

## **Tribute to Founder Dr. Elias Augustus Dorsey, Jr.**

I was in my home on July 26, 2010 when I heard my Founder, Brother Elias A. Dorsey, Jr., passed away. My mind was filled with the memory of how I met him.

It was Conclave 2003, and our meeting was held in my hometown of Chicago, Illinois. It was hot outside, but inside the hotel was cold. While other Brothers were wearing their suit blazer, I decided to wear one of my fraternity sweaters. Of course, you have to wear the best paraphernalia when you are at these meetings, and I thought I was too cool. A man stopped me for conversation. He was telling me how my sweater reminded him of what he used to wear when he was an undergrad back in the day. I was like...that is cool. I remember I had to be somewhere else since I was on a few committees as part of the hosting chapter of Conclave. I said, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Elias Dorsey, Jr." My mouth dropped to the ground. I have never met this man, and I only had to say his name one million times when I was pledging! Anyone who knows me will tell you I **always** have my camera with me at regional or national functions. At that time, I had my 35mm camera. I asked him if I might have a picture with him. He was most gracious, and he took a picture with me. Today, I am so glad that I asked him his name. If not, I would have walked by him to get to wherever I needed to be. Along with the picture I took with the Late Ms. Audrey Brooks at Conclave 2003, my photo with Founder Dorsey is very special to me.

Members of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated® and the Iota Hearts auxiliary organization are special because we have many of Our Founders and First Pledge Line living and extremely visible in the Fraternity. I am blessed to say I have met many of Our Founders and historical members of Iota that have shaped the Fraternity to what it is today. I will be able to share stories of the Founders to new members of the Organization. What an honor and privilege to be in THIS part of Iota history!

While I was sad about the passing of Founder Dorsey, he will live forever because his name is stitched in history. Founder Dorsey and eleven other men founded Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated® on September 19, 1963 at Morgan State University. I stand on their shoulders, and I am humbled by what happens when you have a dream burning in your heart.

Saturday, July 31, 2010 was a beautiful day. I was there in Baltimore when we laid Founder Dorsey to rest in his Centaur green casket. All I could see was love. The Brothers gathered together and sang songs led by our former International Grand Polaris Tex Dean. All I could do was soak in the environment and join the Brothers singing Our songs.

I salute you, Founder Dorsey! Your legacy will live on, and I pray we, as Iota men, will make you proud.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Sirlester Jefferson, Jr.**

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated® – Midwest Region Historian  
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