



ALPHA CHI
Announcement

ALPHA CHI OMEGA NAMES 2023 REAL. STRONG. WOMEN.[®] OF DISTINCTION AWARD WINNERS

JUNE 14, 2024 – Alpha Chi Omega is proud to recognize seven members with the 2023 Real. Strong. Women. of Distinction award. This award honors members who are doing great things across the globe and down the street. They are difference makers, risk takers and dream chasers. They're out to make a positive impact on their own lives and on lives around them. In their efforts, they draw on their skills, connections and growth from their Alpha Chi Omega membership and remind all sisters of the power of the Real. Strong. Women. Experience.

Meet our seven award recipients and read more about them in the [summer issue of *The Lyre*](#).

KELLY JEAN (KJ) THOMAS CRAIG BURTARD, PH.D. (PHI, UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS)

Dr. Burtard is the director of evidence development at CVS Health[®], designing and implementing products and practices that address health care inequities and disparities in clinical areas like neurodegenerative disease, cancer and COVID-19 mitigation. As she has climbed the ranks in health informatics, she lives out her commitment to STEM advancement for women and BIPOC populations by providing mentorship, acquiring grant funding and more.

Her Alpha Chi Omega experience has provided her with “home” in many ways; she says, “It has been a physical structure, a place of foundational personal growth, a safe haven, and most importantly, a family.”

PHOEBE EDALATPOUR (EPSILON PHI, GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY)

Phoebe founded Wi Yone Plastik, a social impact business venture that empowers Sierra Leonean women to change their relationship with plastic by engaging them in programs to transform waste into valuable building materials. The organization collected more than 4,000 pounds of plastic waste in its first year and provides a health education curriculum.

Phoebe credits the women in her life for the impact she's able to make, adding, “Just like each of my Alpha Chi Omega sisters, I am a real, strong woman.”



TIFFANY KERNS (DELTA PI, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE)

As the executive director of the Country Music Association (CMA) Foundation and CMA's vice president of industry relations & philanthropy, Tiffany leads efforts to promote the value of music education and to support CMA's members, educators and the music community at large. During the pandemic, she led instrumental efforts to provide financial support, mental health support and other initiatives for the heavily impacted music industry.

Tiffany gained valuable lessons from Alpha Chi Omega, explaining, "Through my experience as an Alpha Chi, I know I am a better listener, communicator and empathetic to all situations."

JENNIFER LANE, PH.D. (ZETA PI, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY)

A lifelong volunteer at numerous national and local organizations, Jennifer knows the value of community. She is the president of National Charity League, Inc., and recently completed service on the Arizona Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism. Outside of volunteering, Jennifer is a residential faculty member at Glendale Community College.

In addition to being encouraged by Alpha Chi Omegas to get involved in volunteering soon after graduation, Jennifer found that the organization showed up in many other areas of life. She says, "Alpha Chi Omega gave me a very strong foundation of knowing who I am while also providing me a support network that challenged me to be and do more."

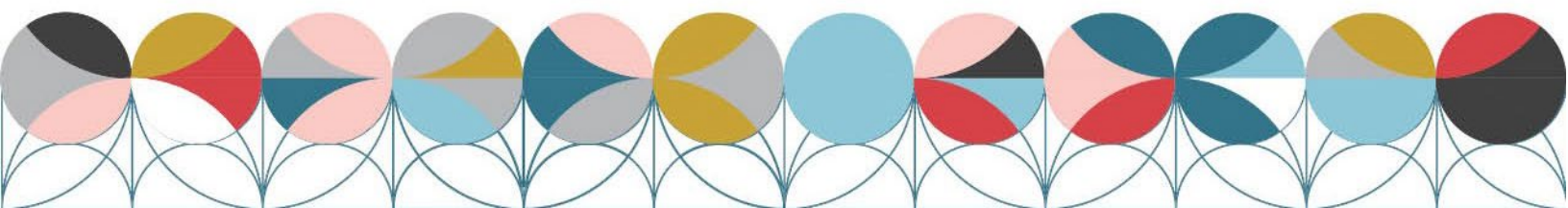
SARAH GENSLER MARIANI (GAMMA OMICRON, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY)

After founding Unlimited PossAbilities years ago, Sarah took over as executive director in March 2020 – just days before her state shut down for the pandemic. She persevered and ensured the organization continued to provide its services to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She is a national advocate for people with disabilities and those who serve them, her work having been celebrated on Capitol Hill.

"Alpha Chi Omega saw my potential and knew how to develop it while letting me build and strengthen my character with grace," she says. "The result is a confident woman who has remained true to her inner self."

KIMBERLY O'CONNOR (ALPHA BETA, PURDUE UNIVERSITY)

A professor and associate vice chancellor of teaching and learning, Kimberly is an expert in the emerging field of cyberlaw, which includes topics like intellectual property, cyberbullying and data protection. She loves to share this knowledge with children, presenting at schools about digital citizenship and responsible behavior when using technology.



An advocate for women in STEM fields, Kimberly says, “I strongly believe that female mentorship plays a major role in shaping real, strong women. Alpha Chi Omega was an early example of this in my life.”

ELLEN THOMPSON, M.D. (GAMMA OMICRON, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY)

As the director of the cardiology fellowship at the Marshall School of Medicine, Ellen is teaching the next generation of cardiologists. She has spent 20 years practicing in noninvasive cardiology, co-founded the school’s cardio-oncology program for chemotherapy and is also the director of echocardiology. She has invested in rural communities of Appalachia and started a tele-education program to support frontline practitioners on complex cases for patients living far from specialists.

In speaking about Alpha Chi Omega, Ellen says, “The confidence I have found, I am sure, is the only reason I was able to go through with medical school applications and interviews and ultimately succeed in medicine.”

