

Friends for Life

by

[Scott Pickard](#)



Theta Xi, 1967

Back in 1967 when I was a freshman pledge at Theta Xi at the University of Illinois in Champaign, I had no idea that I would still be close friends with my pledge brothers 49 years later. Back then we were too immersed in the daily flow of being students at the U of I, pledges at TX, participating in intramural sports, dating, going to social functions, going to Illini games, and everything else that made up those glorious and unforgettable college days, to think about where we would be in a half-century.

Now say what you will about the good and bad of fraternities and sororities and their place in today's diverse and politically correct world, I will stand by the fact that the friendships you will make at Theta Xi fraternity will be special and unique and as each year goes by you will appreciate that this is true.

My pledge brothers and I have come a ways since our days at the house: graduation, work, marriage, kids, grandkids, and now some of us retired. As the years have ticked by I've asked many alums about their experience at UIUC and most of them don't come close to the bond and longevity of friendships we made at TX. So please consider my words as a voice from your future 50 years from now that if you and your pledge brothers work at it – because any lasting

relationship whether it be family or friends or colleagues or girlfriends or wives, takes effort — you will come to cherish the same long-time friendships my pledge brothers and I do today.

There will be forces that will challenge your ability to hold on to these TX friendships once you graduate: working long hours, moving around the country (or globe) from one job to the next, and taking care of your marriage and family. These will be your top priorities during this period of your life as they should be. But my recommendation to you is don't ever lose touch with your pledge brothers. It will be hard many years but all it takes is an occasional email or phone call to maintain the bond from year to year.

But the most important thing of all is when the various invitations come, show up! Nothing beats showing up, if you can. We all go through the same lifecycle of coming back for homecomings, birthdays, bachelor parties, weddings of fellow pledge brothers, then weddings of their kids, and then eventually, I hate to say, some funerals. Across all of these life events, being there is the greatest gift of respect and friendship you can give to a fellow pledge brother.

In 2016 my pledge brothers and I will meet up in Tucson, AZ for our 15th annual winter golf outing. We look forward to this event like no other. It is our annual "fishing trip" and it's a great thing. We will have brothers coming from Arizona, California, Illinois, Ohio, Georgia, New York, Virginia, and Florida. And God willing, we will be doing this for another 15 years. Because my fellow brothers, at the end of this fraternal journey these friendships will be all you have left from Theta Xi. —sp



Medinah, 2015