

# ΣΠΣ The Physics and Astronomy Honor Society: Induction Ceremony and Reception

2026-xx-xx

[Department Name], [University Name]

Chapter Chartered on Month xx, year

# SPS & ΣΠΣ – Linked, but Distinct



The **Society of Physics Students (SPS)** is open to all who have an interest in physics and astronomy. SPS Chapters are chartered at two-year and four-year colleges and universities. With over 800 chapters, SPS is the professional society of undergrad students and their mentors.



**Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ)** is the physics and astronomy honor society and is linked to SPS through our shared constitution. ΣΠΣ chapters are restricted to colleges and universities that offer a strong physics or astronomy program. With over 100,000 lifelong members, ΣΠΣ fosters opportunities to connect and contribute to each other and the broader physics and astronomy communities.

Together they form an organization devoted inclusion and excellence.



# The Mission

**Sigma Pi Sigma ( $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ ) exists to:**

- Honor scholarship
- Encourage interest in physics and astronomy
- Promote service
- Provide fellowship



# A brief History of ΣΠΣ

**ΣΠΣ was established at Davidson College, NC on December 11, 1921**

“I became acquainted with some students at Davidson College, NC... a very high-class liberal arts college... [They] came up with ΣΠΣ... I said, ‘Oh... that’s what we ought to have here at Penn State.’”

*Marsh White, ‘founder’ of Sigma Pi Sigma*

The first signatures in the first red book

SERIAL	NAME	CLASS OR POSITION	REC'D.
1	DOUGLASS, JAMES McDowell	PROF. PHYSICS	DEC. 11, 1921
2	WOOD, Wm. WOODHULL	" MATH. PHYSICS	"
3	POORE, ROBT. H.	"	"
3 (A)	DEW, MARCUS CECIL	"	"
4	COOKIE, LAWRENCE MACLAURIN	INSTR. PHYSICS	"
5	MCCAIN, WALKUP KENNARD	"	"
6	BRUCE, ROBT. MARION	"	"
7	DOUGLASS, JOHN LEIGHTON	PROF. MATH	"
8	PRICE, JOHN KRAEMER	"	"
9	(SIGNED BY JENNIFER SUTHER)		
56	McGEE, ROGER MARTIN	"	MAR 11, 1922
10 (A)	SMITH, HUGH HOLLINGSWORTH	"	"
10 (B)	LATHA, DAVID ROBERTSON	"	"
10 (C)	SLANN, SAMUEL REED	"	"
10 (D)	CRAY, HUGH MONTGOMERY	"	"
11	BOUSHAR, EDWARD EARL	"	NOV. 27, 1922
12	BROWN, CHAS. VICTOR, JR.	"	"
13	...	"	"

# The beginning...

## CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF SIGMA PI SIGMA CHAPTERS BY THEIR INSTALLATION DATES

1. Davidson College, Davidson, NC -- *December 11, 1921*
2. Duke University, Durham, NC -- *May 14, 1925*
3. Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA -- *May 17, 1926*
4. Centenary College of Louisiana, Shreveport, LA (1989-) -- *April 20, 1927*
5. Furman University, Greenville, SC -- *May 16, 1927*
6. William & Mary, College of, Williamsburg, VA -- *June 2, 1927*
7. Tennessee-Chattanooga, University of, Chattanooga, TN -- *May 17, 1929*
8. West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV -- *June 3, 1929*
9. St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY (1929-73) -- *June 7, 1929*
10. Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH -- *June 5, 1929*
11. Kentucky, University of, Lexington, KY -- *May 15, 1930*
12. Oklahoma, University of, Norman, OK -- *May 17, 1930*
13. Park College, Parkville, MO (1970-79) -- *May 19, 1930*
14. William Jewell College, Liberty, MO -- *May 20, 1930*
15. Morningside College, Sioux City, IA -- *May 21, 1930*
16. Colorado, University of, Boulder, CO -- *May 22, 1930*
17. Washington, University of, Seattle, WA (1930-34) -- *May 26, 1930*
18. Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL -- *May 31, 1930*
19. Wooster, College of Wooster, OH (1930-43) -- *June 2, 1930*
20. Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL -- *June 3, 1931*
21. Richmond, University of, Richmond, VA -- *March 16, 1932*
22. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN -- *April 12, 1932*
23. Miami University, Oxford, OH -- *June 4, 1932*
24. Illinois-Chicago, University of, Chicago, IL -- *June 6, 1932*
25. Philippines, University of the, Quezon City, PI (1932-62) -- *July 6, 1932*
26. Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (1933-60) -- *May 29, 1933*
49. South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD -- *June 17, 1947*
50. South Dakota, The University of, Vermillion, SD (1947-59) -- *June 17, 1947*
51. Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA (1948-74) -- *February 14, 1948*
52. Maryland-College Park, University of, College Park, MD -- *March 17, 1948*
53. Manchester College, North Manchester, IN -- *April 28, 1948*
54. Colby College, Waterville, ME -- *May 5, 1948*
55. Oregon, University of, Eugene, OR (1948-52) -- *May 10, 1948*
56. Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA -- *May 12, 1948*
57. Arkansas, University of, Fayetteville, AR -- *May 13, 1948*
58. Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK -- *May 14, 1948*
59. Emory University, Atlanta, GA -- *May 17, 1948*
60. Utah, University of, Salt Lake City, UT -- *June 8, 1948*
61. Howard University, Washington, DC -- *March 7, 1949*
62. Clemson University, Clemson, SC -- *March 25, 1949*
63. Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA -- *March 28, 1949*
64. Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA (1949-61) -- *May 2, 1949*
65. Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL (1949-66) -- *May 7, 1949*
66. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL -- *May 9, 1949*
67. Evansville, University of, Evansville, IN -- *May 10, 1949*
68. Alabama, University of, University, AL -- *May 18, 1949*
69. Maine, University of, Orono, ME -- *May 25, 1949*
70. Trinity College, Hartford, CT (1949-77) -- *May 26, 1949*
71. Delaware, University of, Newark, DE -- *June 1, 1949*
72. Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA -- *June 4, 1949*
73. Wyoming, University of, Laramie, WY (1949-74) -- *June 10, 1949*

## Marsh White at the Wheaton College ΣΠΣ Installation Ceremony (1931)



# Supporting Physics and Astronomy

“From such a modest beginning, ...  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  has grown. ... The most serious subject for consideration at the first business meeting after organization was a discussion by Price, Brice and Dew [founding members] as to how much voltage could be applied to “Wooly” Grey, [member of the first induction class] without doing him any permanent injury. A moderate voltage was decided upon, and applied at a later date.” – Radiations, December 1931

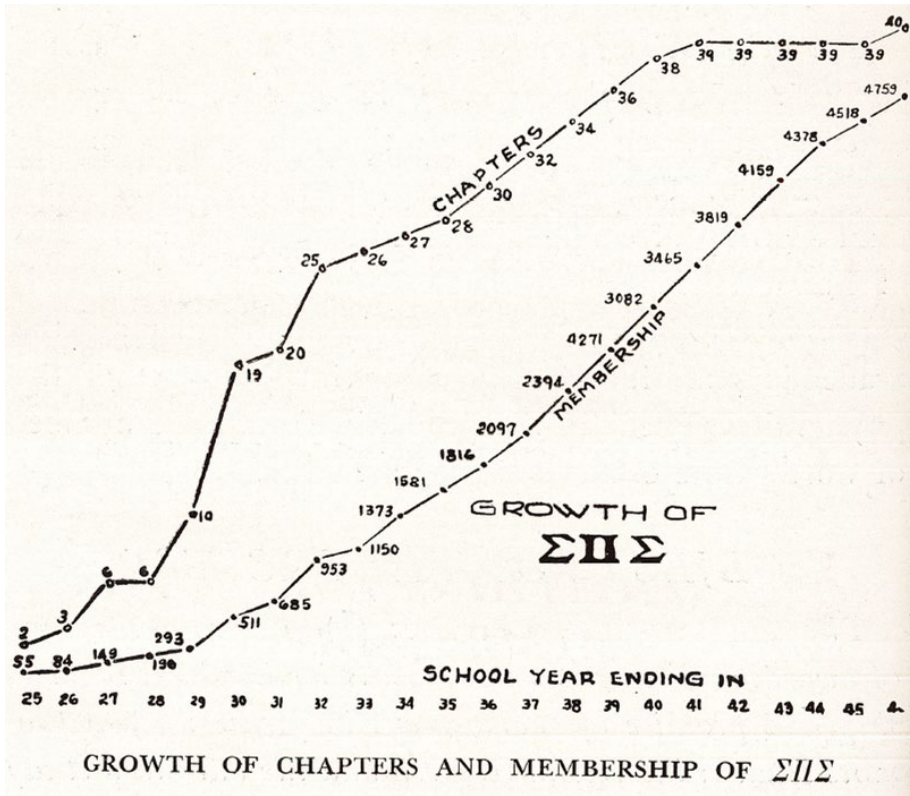
The next entry states that a several moderate voltage were applied and that Wooly was mostly unharmed.

Since its inception,  $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  & SPS have supported department goals and been reflections of our community.

First Covers of the Radiations Publication



# Marsh W. White



Students from chapters would gather every few years to form ‘congresses’ that would guide how the organization supported students and members. Congresses helped to promote the new organization.

1<sup>st</sup> Congress 1928: Davidson College, NC

4<sup>th</sup> Congress 1939: Ohio State University, OH

7<sup>th</sup> Congress 1962: University of Kansas, KS

11<sup>th</sup> Congress 2000: College Park, MD

13<sup>th</sup> 2008: Fermilab, IL

16<sup>th</sup> 2022: Washington, DC

“...You’re supposed to remember them [secret handshakes and such], but I’ve forgotten. When I’d go to install a chapter I’d teach it all to them. You used to shake hands and ... say certain names or phrases.” – Oral Interview with M. White



# An organization evolving

In the 1950's, AIP (American Institute of Physics) and SPS began hatching a plan to support students and education issues. On April 22, 1968, Articles of Agreement between the AIP Student Sections and ΣΠΣ were signed, creating a joined Society of Physics Students (SPS) and ΣΠΣ. Both societies remain supported by AIP to this day.

The organization continues to evolve - in 2021, SPS and ΣΠΣ changed its constitution to explicitly define that both societies must support both physics and astronomy students.



Members of the Society's Executive Council, including the new officers elected during the convention, are (l. to r. in the rear) Vincent E. Parker, chancellor, Marsh W. White, executive secretary; (l. to r. in the front) Walter French, vice president, L. Worth Seagon-dollar, president, and Stanley S. Ballard, immediate past president.

# SPS & ΣΠΣ today

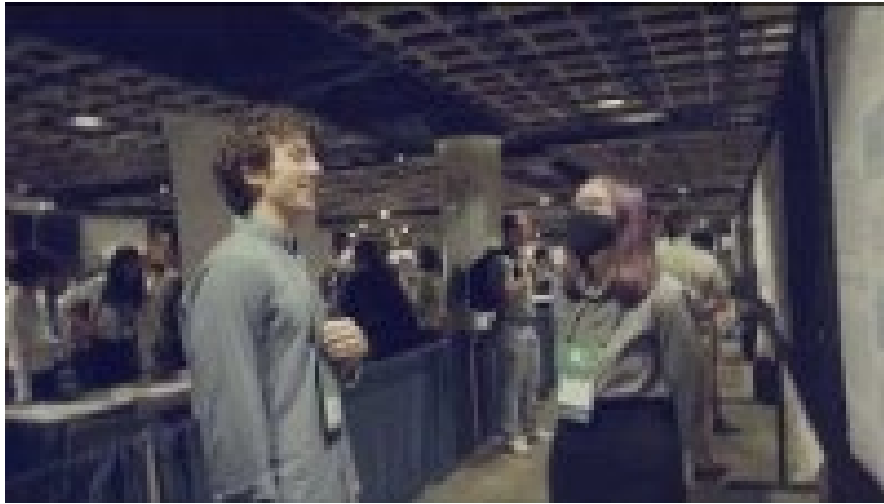
Our societies continue to grow:

- + 840 SPS chapters
- + 580 ΣΠΣ chapters
- + 100,000 lifetime ΣΠΣ members
- +100 Honorary ΣΠΣ Members
- +40 international chapters
- New ΣΠΣ Service Awards
- New ΣΠΣ Leadership Scholarship
- Yearly Regional Events
- Physics and Astronomy Congresses



# ΣΠΣ Physics and Astronomy Congresses

[Click on the picture for a video about the 2025 Congress](#)



## Recent themes:

2025 – Supporting Phase Shifts

2022 – 100 years of Momentum

2019 – Making Waves & Breaking Boundaries

2016 – Unifying Fields:  
Science Driving Innovation

ΣΠΣ and its members are the official hosts of the Physics and Astronomy Congresses. This meeting aims to provide students:

- National voice around issues facing their departments
- Strong connection to the national organization of SPS & ΣΠΣ
- Networking and Community Building initiatives
- Career and graduate school guidance



# 2025 Physics and Astronomy Congress - Supporting Phase Shifts

**October 30– November 1, 2025**

Downtown Denver, Colorado, USA

- Two poster sessions
- $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$  member day and reception
- UC Denver sponsored High Energy Hot Chocolate and Game Night
- SPS Chapter/ Club Showcase
- 21 workshops
- Tours of regional laboratories
- Visits to local PhD Programs
- Lunch with Scientists



Honorary Chair:

Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell

Confirmed Plenaries:

- Eric Cornell, NIST/ JILA
- Renee Horton (Workshop)
- Sarah Hurst
- Julieann Pollard-Larkin, MD  
Anderson Cancer Center
- Donnell Walton, Corning Inc.



# 2028 Physics & Astronomy Congress



October 26- 28, 2028  
Saint Paul, Minnesota  
Saint Paul River Centre  
**Theme: TBD**

# Lifelong Service Opportunities

Sigma Pi Sigma members serve the physics community in many ways, for example:

- Supporting local and national SPS programs
- Representing physics to the public
- Providing alumni networks
- Working for sound national science policies
- Offering science outreach opportunities



# Symbolism



## The Key

*Voltmeter with lamp & dynamo*



## The Insignia

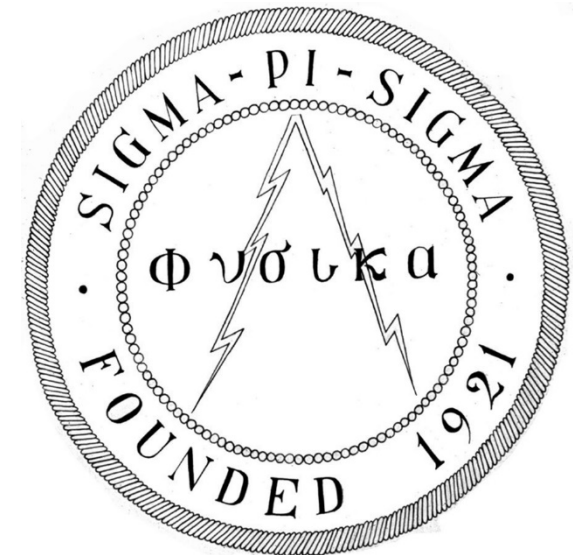
## The Motto

ΣΚΕΨΙΣ ΠΡΟΪΣΤΑΤΗΣ ΣΥΝΕΣΕΩΣ

Pronunciation: **S**kep-sis **P**raw-stak-tays **S**ooh-ess-eh-occe

Translation: Investigation the Forerunner of Knowledge

## The Seal



# Induction: Signing of the Book

Remember, as you pen your name,

- ΣΠΣ was founded by students and faculty.
- You are joining a distinguished group, connected by common ties of physics and astronomy.
- You are uphold honor, encouragement, and lifetime service and fellowship.
- Signing begins a lifelong connection to the society and your chapter.



# The ΣΠΣ Pledge

When called, repeat the following so that all may hear:

I, Your Name agree to uphold the pillars of ΣΠΣ:

- Encourage those seeking knowledge and competence in physics and astronomy;
- Develop and maintain an attitude of service;
- Support colleagues, promote fellowship, and honor excellence in physics and astronomy;
- And, encourage scholarship in physics and astronomy, at all levels.



# Charge to New Members

Continue your commitment as physicists and astronomers to honorable scholarship, irrespective of your ultimate career trajectory. Traditional scientists and 'hidden physicists and astronomers' alike are critical to the future of society.



# ΣΠΣ: Experiences, Opportunities, and Connections

## ΣΠΣ encourages lifetime service

- Attend future department induction ceremonies
- Connect to current students:

### [Alumni Engagement Program](#)

- Support high school students: [Adopt-a-Physicist](#)
- Connect to ΣΠΣ members through [LinkedIn](#)
- Attend the 2028 ΣΠΣ Physics and Astronomy

## Congress

- Give talks to other chapters
- Write for [Radiations](#)
- Host student visits



www.sigmapisigma.org

# ΣΠΣ

## THE PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY HONOR SOCIETY

### 100 Years of Physics Excellence

#### Fellowship

- Access alumni and professionals through local chapters
- Honorary distinction for high academic achievement
- One-year SPS membership
- Eligibility for grants and awards
- Lifetime subscription to Radiations, the official publication of ΣΠΣ
- Connect to alma mater and local ΣΠΣ chapters

#### Professionals




- Access to exclusive networking opportunities
- Enter federal service at a higher pay level
- Professional development opportunities
- National network of Physicists and Astronomers
- Engage with the community: Physics and Astronomy Profiles

#### Service

- Engage with students at ΣΠΣ-hosted Physics and Astronomy Congresses
- Science advocacy and outreach opportunities
- Host internship opportunities
- Community service projects
- Adopt-a-Physicist program for high school classrooms
- Share your stories with our "Hidden Physicist and Astronomer" resource.

An invitation to ΣΠΣ provides a lifetime of benefits & service opportunities.  
**Lifetime membership: \$54**

Sigma Pi Sigma · The Physics and Astronomy Honor Society · www.sigmapisigma.org  
1 Physics Ellipse · College Park, MD 20740 · 301-209-3007 · sigmapisigma@aip.org



# Congratulations!

Many thanks to the family, friends, & professors, teachers, and mentors who helped our students arrive here.



## SPS & ΣΠΣ Leadership:

Ron Kumon, SPS President 2025-2027

Blane Baker, ΣΠΣ President 2022-2026

Earl Blodgett, SPS & ΣΠΣ Interim Director

Kayla Stephens, Associate Director of SPS

Want to connect?

James Burrell, Member Services

[sigmapisigma@aip.org](mailto:sigmapisigma@aip.org)

301-209-3007

[www.sigmapisigma.org](http://www.sigmapisigma.org)

