Pike Profile

This month, we honor Brother Joe Burford, a 1962 initiate and 1967 graduate with an AB in Chemistry and BS in Business Admin. Joe went on to finish Law School at Georgia State in 1987 and is presently one of the senior staff of the Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia. Here, in his words, are his recollections of life as a PiKA at West Virginia and his career that followed:

While an active in Alpha Theta, I served as Rush Chairman, IMC and SMC. Fraternity meant good times, long term friendships, home away from home, sharing good and bad times, and learning to exist on one's own. Memories always revolve around road trips, pledges and the "bell," New Year's Eve in Charleston, and being a fraternity which was "off campus" (gave us some autonomy and a certain anonymity from University control--out of sight, out of mind). I cherished the "Ole House" for its uniqueness and individuality. It forged the fraternity into a cohesive unit because of its size, design and the mere fact it constantly had to be maintained, a job shared by all. The one word I use to sum up our fraternity in the 60s is DIVERSITY.As a fraternity we did not have that "set look" or "set persona" for which the Greek System was so famous. We were "Animal House!" and we loved it. Fortunately, we did better with grades and administration relations. We really were a group of individuals who meshed very, very well. I believe this is what set Pi KA apart from the rest of the fraternities at WVU. The diversity of individuals in the PiKA ranks was the primary reason I joined.

Upon graduation from WVU, I married and joined Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp as a sales representative. Between 1967 and 1970, we lived in Detroit, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Syracuse. In 1970, I joined Thomas Steel Strip Corp as New York Regional Sales Manager. We remained in New York until 1974 when we moved to St.Louis where I assumed the position of Western Regional Manager. I left Thomas in 1977 to purchase a controlling interest in Snowshoe Mountain Resort in Slatyfork, WV, with my brother. I headed up real estate sales and construction from 1977 to 1980. I then functioned as general manager until we sold the resort in 1985. The hospitality industry is extremely different, quite interesting, seasonal, and one heck of a lot of fun. But it was also trying and quite exhausting, particularly in West Virginia.

I moved the family to Atlanta in 1985 and entered law school while working as an independent real estate broker/agent. Upon graduation from GSU, I joined the Fulton County District Attorneys Office as a Trial Division Attorney. In 1992, I was assigned to the Major Case Division and handled high profile violent felonies through 1998 when I joined the Prosecuting Attorneys Council.

Marleen and I raised two boys and one girl.Matthew, 29, is currently living in Morgantown and is manager at Edgewater Restaurant on Cheat Lake. Jeffrey, 28, graduated from Maine Maritime Academy with a degree in marine engineering.He is a 2nd Grade Merchant Marine Engineer, currently shipping in the Pacific. He lives where ever the fun is when he is not at sea. We refer to him as our "homeless child." Amanda, our youngest, graduated from Randolf-Macon University with a degree in marine biology. She works for Noesis, Inc., a beltway bandit and research development facility in D.C.

Marleen is the Director of Corporate Communications at Cox Interactive Media. She is current President of the Georgia Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. She also breeds and shows West Highland White Terriers, and is an AKC judge in her spare time.

Our door is always open, and we'd love to see the "ole crowd" if any are ever in the area.