



1972 Beta Epsilon Chapter Kappa Koronation Story

Our Beta Epsilon Brothers of the early 1970s establish several of the BE traditions and norms of our famed chapter. The picture above of the brothers at the 1972 BE Kappa Koronation and the story that goes with it, serves as an example of Kappa Alpha Psi's impact and influence at Pitt (Nupes running the yard) and throughout the Pittsburgh community in the early 1970s.

The story begins in late 1971 when the chapter brothers wanted to make a big splash to commemorate the 1972 Kappa Koronation. It was decided that the brothers of BE would bring The Ohio Players to Pittsburgh as the headliner for the event. After making contact with the band and agreeing to the \$1500 advance to book the group, the leadership of the chapter began to make preparations for the event - but one critical decision needed immediate attention - where would they get the \$1500 advance. A small group was tasked with the responsibility of securing a sponsor. After many futile attempts by our persistent group of 19 & 20 year old Nupes, they were beginning to run low on options. A chance cold call to the Duquesne

Brewing companies VP of Sales would be the break they were looking for. Without an appointment, the chance of seeing a decision making executive was low - but not today; without a rehearsed and attention getting pitch, chances for success were low - but we are talking about the Nupes. The Nupes gift of gab led to something bigger and better than the brothers expected. Not only did they get the \$1500 advance, the VP of Sales agreed to donate advertising paraphernalia with both Kappa and Duke Beer logos, 25 cases of beer were delivered to the 10th floor of Tower C to one of the brothers rooms (can you imagine a beer truck pulling up on 5th Ave - 5 dollies with 5 cases each being carted through the tower lobby to a brothers room?), and most unexpectedly the door proceeds from the concert (held at Duquesne University), would go into the Beta Epsilon Exchequer.

Another element of the story that can't be overlooked is that while The Ohio Players are a legendary band to us all today, in 1971 they were not as well known and had had many fits and starts over the prior ten years. Fortunately for our brothers of BE, the core group of musicians that would make up The Ohio Players and produce the super grooves of the 1970s including early hit songs *Pain* and *Funky Worm* - both of which were starting to hit the airwaves at the time of the Koronation - would add to the buzz the Nupes were looking to create. A little background on The Ohio Players during the early 1970's provides additional context:

After recording an album for Capitol Records in 1968, the group split up. Some of the members decided to take one more chance and it led them to the Westbound label in Detroit, the then-home of George Clinton and his band Funkadelic. The group recorded "Pain" and was released as a single. Positive feedback lead to Westbound signing them for a full contract, making the band record enough material for their Westbound debut, the *Pain* album. The 1972 album was engineered by Arlen Smith who also engineered The Ohio Players *Pleasure* and Funkadelic's *America Eats Its Young*. A number of things were established with the *Pain* album. The romantic and sexy aspects of their music started with *Pain*, with songs devoted to their love of women. It would become one of their trademarks throughout their career. The group would also become known for their suggestive photos on the album covers. Fans of the group in the mid-1970s will not forget ladies in various states of undress, but for those who knew of them beforehand, the music was defined by the S&M, bondage & discipline imagery on their sleeves, which can be viewed as a mixture of the sexual and perhaps cultural metaphor. The group would also present a character in the form of a grandmother who was simply known as Granny, voiced by Walter "Junie" Morrison. Granny and her stories which are prominently featured on the groups albums, including the 1972 classic *Funky Worm* (click link: <https://binged.it/2FJoprO>).

So the 1971-72 Brothers of Beta Epsilon with a great headliner and sponsor would add the finishing touches to a memorable event. The brothers would celebrate their sweetheart court, warm up the audience with a step show (with 3 foot canes) and introduce a soon to be legendary band, The Ohio Players, to those in attendance.

Transcribed by Bro. Russell Crockett (BE82) from a phone call with Bro. Dwayne Cooper (BE70) – Nov 2018