

STARTING SMALL: CREATING A PI KAPPA DELTA HONOR SOCIETY (NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION) NATIONAL DIGITAL ARCHIVE AT OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, OTTAWA. BY GLORIA CREED-DIKEOGU, Ph.D & LESLIE DRAKE, M.L.S.; M.A. Ottawa University, Gangwish Library, Ottawa K.S.



PI KAPPA DELTA’S ALPHA CHAPTER IS ESTABLISHED

- Pi Kappa Delta (PKD) is the oldest national forensics organization in the United States with an active presence in over 200 universities (chapters) within 41 states.
- The Greek symbols of PKD stand for: *Peitho Kale Dikaia* (“the art of persuasion beautiful and just”).
- PKD was the brainchild of two men at Ottawa University (Ottawa, KS) in 1911; a student: John Shields, and his young speech and forensics professor: Egbert Ray (E.R.) Nichols.
- Before the structure of the organization was formalized, Prof. Nichols left Ottawa to take a positions at Ripon University in Wisconsin, and then Redlands University in California.
- While PKD’s constitution was written by Shields at OU in 1913, Nichols remained actively involved. His mobility most likely resulted in PKD becoming a national forensics organization rather than simply a local one.
- While originally formed as a forensics fraternity, PKD has from the beginning welcomed women and they have always been represented in their number. The term “fraternity” was formally excised from its title in the early 1980s.
- PKD remains the most comprehensive forensic organization in the country, sponsoring a National Tournament hosted by a different university and location every two years.
- National Tournaments offer competitions and awards in events ranging from traditional forensic activities, such as debate and dramatic oratory, to non-competitive ones such as scholarly writing and interviewing skills.
- The 2017 Nationals at Boise State University in Idaho presented over 900 awards to student Forensics participants.
- In addition to Ottawa University being the location of the founding of PKD it is also the site of the first PKD university charter formed, Alpha Chapter.
- Competition was keen for this first chapter honor among the early sponsors of PKD, but John Shields, apparent by the many letters he wrote about forensics events, preserved in the Alpha Chapter’s collection, was aggressively competitive and managed to outmaneuver his rivals to found the chapter at Ottawa University.
- His fellow partner, Professor E.R. Nichols, then at Ripon University founded the second PKD chapter.
- This maneuvering is an example of the fierce intellectual drive that has always been at the heart of Pi Kappa Delta, making the organization what it is today.
- It is also the reason why Ottawa University who preserves this first charter’s Forensics history was considered to be the most logical college to house the PKD National Archives, despite its size and financial challenges.



Ottawa University, Pi Kappa Delta Debaters, 1926



Ottawa University debaters, Jaclyn Dawes, Ada Castro and LaMoine Tatum at the Pi Kappa Delta Tournament in Boise, Idaho, 2017.

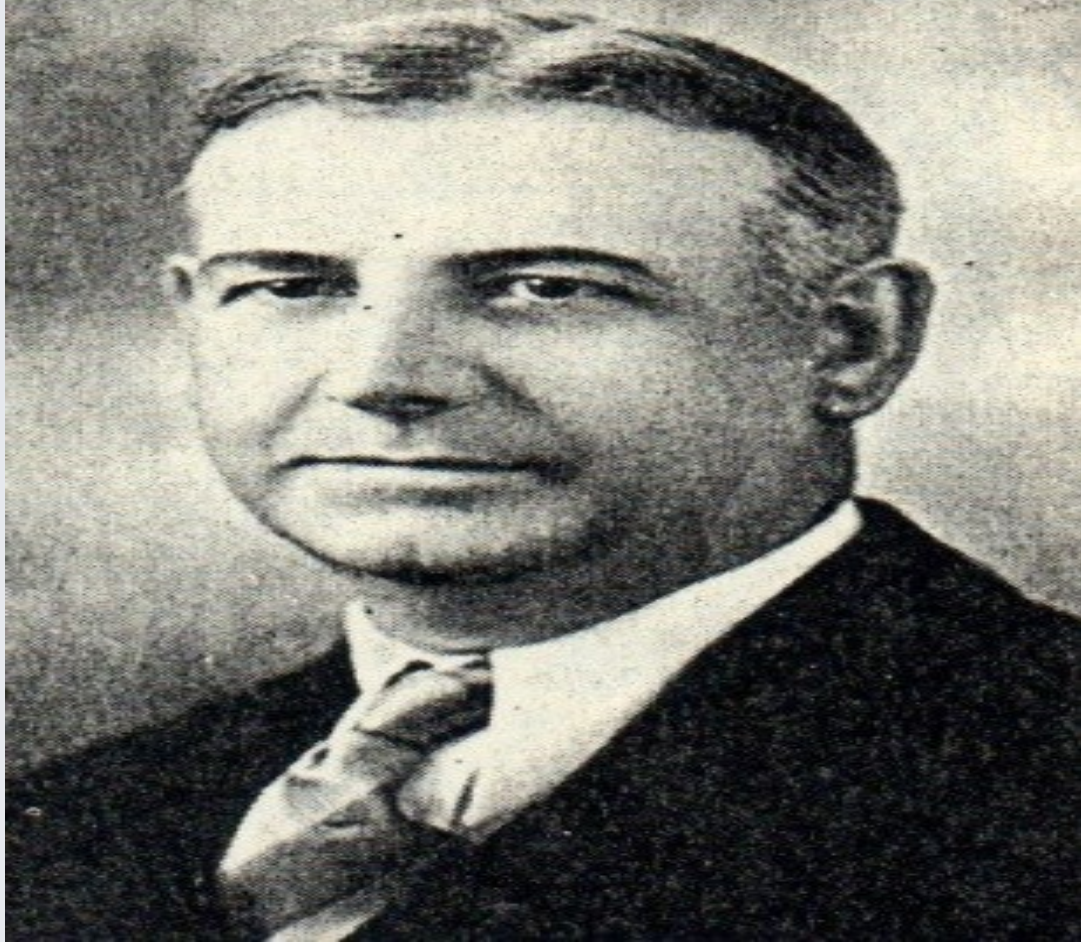
ESTABLISHING THE PI KAPPA DELTA HONOR SOCIETY NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The need for a central location for the expanding collections of Pi Kappa Delta began to become obvious by the 1980’s particularly under the leadership of PKD President, David R. Ray (1987-89) of the University of Arkansas. Even after his term of office Ray remained actively involved in promotion of a PKD central archive for years following his presidency. The reason this was not considered an issue previous to that date is that Pi Kappa Delta is made up of chapters at many universities. The universities have each provided the student talent, the training and the revolving administration of PKD. Since each of these universities had their own library archives material would be stored at each location where it was concerned. As the organization expanded, the necessity to locate certain historical information and to encompass the full history of PKD in relation to its future became impossible.

PKD presidents are elected every two years at a National Tournament/Convention and preside over a National Council of 10 forensics professionals (and two student representatives) from as many university chapters. In the early 1990’s the Council settled on William Jewel College in Missouri as the location for this archive. Primarily this was because it was the home university of a past PKD president and the facility contained the necessary conditions for proper storage. Problems arose when those enthusiastic about the collection left the university and the collection remained unprocessed.

In the early part of the 21st century the collection was shifted to Ripon University (one of the founding universities) which did begin to add a portion of the collection, the PKD Hall of Fame, to its archives. Problems have developed there since, as the university fallen on difficult times. In each case there appears to have been a lack of total commitment by the full council concerning the archives, confusion about when and where to send archival materials, which ultimately resulted in much of it not ending up at the archives, and the lack of consistently dedicated personnel staffing the archives to process such a huge, intricate and ungainly collection, has been problematic.

In 2015, Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas (the founding chapter) began to formalize plans and begin construction on a new campus library. OU had never been considered previously as a location for the PKD archives because the former library had no dedicated archival space and was susceptible to water leakage. The new library however was to contain a formal archive space, including a reading room. Due to efforts of OU Professor of Communication and Forensics, Ryan Louis, a PKD National Council member, and OU Library Director Gloria Creed-Dikeogu in liaison with the Council and OU Administration, the Gangwish Library at Ottawa University began to emerge as the new home for the PKD archives. This decision was finalized in the Spring of 2015.



Professor Egbert Ray Nichols



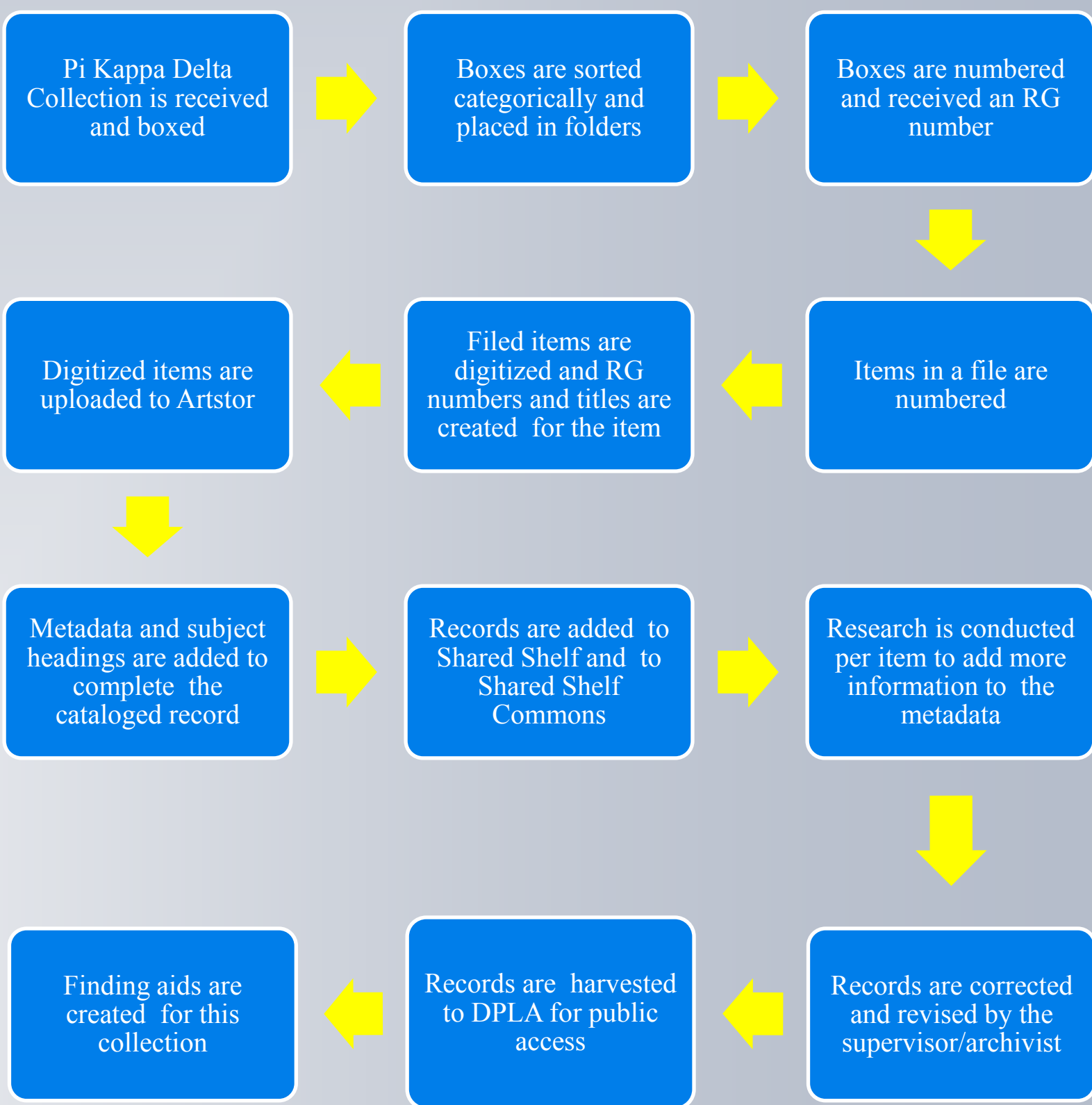
John Shields, PKD Alpha Chapter Founder at Ottawa University, 1913

THE DIGITIZATION PROJECT IS BORN

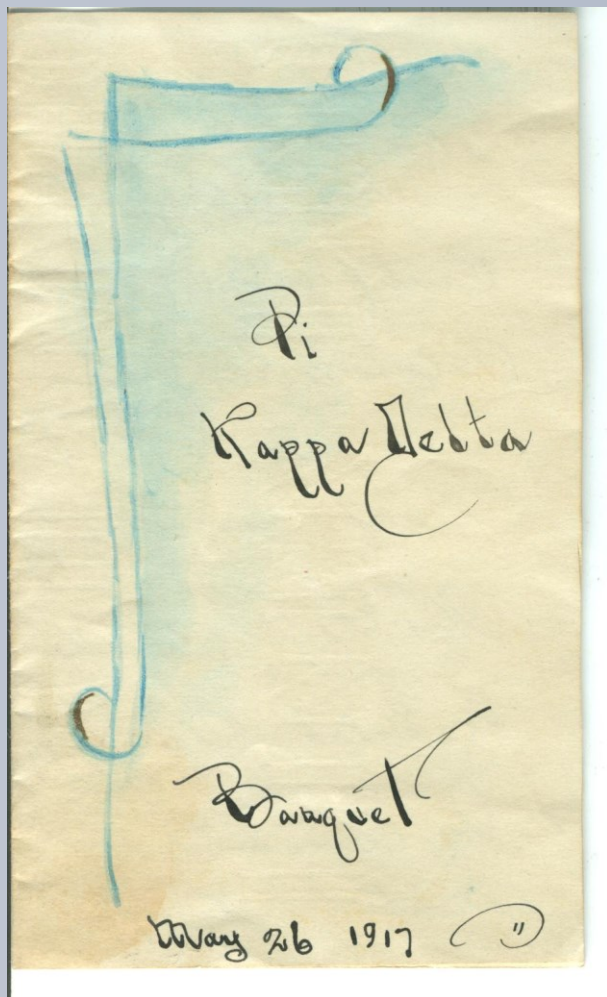
At the start of a Council for Independent Colleges, Consortium on Digital Resources for Teaching and Research Grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, librarians at the Gangwish Library began three collaborative projects, two with the Dr. Kelly Fish-Greenlee, Chair the Human Services Department, allowing for the digitization of two Native American Collections and the third with Ryan Louis, Chair of the Communications Department and the Forensics Program at Ottawa University. Over the past three years, collaboration between the PKD Council and Ottawa University’s administration, has led to an agreement with PKD to finance an archivist position. An archivist to work exclusively on the Pi Kappa Delta Collection, 10 hours a week. However, discussion is underway with the Council to fund a half-time or possibly a full-time position in the coming year, where the university will be required to provide for a portion of the archivist’s salary plus benefits. Because of limited funding for their National Archive’s digitization project, librarians at the Gangwish Library have used student-aides and student archives interns to help the archivist with the project. Students are taught how to scan images and add them to Artstor and create metadata for each record At present, there are 123 assets in Shared Shelf Commons that Ottawa University students and Pi Kappa Delta members can access. These assets were also harvested by DPLA so that Pi Kappa Delta assets are also available to the public.

Thank you to the Mellon Foundation and the Council of Independent Colleges for the grant providing access to Artstor and to the National Council of Pi Kappa Delta for funding the Pi Kappa Delta National Archives at Ottawa University.

THE DIGITIZATION PROCESS



Pi Kappa Delta National Honor Society Publication “The Forensic” May 1920



Ottawa University Pi Kappa Delta Banquet May 26, 1917

THE FUTURE

The future is not set in stone. It is hope that Ottawa University’s Administration in collaboration with the PKD Council will continue to expand the current funding of the archivist’s position and further paid opportunities, so that the PKD National Archives will flourish at Ottawa University. Due to limited funding, there is a constant need for archival supplies, staff and ultimately for the temperature controlled archival space which was originally promised by the university. With the archivist’s current part-time hours and now an influx of PKD material sent from other PKD archives around the country, it has quickly become obvious that the time and funding allotted for this work is inadequate. There still seems to be confusion within PKD itself as to the importance of the PKD archives, what it should contain, and the allocation of adequate resources to the project. For this reason the PKD National Council met for their 2017 Summer at Ottawa University on June 30 – July 2, 2017, where the PKD archivist, Leslie Drake, presented a PKD display of Alpha Chapter archives, and of sorted portions of the collection, followed by a demonstration of the Collection currently accessible on Shared Shelf Commons. In partnership with Professor Louis and Director Creed-Dikeogu, the challenges toward the goal of a functioning PKD National Archives at Ottawa University was discussed. The Council was impressed and enthusiastic about the records currently accessible on Shared Shelf Commons. For this reason the Council voted unanimously to devote more resources and attention to the digitization of the PKD archives at Ottawa University.

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