PSK Founders Day

March 22, 2025

Richard “Dick” Doherty

Today, in honor of Bear Kohler, we are recognizing Richard “Dick” Doherty with the initial Lifetime Achieve Award. Dick passed away on January 23, 2025, at the age of 88 surrounded by family in a hospital in Lansdale, PA. Dick was born in Philadelphia in 1936. He graduated from Penn State in 1958, with a bachelor’s degree in agriculture. Dick was a member of our Kappa Chapter of Phi Sig. During his time living in the Chapter house, Dick overlapped with Bear Kohler, who many of you know served as the Kappa Chapter advisor for decades.

After graduation, Dick joined the United States Coast Guard, and his service led him to two tours of duty in Alaska and other East and West Coast postings.

Dick retired in 1985 as a Captain, and then he worked as a consultant working on environmental contamination remediation, including working on the Valdez Alaska oil spill. Dick and his wife raised two sons and a daughter. Dick was very active in Scouting with his sons. He passed on his love of the ocean to his children, after spending many summers vacationing in and working in Avalon, New Jersey.

Dick's tours of duty with the Coast Guard and his active environmental consultancy after retirement did not allow him to visit Kappa Chapter very often.

But when he visited the Chapter house in the mid-90s, he saw that the house was in major need of a significant renovation. After he learned that fraternity houses were being required to install sprinkler systems throughout the house to protect against fire risk, and that this work would require ripping out drywall and ceilings to install the new sprinkler system, Dick talked with Actives and Alums and encouraged us to take that opportunity to do a major renovation of the Chapter house.

Dick was the catalyst in our forming a Capital Campaign Committee to spearhead the Reason to be Proud Campaign. He asked Bill DeGrandis to chair the Campaign Committee and Dave Hyland to chair the Architecture Committee. We kept the stone wall exterior of the house and put all of the $ 1.7 million that we raised in that Campaign into the inside of the house, removing walls so the 2x4s of the house interior were exposed, and a completely new HVAC system was installed.

The renovation project took one semester and one summer to complete. All the time, we benefitted from Dick's direct and clear management skills, no doubt with his relying on his decades of being an officer in the Coast Guard. He also served over two decades on the Alumni Board, including as Alumni Board chairman, until 2012.

Dick, we thank you for your great service to Kappa Chapter. Without your vision, guidance, and support, we literally may not be here today.