



PI DELTA PHI was founded as a departmental French honor society at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1906, and was nationalized the following year when the Beta Chapter was established at the University of Southern California. Growth of the Society until the end of World War II was slow; only seventeen chapters had been established by 1945. Although a national honor society by 1945, "Pi Delta Phi could hardly be called a national society, geographically speaking" wrote former Executive Director Louis E. Richter. Richter noted that two clusters of fourteen chapters formed most of the society: the first group included schools west of the Mississippi (California, Texas, Oregon, Kansas and Arizona), and a second group of three chapters at schools in the Gulf states of Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Three other chapters were located in Illinois, Pennsylvania and New York. "In 1948," Richter wrote "this gave rise to the impression that there were two separate honoraries, one in California and the other in the Gulf states."¹ Because of the perceived division, two main objectives were placed on the agenda for the 1948 National Convention of the Society, which was held at the San Francisco College for Women. First, Pi Delta Phi sought to be officially endorsed by the [American Association of Teachers of French](#) (AATF); the endorsement was granted in 1949. Second, the Executive Board set a goal to expand the Society on a greater national basis, which was subsequently made possible with the help from the publicity gained from the AATF's [French Review](#). By June of 1950, Pi Delta Phi had grown to thirty-eight chapters including chapters in Ohio, Louisiana, Minnesota and Arizona. By 1962 there were eighty-four chapters in the U.S. At the present time, Pi Delta Phi numbers more than 350 [chapters](#) established at representative public and private colleges and universities in almost every state, as well as chapters at American Universities in Paris and Aix-en-Provence. The society was admitted to membership in the [Association of College Honor Societies](#) in 1967.

¹ Louis E. Richter, "Pi Delta Phi Notes" [The French Review](#), Vol. 24, No. 1 (Oct., 1950) .

Pi Delta Phi