

CIC 2023

September 21-23, 2023

Slide 1: Sisters from all of the United States and Canada arrived in Pittsburgh to celebrate how we were able to “Raise the Bar to the Stars” during the 2021-2023 biennium. Patti Brolin-Ribi led the convention with love and laughter.

Slide 2: Some sisters arrived early and were able to enjoy extra activities around Pittsburgh, including a baseball game, local sights, and some of Pittsburgh’s best food. Others arrived on Wednesday and readied themselves for the annual state dinner. Regardless of when everyone arrived, happiness and smiles were apparent. Nineteen Alabamians, including three BILs were able to make the trip. Many thanks to Ray Newton, Chris Sargent, and Scott Piro for representing all our BILs.

Slide 3: Thursday found our delegation attending four required seminars on topics from how to speak and vote on the amendments to understanding the finance and budget that would be presented. There was also time to visit the Pennsylvania room, Philanthropies room, and, of course, the Marketplace.

Slide 4: The opening ceremony found Cindy and Elaine representing Alabama in the Parade of Flags wearing SEC football jerseys from Auburn and Alabama. It was met with many shouts of “War Eagle” and “Roll Tide.” Elaine was quick to hug Cindy, while on the big screen, to say that P.E.O. love is bigger than the rivalry that football brings. The project speakers are always the most popular event of convention, and this year was no different. The ELF representative spoke of her ability to experience clinical rotations at different regions in the country thanks to her loan and how that had impacted her learning. The Cottey alumnae credited Cottey for her confidence, leadership, and empathy that she carries with her to the non-profit she works with now. IPS is a renewal recipient pursuing a doctorate in biomedical engineering in PA where she is determined to contribute to the field of cancer research. The PCE speaker is a certified massage therapist. The PSA scholar works with mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Lastly, the STAR recipient grew up living out of a suitcase with her mother to escape an abusive situation. Her little pink suitcase, which she still has to this day, is with her at college, reminding her how far she has come.

Slide 5: The project displays were incredible. There was valuable information to be learned at each station. The Cottey College room had our wonderful Stephanie Grgurich manning the area. She was excited to share that Alabama’s convention was the best one that she had attended and spoke passionately about the personal impact it had on her. She stated that she carries the positive vibe and passion for PE.O. that she experienced there and even showed her “Embrace the Adventure” luggage tag that she received and keeps on her backpack that she uses every day. Her Cottey business cards fit perfectly inside so she thinks of us every time she shares her card.

Slide 6: The keynote speaker reminded us that we need to surround ourselves with things that “ZING” and passionately look for them. Three Zings for every one Clunk or negative event. She encouraged us to think about who we can reach out to show gratitude and appreciation and to light a spark with positivity. Don’t snuff it out. We should learn to laugh at ourselves, and deepen relationships and energy. Bond with people you feel loved and nourished by. The “Zings” resonated throughout the remainder of the convention.

It wasn’t long before the first meeting of convention began. To hear thousands of women recite our Objects and Aims together will be a favorite memory for many. Amendments were debated and voted upon. Pros, cons, questions, points of order, calls to question, and stand at ease were all part of the voting process, and Robert’s Rules were followed to the T. Results are on the International website but some that Alabama sisters were concerned with are listed here.

The Convention of International Chapter is held every 2 years and is the official business meeting of our sisterhood, the only time that changes can be made to our Constitution and By-Laws. Each chapter has a delegate representing no more than 7 chapters and because Alabama has 41 chapters, we were entitled to have 6 delegates. All Past State Presidents who attend and the President and Vice President of the state are also considered voting members of convention. This year, 1453 sisters had the responsibility of voting on the proposed amendments after hearing the debate on the floor.

In order for an amendment to be adopted, it must receive PRO votes from 2/3 of the votes cast.

- *Report of Study and Research to decrease eligibility age from 18 to 17. **Defeated**
- *Increase annual dues \$10 over a 2-year period. From \$26 to \$36. **Adopted**
- *Remove distinction between resident and nonresident active members. **Adopted** (It still allows for local chapters to offer different local dues for nonresidents.)
- *Removal of the office of Guard. **Defeated**
- *Allow the option, if provided for in the chapter bylaws, for the Recording Secretary to distribute the draft minutes after review of the chapter president to all members prior to next meeting by email or post service. **Adopted**
- *Remove the requirement that a woman acknowledge her belief in God and instead to acknowledge her commitment to the Object and Aims. **Defeated**
- *Allow a prospective member to attend a local chapter meeting. **Defeated**
- *Remove and replace wording of Thy, Thee and “may it be our constant endeavor to work, not for our own glory, but for Thine” in P.E.O. prayer. **Defeated**
- *Ceremony of Initiation changes were all **defeated** except E-7. Chaplain’s response, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” to “as a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she.” **Adopted**

Note that while adopted amendments take effect immediately, they are to be implemented only after official notice is given in the November-December 2023 issue of The P.E.O. Record and/or when instructions with implementing materials are received (i.e., Ceremony of Initiation).

Slide 7: The Celebration of Life was beautiful and accompanied by a professional Harpist. Alabama PSPs who entered Chapter Eternal were noted: Shirley Beckett, Betty Harrison, Marianne Stevens, and Carol Timkovich.

Slide 8: Alabama shined with the You Add 2 P.E.O. campaign. Board officers received a special button to reflect the state's accomplishments, and all sisters received a floral light up halo to celebrate our sisterhood. For the first time in 10 years, membership fell below 200,000 members. We presently have 197,281 sisters. Alabama continues to be only one of 2 states without a disbanded or merged chapter!! Alabama was also 1 of 3 to grow in membership!! Great job!!

Slide 9: 2023-2025 officers were installed. The new Secretary is Katherine Bayne from Maine. The Invitation to Convention was presented and the 2025 convention will be in Phoenix, Arizona, September 4-6. Alabama chapters who will represent our state will be E, F, H, O, AF, and AN. The theme is The Art of Sisterhood: Believe * Belong. President Cathy Moss's goals for the next biennium are to optimize technology, champion the advancement of women, promote philanthropic vitality, and strengthen chapter vitality.

Slide 10: Despite the drop in membership, our P.E.O. Sisterhood is healthy and strong.

- 25 new chapters were established in the last biennium.
- 9500 new members joined through the Initiation by Affirmation during COVID
- Over 116 years, through the five Des Moines-based projects, P.E.O. has loaned, granted, and paid 122,374 women \$416,530,407.
- A new website will be launched in 2024. You will log into it with your own email and password.
- In January of 2024, the option to hold a virtual Ceremony of Initiation will be available.

Above all, we were reminded:

- Leadership does not mean power. It means caring
- Friendships make life better. Love and support each other.
- The P.E.O. Star shines brightly for each of us.
- Our mission to educate women will last a lifetime, sometimes long after we are gone.
- Keep faith in our sisters.