

# DIVINE NINE: BLACK GREEK LETTER SORORITIES SISTERS IN SERVICE

Divine Nine (D9) is the more commonly used name of The National Pan-Hellenic Council. The Council is comprised of nine Black Greek Letter organizations (BGLOs) four sororities and five fraternities. The four sororities in order of founding year are:

Organization	Founded When/Where	Colors	Symbol	TEMPO Sisters Current or Retired Members
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated	1908 Howard University Washington DC	Pink and Green	Ivy Leaf	Frances Huntley-Cooper* (Past President) Kesha Bozeman* Leslie Petty* (Current President) Deborah Cureton* Stephanie Bradley-Wilson
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated	1913 Howard University Washington DC	Red and White	Elephant with the trunk lifted upward	Gloria Hawkins Angela Davis Deborah Biddle
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated	1920 Howard University Washington DC	Royal Blue and White	White Dove	Theola V. Carter*
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated	1922 Butler University Indianapolis, IN	Gold and Royal Blue	The Poodle	Judge Nia Trammell

\*Served on TEMPO Madison Board and/or an Officer on the Board

Howard University in Washington DC was the academic incubator for most of the D9 organizations. BGLOs came into fruition in the early years at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to assist matriculating black students (W.E.B. Du Bois, a Fisk University graduate and a fraternal D9 member) referred to as the *Talented Tenth*. Black students were not admitted into traditional white fraternal organizations. BGLOs emerged in a time of profound racial hostility and tension. Despite being educated, professional Blacks did not escape the daily racial hostility in America. Black Greek Letter Organizations provided and yet provides an avenue for members to unite for similar causes and forge bonds of sister/brotherhood that lasts a lifetime.

One of the main differences between BGLO and non-BGLO is that BGLOs are service oriented and not social, and membership is for life. Chapters are chartered at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The shared tenets across all of the organizations are scholarship and service to the community. Membership requirements for most is by invitation and those interested at the undergraduate level must be enrolled at a four year institution, pursuing a baccalaureate degree and meet the grade point average as established by each organization. At the graduate level, interested women must be in possession of a baccalaureate degree and meet the criteria for membership as established by that organization. VPOTUS, the Honorable Kamala Harris, is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She was initiated into the Alpha Chapter on the campus of Howard University.

Members in the sororities refer to another sorority sister as a "soror". Membership is comprised of dynamic women in multi-disciplines and work in professions across the spectrum including but not limited to: Education, Policy, Politics, Law, Government, Science, Math, Medicine, Engineering, the Humanities, Accounting, Business, Chemistry, Biology, Human Services, Transportation, Finance, and the Performing Arts. Many are politicians, doctors, dentists, teachers, librarians, social workers, lawyers, judges, pharmacists, veterinarians, college professors, principals, deans and school presidents, policy analyst, athletes, entertainers, government officials, lead non-profit agencies, and many are in active duty service or are veterans. There are more than 1,200,000+ women affiliated with BGLOs domestic and abroad. Chapters are chartered in locations outside of the United States such as on the continents

of Africa, Europe, and Asia (Middle East). Despite being different organizations, members consider themselves as fellow BGLO sisters.

Greetings to the Ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Greetings to the Ladies of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Greetings to the Ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and Greetings to the Ladies of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., from TEMPO Madison.

