



Cynthia M.A. Butler-McIntyre has led the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority through a tumultuous period in U.S. and world history. It is an era of inspiring highs, such as the election and re-election of America's first Black president and the 100th anniversary of the organization's founding; and of debilitating lows, such as the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010, the rise of obstructionist conservative politics on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures across the country and the rolling back of civil rights victories, such as the recent gutting of Section 4 of the *Voting Rights Act* by the Supreme Court.

Through it all, Butler-McIntyre has led "with a servant's heart," as she often describes her approach, which is informed by her faith.

A native of New Orleans, La., Butler-McIntyre was elected as the 24th president of the

200,000-member Delta Sigma Theta Sorority by a unanimous vote of over 800 voting delegates at the organization's 49th National Convention in Orlando, Fla., on Aug. 18, 2008.

Butler-McIntyre has been a member of the sorority for 35 years and held several local, regional and national offices.

A 1976 Dillard University alum, Butler-McIntyre is an educator who has impacted the lives of countless young people for over 30 years as a teacher, assistant principal, summer school principal and now a director of human resources for the Jefferson Parish Public School System in Harvey, La.

In addition to her bachelor's degree, Butler-McIntyre earned a master of education degree from the University of New Orleans at the age of 20 and also holds an honorary doctorate of divinity degree from the Christian Bible College of Louisiana.

The sorority president has received numerous recognition for her service, which includes membership on the boards of several other organizations including as national board member of the National Council of Negro Women; a past national board member of the National Alliance of Black School Educators; the state secretary of the Louisiana Association of School Personnel Administrators; and founding president of Algiers-Gretna Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, to which President Barack Obama appointed her in 2011.

In an interview with the AFRO, Butler-McIntyre reflected on the organization's legacy and centennial celebrations, including the 51st National Convention in Washington, D.C., where a new president and other officers will be elected.

1. Why the choice of Washington, D.C., for the Centennial Celebration?

Washington, D.C., was the most appropriate place to have our 51st National Convention, culminating our Centennial Celebration, as it is the birthplace city of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. We could not have aptly celebrated 100 years of sisterhood, scholarship and service and honor the courage of our 22 founders without coming back "home" to where it all began. We also wanted to give our members the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of our founders and visit Howard University, where our founders collectively decided that this organization would be dedicated to serving the community and addressing needs and issues that pertain to the

African-American community.

2. How has the sorority evolved over the past century?

The sorority has grown substantially over the past century, going from an intimate group of socially conscious college women seeking to affect change on the campus of Howard University and throughout the country to an organization that spans around the globe – consisting of hundreds of thousands of members, representing over 900 chapters in the U.S. and abroad. So, as you can see, we have grown and will continue to expand our reach.

3. What factors have distinguished the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from other sororities/fraternities/social groups?

I am proud to say that all the sororities and fraternities of the National Pan-Hellenic Council have programs and initiatives geared towards the betterment of our communities. I think what sets Delta Sigma Theta apart from them and other organizations is the fact that we are the single largest predominately African-American women's organization in the country. Not to imply that the others do not, but we also make social action a top priority – as we commit to staying abreast of key legislation that dramatically affects the African-American community and relay the necessary information to our respective communities. During our Delta Days in the Nation's Capital and Delta Days at the UN, we make our presence known and our voices heard.

4. What factors were responsible for the sorority's ability to survive and thrive throughout the past century?

As an organization founded on Christian principles, I can say with confidence that it was God's never-ending grace that has allowed us to survive. The tenacious spirit of our founders; the awesome leadership of the 23 women that came before me to serve as the national president of this dynamic organization; the commitment of our members to be public servants have definitely propelled us forward over the past century and allowed us to thrive.

5. How has the sorority been involved or influenced by some of the defining moments in U.S./Black history?

Delta Sigma Theta and its members have been and remain in the forefront of some of this country's most world-changing events. U.S. history, Black history and Delta history are all intertwined, as Delta Sigma Theta has incited change, demanded equality, and fought injustice since its creation. The first public act of social advocacy Delta Sigma Theta participated in – two months after its founding – was the 1913 Women's Suffrage March. As the only African-American organization present, our founders made the determination in that very moment that Delta Sigma Theta would not sit idly by while any group of individuals were denied their basic human freedoms. And since then, we have not strayed from that fighting stalwart spirit that has been engrained in every Delta woman.
