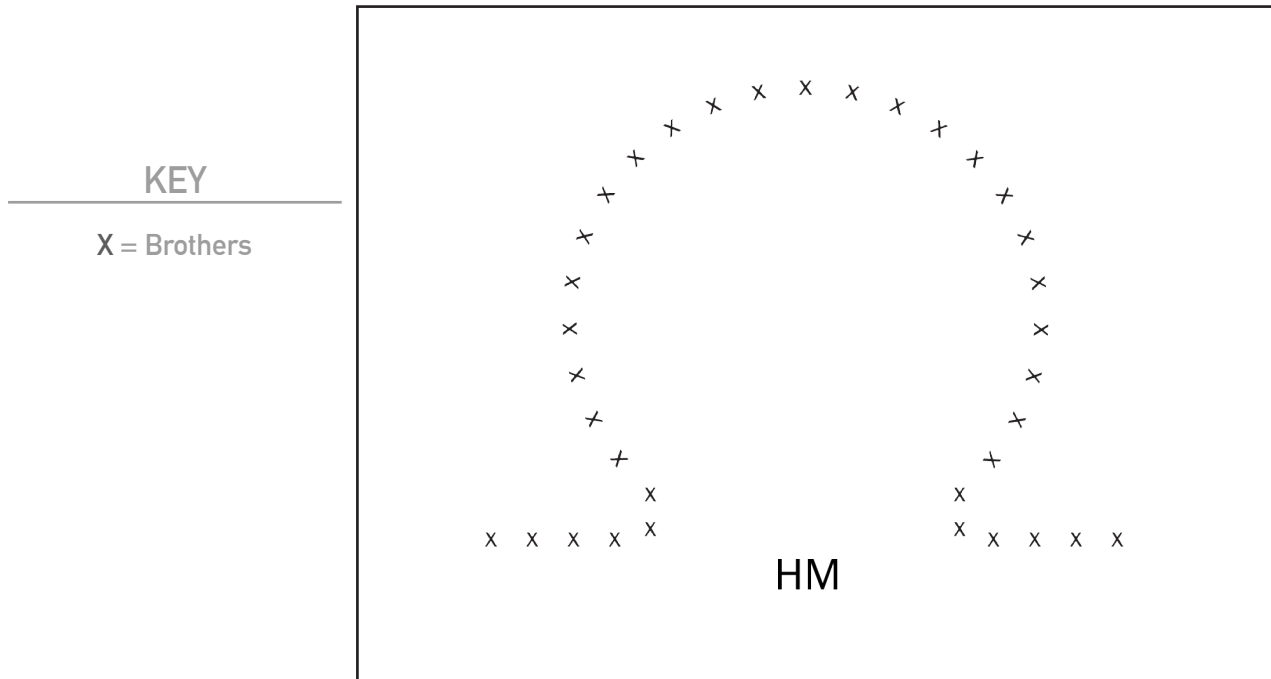


# BLACK LANTERN PROCESSIONAL

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## INTRODUCTION

The Black Lantern Processional is one of our brotherhood's public rituals and one of Alpha Sigma Phi's oldest. It was born at Yale University in the mid - 1800s. Traditionally, those selected for membership were placed into the line in between brothers and taken to the place where they were to be initiated. Today the processional is used to celebrate Founders' Day, to mark the anniversary of a chapter, to gather new members for the Initiation ceremony, or as a memorial for our deceased brothers. The processional is conducted from start to finish in a dignified manner and in total silence.

Great care should be taken when organizing and performing the Processional. This resource contains materials and checklists that will help your chapter carry out a successful Black Lantern Processional.

## EQUIPMENT

- Battery-powered lanterns (1 per person or 1 for every 3 brothers)
- Candle(s) if not using battery powered lanterns
- Local permits for conducting processional (if needed)
- Processional handouts (available on Fraternity's website)
- Fire Extinguishers if using candles
- Black robe (with a white stole) for Marshal
- Black robe with hood for each member

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## SETTING

- The Vice President of Ritual and Traditions leads the procession, wearing a black robe, hood up or down, with a white stole. He carries a lantern in his left hand.
- Members follow the Marshal at 6-foot intervals. Members are in black robes, hoods up or down. Each carries a lit lantern in the left hand. *(If there are not enough lanterns for each man, every third man should carry a lantern.)*
- The Vice President of Ritual and Traditions should plan where the brothers are to gather if other than the chapter quarters. The actual route of the march should also be determined and walked to see if there is a need for traffic control or any hazardous spots are to be avoided.
- The Vice President of Ritual and Traditions should mark the “Omega” symbol (Ω) with tape or chalk before the ceremony begins.

## PREPARATION

### 30 days prior to the proposed date

- Chapter Planning Meeting (VP of Ritual and Traditions, Prudential Board, GCA, and Faculty Advisor) to select date, time, and delegate tasks, etc.
- Meeting with campus Fraternity & Sorority professional
- Inventory chapter equipment; make necessary arrangements to borrow robes and lanterns from area chapter if needed, or purchase additional materials

### 10 days prior to the proposed date

- All press releases delivered
- Letter of notification sent to: Campus Fraternity & Sorority Professional, Vice President for Student Affairs, Residence Life office, IFC, NPHC, Panhellenic Council, and all campus Multicultural Groups
- Letters of notification sent to: Campus/city police
- Route for processional mapped out

### 3 days prior to the proposed date

- Lanterns checked to make sure they work
- Rehearsal

### Day of the processional, communicate with the following:

- Campus Fraternity & Sorority Life Professional
- Campus Police
- City Police

## LETTERS OF NOTIFICATION/INVITATIONS SENT TO

- Fraternity & Sorority Life Advisor
- All Campus Multicultural Groups
- Dean of Students
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- IFC, NPHC & Panhellenic Council
- All other Greek Organizations on Campus
- Director of Residence Life (if route takes the chapter past residence halls)
- Public Safety/Campus Police and City/Town Police
- Campus and Local Newspapers and Media Outlets

# BLACK LANTERN PROCESSIONAL

continued

*The VP of Ritual and Traditions leads the procession, wearing a black robe (hood up or down, with white stole). The VP of Ritual and Traditions carries a lit lantern in his left hand. Brothers should line up behind the VP of Ritual and Traditions (traditionally brothers line up in roster order; alumni or visiting chapters are at the front of the line). Brothers should follow the VP of Ritual and Traditions at 6-foot intervals. Members are in black robes (hoods up or down). Each man carries a lit lantern in the left hand. (If there are not enough lanterns for each man, every third man should carry a lantern.) The VP of Ritual and Traditions may need to use a microphone or megaphone so that all brothers can hear the prayer. Once all the brothers, new members, and distinguished guests have arrived, the Marshal addresses the brotherhood:*

HM:

Brothers, the Black Lantern Processional serves to remember our deceased brothers. It is one of the Fraternity's oldest traditions, dating back to the 1800s when it was used at Yale University to announce to the campus those candidates who were accepted into Alpha · Sigma · Phi. In just a moment, we will begin our slow and steady tread toward [insert location]. The Processional is conducted from start to finish in a dignified manner and in total silence. Upon completion of the Omega Prayer, brothers will place their lanterns on the ground and walk away in total silence. Brothers, you should remain in silence until you have vacated the immediate area of the Omega symbol.

*Once the VP of Ritual and Traditions has addressed the brotherhood, he should start marching with a slow and heavy tread, with marked emphasis on every third step. Each person marches in unison to the VP of Ritual and Traditions's lead. The tread should continue (even if that means stepping in place) until all members have arrived at the site of the Omega Prayer. Once the brothers have formed the Omega symbol, in a slow and steady voice the VP of Ritual and Traditions should read the Omega Prayer.*

HM:

Gracious and Mighty God,  
Alpha – The Beginning and Omega – The End.  
We approach Thee in our weakness, and humbly  
crave Thy help.  
We lay our burden of great sorrow at Thy feet,  
and cry aloud to Thee, for comfort in our afflictions.  
Thou have for some wise purpose seen fit to remove  
from our Mystic Circle brothers dear to our hearts. We  
pause now to remember those who are no longer with  
us:

*[First and Last Name, University and Year of Initiation]*

# BLACK LANTERN PROCESSIONAL

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*After the VP of Ritual and Traditions has finished reading the list of deceased members, the VP of Ritual and Traditions continues reading the Omega Prayer.*

HM:

Sanctify, we beseech Thee,  
to our understanding the truth of our loss,  
to see the light of wisdom, in a world dark with ignorance,  
and be reminded of the friendships in brotherly love,  
so that we may be an arm of service in a world of need,  
wretched with despair, and that we may redound it to our  
eternal good.

We cherish their memories and enter their names now  
into the Omega Chapter, there to remain from this  
moment, until that instant when we are gathered to our Fathers  
in that silent sleep of death, and are again reunited with our  
brothers within the Mystic Circle.

All Hail, ALPHA · SIGMA · PHI, Amen.

*After the prayer, the VP of Ritual and Traditions places his lantern on the ground. This signals the rest of the brotherhood to do the same. Everyone then leaves the ceremony in silence, and one should be able to look back and see the shape of an Omega still burning brightly. The VP of Ritual and Traditions should prearrange who will pick up the lanterns and transport them once the ceremony has concluded. Allow them to burn for a few minutes until most people have vacated the immediate area.*

**END OF THE BLACK LANTERN PROCESSIONAL**