



West Virginia Alpha...A strong, rich tradition of Phi Kappa Psi

MOUNTAINEER

PHI PSI

Zachary L. Mendelson '79, Editor

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May 2013: Summit of Mt. Whitney, CA (14,505') with guide Brother Kurt Wedberg (CSU, Northridge)

FRATERNITY BROTHERS CONQUER GLOBAL FEATS

BEN HARDESTY '69 AND RICK WAGENER '69

Two pledge Brothers, **Ben Hardesty '69** and **Rick Wagener '69**, arrived in Morgantown from different backgrounds and for different reasons.

Hardesty grew up in Shinnston, WV. Preceding his arrival in Morgantown (and the Fraternity) was his older brother, **David Hardesty '64**, who also attended Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. He later became the 21st President of West Virginia University (1995-2007). Ben earned his B.S. degree in 1972 and his M.S. degree from George Washington University in 1976. While at WVU, in addition to Phi Kappa Psi, Hardesty was a member of Sphinx, Mountain, the Student Legislature, the Athletic Council, and Army ROTC. He served as an active-duty reserve Army officer.

Hardesty noted that it was not a foregone conclusion he would pledge Phi Psi. He visited other fraternity houses, and he also knew a couple of older brothers, **Richard Adams '65** and **Ricklin Brown '65**, who were contemporaries of his brother. In the end, he pledged Phi Kappa Psi, where his Big Brother was **George Zivkovich '68** and his Little Brother was **Herschel 'Ned' Rose '70**. After military service, he worked on Capitol Hill, where **John Nutter '66** was instrumental in helping him secure a position as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Before founding Alta Energy, Hardesty was the President of Stonewall Gas Company, Dominion Exploration & Production, and affiliated Dominion Energy companies. Hardesty is the owner and CEO of Alta Energy, a consulting firm focused on oil, natural gas, and energy.

He serves on the boards of several private energy and financial companies. At the WVU College of Engineering Commencement on May 12, 2024, Hardesty was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Engineering. He also delivered commencement remarks to about 450 graduates. Previous WVU Honorary Degree recipients include **Charles Vest '60** and **Robert "Bob" Reynolds '71**.



Brother Hardesty at the commencement ceremony receiving an Honorary Doctorate of Engineering.

Wagener, a native of Linthicum, Maryland, was the son of a blacksmith and a bookkeeper. He chose to attend WVU to further his burgeoning baseball career. In many ways, it was fate for Rick to go to WVU, where he met his wife, Jay, during their freshman year in an economics class. In the late 1960s, few athletes participated in fraternities. However, the WVU Baseball Coach, Dale Ramsburg, was a Sigma Phi Epsilon alumnus, and he encouraged players to explore fraternities to build a network of non-athletic friends. Ironically, **Matt Ruckman '69** was also a member of the football team. Consequently, the decision was made to rush and pledge Phi Psi. Rick has stayed close to his Big Brother, **Mike Hoffman '68**; and (2nd Big Brother, **Bill Richards '68**, and **Jim Dailer '69**.

Wagener, a left-handed pitcher, finished with an impressive 16-3 overall record and a 1.79 ERA during his WVU career from 1968 to 1971. He pitched 156 career innings at WVU, totaling 193 strikeouts in 26 career appearances. In terms of his WVU baseball career, Wagener ranks No. 2 in program history for strikeouts per nine innings (11.13) and No. 5 in career ERA

"Brotherhood that I learned while pledging 50-years ago assisted in my training as you must depend on the person roped up to you with your life. My climbing partner for many expeditions was **Robert (Bob) Steptoe Jr, Virginia Alpha '63**. Another Phi Psi bond and brother you can trust. Nobody can let go of the rope at 15,000 ft. The situations you encounter (when climbing) will physically and mentally break you down."

- **Ben Hardesty '69**

FRATERNITY BROTHERS CONQUER GLOBAL FEATS CONT.

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October 2018: Wagener ready to head up to a 14,000 'peak at Courmayeur, Italy

(1.79). Notably, Wagener was the first-ever freshman to compete at the varsity level for the Mountaineers in 1968.

"I attended Rick's last game vs Pitt. He pitched a gem, beating them for the 4th time during his career," noted Hardesty. Wagener shared: "Before the game, the Pitt Coach asked me if I was ever going to graduate."

He spent three seasons in the New York Mets organization from 1971-73, after being selected by the club in the second round of the 1971 January Secondary Draft. "I was drafted after my junior year but decided to stay (at WVU) and finish school," noted Wagner.

Wagener attended graduate college during baseball off-season and earned a master's degree from George Washington University. He is the Managing Partner and Registered Principal at Wagner-Lee, LLC, in Columbia, MD. For more than 30-years he has practiced comprehensive financial planning and portfolio management and is a Registered Principal with Raymond James Financial Services.

His business success has created the opportunity for both Rick and his wife, Jay, to make several significant donations to the WVU Baseball Program since 2022, leading to the renaming of the field as Wagener

Field at Monongalia County Ballpark. The Wagener's have also supported the recently completed construction of a new state-of-the-art indoor WVU baseball facility.

Having achieved significant success in their personal and business careers, these pledge brothers created their own 'Bucket List' for climbing the world's major peaks.

Wagener's list includes Mount Everest, Nepal; Mount Cook, New Zealand; Mount Aconcaguna, Argentina; Patagonia, Chile; Chamonix, France; Mount Courmayeur, Italy; Mount Ranier, Seattle; and Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

For Hardesty, his list includes Grand Teton and Gannett Peak (WY), Mount Rainer (WA), Mount Hood (OR), Granite Peak (MT), Mount Shasta and Mount Whitney (CA), Grand Canyon-South Rim (AZ), The Matterhorn, Switzerland, Mount Elbrus, Russia, Mount Kilijamaro, Tanzania, Mont Blanc, France, Pico de Orizaba, Mexico, Mount Khuiten, the volcanoes of Ecuador, and the Volcanoes of Iceland.

Note: Due to weather and safety conditions, not every summit attempt was successful, and both Hardesty and Wagener made second summit bids. They have NEVER 'summitted' together.

Both brothers share another common bond: they married wonderful women. Rick has been married to Jay for 52 years, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren. Ben and Jeanie will celebrate their 50th anniversary on August 2, 2025. Today, they are proud parents of three children and five grandchildren.



October 2018: Wagener belaying off a rock face at 11,000 ft in Courmayeur, Italy.

NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA



A GROWING PHENOMENON
PINEHURST N.C.

What if I told you that a casual golf outing among brothers from West Virginia Alpha has transformed into the largest national Phi Kappa Psi event in the United States, aside from various Founders Day celebrations? It has, and the next chapter will be written later this summer.



This is a first-time, first-person story on how my journey intersected with this growing phenomenon known simply as Pinehurst, which began in the Summer of 2014. If you'll allow me to reflect on my experiences, I'll try to make it worth the read.

Back in the day, along with other family obligations, I was also caring for my elderly mom, Betty, a proud member of the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma at West Virginia University. At that time, she was speeding through her 90s as one of the oldest living members of her national sorority.

I'd hear bits and pieces about the every-two-year event whenever I spoke to one of the attendees. As time passed, there were more and more stories of the picturesque settings on and off the golf course, the incredible camaraderie and endless laughs over drinks.

Fast forward several years, and Brother **Zach Mendelson** '79—the mastermind behind Pinehurst—was in San Antonio, Texas, on business in early 2023. We had dinner on the Riverwalk with our wives, Krista and Suzanne, and of course, WVU athletics was a hot topic.

Eventually, the discussion shifted to the upcoming Pinehurst event and its emerging reputation for good times. I was saddened to report that Betty had passed away about six months earlier, just weeks after her 100th birthday. But as we talked, I told Zach, "You know what? I think this is the year!"

Pinehurst, N.C., is a picturesque small Southern town. Most of its charming shops serve as living museums that celebrate the history of golf. The Pine Crest Inn, where most of the 94 attendees of 2023 stayed, is within walking distance of the legendary Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, which hosted the 2024 U.S. Open.

STAY CONNECTED

Chapter Instagram

@phipsiwwu

National Website

www.phikappapsi.com

Foundation Website

www.pkpfoundation.org

Update Your Information

Make sure you stay up-to-date on what is happening at the Chapter and within the organization. Complete the form on the back of this newsletter, place it in a stamped envelope and mail it to the Phi Kappa Psi Foundation. You can also use the link at the bottom of the form to submit your information electronically.

Support WV Alpha

Gifts to the WV Alpha Endowed Chapter OneFund or Chapter Housing Fund can be made by check, credit card and/or appreciated securities. These gifts are 100% tax deductible through the Phi Kappa Psi Foundation.

You can give online using a credit card at pkpfoundation.org/west-virginia-alpha



or by mailing a check to:
Phi Kappa Psi Foundation
5395 Emerson Way
Indianapolis, IN 46226

Checks should be made payable to the Phi Kappa Psi Foundation and note WV Alpha Endowed Chapter OneFund or Chapter Housing Fund on the memo line.

NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA

A Growing Phenomenon

What’s a day in the life like at Phi Psi Pinehurst? What’s that line from the Toby Keith song? Oh yeah, “I ain’t as good as I once was, but I’m as good once as I ever was.” Some of the best times of our lives are relived, enhanced, and shared multiple times, depending on how much laughter the story got the first time.

Each blue-sky day you interact with a spectrum of brothers, ranging from those who just graduated, to your contemporaries to those who were in school around the time John F. Kennedy was in the White House.

The four-day experience of enjoying meals with brothers you haven’t seen in decades, broken up by the day’s activities on the golf course or pickleball courts, is topped off every evening with a journey back into the shadows of our faded memories.



For me, it was reminiscing about many unforgettable experiences and parties in the WV Alpha House. The pickup basketball games after class in the driveway have now grown in stature to resemble a Game 6 in the NBA Playoffs.

Another highlight was getting to room with Brother **John “Chach” Giamalis ’71** – a former roommate at various locations in Morgantown - and constantly laughing about shared memories that seem like a lifetime ago.

Some daily activities predictably leave guys sore the next day, some more than others. In fact, one morning, there was a line of chairs with IV bags and nurses to administer to guys who needed the liquid recharge for the day ahead. After dinner, of course there’s at least one group sing-a-long that includes a full-lung version of “Take Me Home, Country Roads.”

Here are a couple of personal experiences from my first Pinehurst. One night, we gathered in the large dining room area of The Inn for dinner. With open seating available, I took a chair next to Pledge Brother **Dave Hanna ’77**, a Pinehurst alumnus. We chatted about the day’s activities for a few minutes before he pulled out his phone and showed me a photo of us together with a couple of other pledge brothers at a party around Founders Day in 1977.

It was one of those seminal moments framed by a flash. I hadn’t

seen that photo in probably 40+ years, yet not only did I remember everyone in the photo, of course, but also the area in the House where it was taken. Considering how much life had happened in the interim, the speed of recollection would be like instantly finding a random dusty book in a Harry Potter-esque library. Party on memory.

But, to me, it illustrates how special even the smallest Phi Psi memories are in our lives, all those years ago.

Then on the last full day, it was my turn to play pickleball with the designated group going out that day. When I signed up and even on the way out to the courts at the country club, I mentioned a few times I’d never even picked up a paddle before, although I had played tennis back in the day.

I was assured that was fine; these were only friendly games. We divided up into two-man teams and spread out over four courts. After only a few warm up volleys and a quick review of the rules, it was time to start. OK, great, let’s have some fun.

But you and I both know that once it gets competitive among brothers, all bets are off. We were only about two points into the first game when I noticed it— that competitive look brothers get when they’re keeping score. It’s the same look a zebra gets when a pride of hungry lions emerges from tall grass. It was also clear that I might have been the only one who had never played pickleball before.

A point or two later, I lunged for a backhand volley when my left knee buckled, and I landed on it as I hit the ground. I started to walk it off, assuring everyone I was fine. But if you’ve played competitive athletics, you know the difference between being hurt and being Injured. Three games later, I managed a cross-court winner that earned a fist bump from Brother **Jim Hamer ’79**, one of the best players that day.

But my knee was screaming at me that if I wanted to be able to walk through the airport terminal the next day, that was my last shot. As we were walking over to the “winner’s court,” I told Jim I’m going to sit out this game. I was done for the day.

More than a week later, I was able to see our family’s go-to sports medicine specialist, who has worked with the San Antonio Spurs. An MRI revealed that I had a stretched ACL and a bruised kneecap, but no tear. The good news is that I was running distances again by Halloween. So, this summer, I may be back on the court, or I may just order another beer.

There are several other stories from my first Pinehurst that I’d love to share, but the magazine’s editor is signaling me to wrap it up. So, here’s a toast to the planning for Pinehurst 2025, a simple golf outing among brothers that has evolved into a nationwide Phi Psi celebration.

Live Ever, Die Never. I’ll see you at The Inn this Summer.

Steve Arters is a digital marketer in San Antonio and former reporter / editor for The Associated Press in Dallas. Known as “Scoop” by his Phi Psi brothers since his sports writing days for WVU’s student newspaper, The Daily Athenaeum.

NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA

LIVE EVER. DIE NEVER. A STRONGER TOMORROW.
Celebrating Our Campaign Success: \$1 Million Raised!

Brothers,

We proudly announce the successful completion of “Live Ever. Die Never. A Stronger Tomorrow,” the capital campaign for West Virginia Alpha. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumni and friends, we have raised an inspiring **\$1,086,656.57** to revitalize and secure the future of our beloved chapter. This milestone represents more than just a fundraising triumph—it reflects a deep and enduring belief in the power of brotherhood and the importance of preserving the place where it all began. The campaign was launched to address critical housing needs, preserve our history, provide scholarship and leadership development resources for our undergraduate men, and build a strong foundation for the next generation of Phi Psi men at West Virginia University.

Campaign Achievements:

- **\$760,389.26 raised for the Chapter Housing Fund**
- **\$324,808.81 committed to the Endowed Chapter OneFund**
- **430 total gifts from 153 generous donors**
- **Key renovations are currently in the planning stages to enhance the safety, comfort, and functionality of 780 Spruce. Facility modifications will include kitchen improvements, HVAC system upgrades, landscaping, plumbing and electrical improvements and common areas redesign to promote both academic success and lasting friendships.**

The campaign’s success would not have been possible without the leadership of our top supporters. We proudly recognize those who made major commitments of \$25,000 or more:

Lee A. Pyles ’77	John T. Miesner ’81	Zachary L. Mendelson ’79	John N. Giamalis ’76
Robert L. Reynolds ’71	Richard M. Adams ’65	Jeffrey V. Tennant ’74	David D. Pill ’74
Richard A. Pill ’70	J. Frederick Hiehle ’53	Michael D. Fiery ’79	Camden P. Siegrist ’78
Richard H. Wagener ’69	Timothy M. Miller ’74	Brad H. Carmichael ’72	John L. Thomas ’70

These —and many other brothers—will be permanently recognized within the renovated house for their extraordinary generosity and commitment. “The house was where lifelong friendships were made. Giving back was never a question—it was a way to say thank you and ensure others can have what we had.” — **Richard A. Pill ’70**

This compelling reflection embodies the essence of the campaign. Across generations, brothers have united with a common goal: to preserve our past and safeguard our future. Thank you for believing in a stronger tomorrow.

This success would not have been possible without the dedication of our campaign leadership team, class captains, and the unwavering loyalty of our alumni. Together, we invested not only in a building but also in the future of Phi Kappa Psi at West Virginia University.

To all who contributed—whether through a generous gift, a pledge, or words of encouragement—thank you. You helped transform a vision into reality and because of you, we are investing in the future of West Virginia Alpha.

For those who may have missed the opportunity to contribute to the campaign, it is not too late to make a lasting impact. If you would like to make a pledge, donation or to volunteer time or your expertise to help the chapter and the House Corporation, please contact me to discuss.

Timothy M. Miller ...

Tim Miller ’74
Campaign Chairman
701tmm@gmail.com | 304-415-0489



Scan the QR code or visit **pkpfoundation.org/wv-alpha** to make a gift to the *Live Ever. Die Never. A Stronger Tomorrow* campaign today!

P.S. Please save the date and join us on October 26 in Morgantown as we celebrate the campaign’s completion in conjunction with Homecoming and West Virginia Alphas’ Founders Day.

NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA

THANK YOU CAMPAIGN DONORS

GIVING LEVELS

As of 05/08/2025

1852 LEGACY SOCIETY

Honoring those that have designated WV Alpha in their estate plans.

Lee A. Pyles '77

1890 FOUNDERS LEAGUE

\$100,000+

Robert L. Reynolds '71

LETTERMAN SOCIETY

\$50,000-\$99,999

J. F. Hiehle '53
Richard M. Adams '65
Richard H. Wagener '69
Richard A. Pill '70
John T. Miesner '81

CHAPEL SOCIETY

\$25,000-\$49,999

Brad H. Carmichael '72
John L. Thomas '70
David D. Pill '74
Timothy M. Miller '74
Jeffrey V. Tennant '74
John N. Giamalis '76
Camden P. Siegrist '78
Michael D. Fiery '79
Zachary L. Mendelson '79

WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA CLUB

\$10,000-\$24,999

Forest J. Bowman '58
James S. Dobbs '69
Emil C. Iverson '70
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Dennis G. White '71
Thomas R. Douglass '72
David D. Hall '74
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Kim Craig '74
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HARLAN SELBY SOCIETY

\$5,000-\$9,999

Joseph F. Dunn '55

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Charles C. Wise III '69
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Phillip R. Stevens '75
Timothy T. Whalen '75
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Gregory E. Valant '79
Phillip A. Compton '79
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Izaak T. Mendelson '07

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Charles S. Mahan '57
Hubert A. Shaffer Jr. '58
Stephen D. McWhorter '60
David L. Woodrum '61
David C. Hague '63
David C. Hardesty Jr. '64
Stephen D. Richards '64
Randolph L. Stenger '66
Stephen R. Crislip '67
Benjamin A. Hardesty '69
C. D. Laughlin '69
Steven C. Miller '69
William D. Wilmoth '69
David S. Haden '70
Richard B. Pyles '70
Daniel W. Richards '71
Gordon R. Letterman '72
James E. Stike '72
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Samuel D. Morris '73
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Gary K. Waters '74
John D. Mundy '74
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Michael L. Clowser '75
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Edwin D. Gansor '77
James T. Holtzapple '77
Robert W. Dinsmore '77
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Mark J. Vasilko '78
Abraham L. Key '78
Robert S. Raynes '78
Bradley H. Williams '79
James J. Ventrini '79
Edward R. Stike '81
Michael W. Robinson '81
Robert N. Maiolo '81
Barry D. Williams '83
David G. Calabrese '84
Adam H. Mandleberg '94
Charles J. Hageboeck '17

AMICI CIRCLE

\$1-\$999

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Thomas H. Covey '54

Dean E. Hinzman '55
Earl A. Pauley '56
Robert H. Dumbaugh '56
Frank T. Graff '58
Richard G. Burchinal '58
Ward D. Stone '59
James R. Bell '62
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William F. Hartwig '65
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John F. Nutter '66
Robert H. Douglas Jr. '66
William J. Quinn II '66
Nicholas W. Conger '67
David F. Shaffer '68
Jeffry P. Wahl '68
Richard C. Haines '68
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William H. Hevener '70
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Mario J. Marra '72
Charles W. Linaburg '74
Donald B. Teter '74
Richard T. Ratcliff '74
Mark J. Calabrese '75
Richard E. Jones '75
Bruce E. Duchene '77
Timothy Muscaro '79
Theodore N. Pauls '80
Philip B. Hall '81
John L. Coyner Jr. '83
Perry A. Pascasio '83
Jeffrey S. Roberts '84
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Phil J. Mikos IUPUI '12
Brady A. Paga
Scott Dana
Anonymous

NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA ALPHA

FOUNDERS DAY

+

CAMPAIGN
CELEBRATION

Save The Date

OCTOBER 26, 2025

All brothers and a guest are invited. Join us on October 26 at 10:30 a.m. in Morgantown at the Erickson Center as we celebrate the campaign's completion in conjunction with Homecoming and West Virginia Alphas' Founders Day!



ERA	TOTAL ALUMNI	# OF DONORS	TOTAL \$ RAISED	PARTICIPATION %
2010's	232	6	\$2,541	3%
2000's	233	9	\$7,669	4%
1990's	253	4	\$2,200	2%
1980's	238	20	\$118,668	8%
1970's	329	59	\$715,197	18%
1960's	202	36	\$149,156	18%
1950's	106	13	\$69,600	12%
Family/ Friends	-	6	\$21,626	-
Total	1593	153	\$1,086,656.57	9%

CAMPAIGN
LEADERSHIP

Honorary Chairman
David Woodrum '61

Campaign Chairman
Tim Miller '74

Committee

Jack Bowman '58

Rick Pill '70

JT Thomas '70

Bob Bird '73

Kim Craig '74

Dave Hanna '77

Zach Mendelson '79

Tim Hoffman '81

Tim Dyer '81

John Miesner '81

Izaak Mendelson '07

CLASS CAPTAINS

1950's

Jack Bowman '58

1960's

Rick Wagener '69

James Dobbs '69

1970's

Rick Pill '70

JT Thomas '70

Kim Craig '74

Jeff Tennant '74

John Giamalis '76

1980's

Doug Stoup '83

Richard Carlin '86

2000's

Izaak Mendelson '07

If an error has been made in recording you gift on the next page, or your name has been mistakenly omitted or listed improperly, we sincerely apologize. Please advise our campaign team at the Foundation by calling 317.275.3400 or emailing Phil Mikos at pjm@pkpfoundation.org.



MOUNTAINEER PHI PSI

PO Box 4070
Morgantown, WV 26504-4070

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PO Box 4070
Morgantown, WV 26504-4070

Name _____ Init. Yr. _____

Address _____

2025 SUBSCRIPTION \$50.00

City/State/Zip _____ Voluntary Contribution \$ _____

Phone (H) _____ TOTAL \$ _____

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Mountaineer Phi Psi @ WVALPHA

The contact information above is new

Share an update by including your news in your return mailer.

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TAKE A LOOK INSIDE

In This Edition of *The Mountaineer*

- Pledge brothers, climbers, leaders—Brothers Hardesty and Wagener forged lasting heights.
- Golf trip turns national — how Pinehurst became a Phi Psi tradition.
- **A special thanks to our donors who helped raise over \$1 million to secure WV Alpha's future!**



*Would you like to be featured in a future issue of **The Mountaineer**?*

Or do you know a brother who should be featured? Email to let us know at srp@pkpfoundation.org.

