**IN MEMORIUM RITUAL**

**JANUARY 15, 2015**

**FRANCIE MCDONALD**

I’d like to introduce myself, I am Alice White a member of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority and President of the Houston City Council of Beta Sigma Phi.

For those who are not familiar with Beta Sigma Phi Sorority it is International in scope with 200,000 members, 12,000 chapters in 30 different countries, and in every U. S. state and every Canadian province. This organization was founded in 1931 by Walter W. Ross in Abilene, Kansas. He wanted an organization for women with social, cultural and civic enrichment of its members. Through the International office in Kansas City chapters donate in total approximately 300,000 hours of time and raise over $2 million for charitable causes. Beta Sigma Phi is the largest Greek letter women’s association in the world. It is not a secret group and membership is by invitation. Beta Sigma Phi is non-sectarian, non-political and not affiliated with any school or university.

Though Beta Sigma Phi is not a service organization, its members also experience the joy of helping others. Through association with the members of Beta Sigma Phi, each member can expect to enrich their life culturally and socially. They have found their place among the friendliest, loveliest minded and the most socially respected women in the world.

Our local area has many individual chapters and coordinating city councils. Houston City Council of Beta Sigma Phi that has 14 chapters with approximately 152 members.

At this time I would like the members of Epsilon Chi Master, the chapter that Francie was a member to take their place in a semi circle around our yellow rose, the symbol of our sorority, for friendship.

**Pause,**

Now would the other members of Beta Sigma Phi form a semi circle behind these members.

Dearly Beloved: we are gathered together today in sorrowing sisterhood to consecrate in our hearts and memory the life and virtues of a dearly departed member, Francie McDonald, member of Epsilon Chi Master Chapter. Francie joined Beta Sigma Phi February 1964 as a Nu Phi Mu in San Antonio. She has held all offices in the chapters, been on all the committees both in chapter and in Houston City Council. She has served on the council board many times and served as President in 1988-1989. Francie was a life time member and was given the Golden Circle Ritual this last year for being a member for 50 years.

As she stood before in Darkness, initiate, so stands she now initiate to the mystery of Death, and we in the somber shadow s of our grief.

The flowing torch of her bright self must be henceforward absent from us here, but the clear light of her spirit shall remain, undimmed, to guide and strengthen us whom she preceded.

In life she was devoted to the good, the true and the beautiful, and was by color, form and music touched to tears. With loyal heart and with unflagging effort she faithfully fulfilled her duties here. Then being weary for a moment she lay down to rest, using her burden for a pillow and fell into that dreamless sleep that kisses down her eyelids still. While yet in love with life and raptured with the world she passed to timeless silence and to formless space.

So, every life, no matter if its every hour be rich with love and every moment jeweled with joy, must, at its close become to those who stay, a tragedy as sad and dark as can be woven of the wrap and woof of mystery and death.

But in this night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustling of a wing.

She was a faithful and true friend, a treasure inestimable in possession, and deeply lamented in the loss. If we in her lifetime were not always worthy of her love, let us now in her death resolve to be more worthy of the love of all other members of our sisterhood. Nothing is more common than to talk of a friend, nothing more difficult than to find one, nothing more rare than to improve by one as we ought. She has taught us it is best to live in time as friends to those with whom we would be all eternity, for true friendship is infinite and immortal.

The record of generous life runs like a vine around her memory and her every sweet, unselfish act is now a perfume flower. Were every one to whom she did a service to bring a blossom to her grave she would sleep tonight beneath a wilderness of flowers.

Life is a narrow vale between two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. But through the mist of our tears the light of love beholds a rainbow, the rainbow of her vitues:

The red of her courage,

The orange of her loyalty,

The yellow of her vision,

The green of her fellowship,

The blue of her humility,

And the violet of her service.

Character survives, goodness lives, love is immortal.

The torch of our sisterhood lighted her way on earth, but she hath now no need for sun or moon. But we have need to keep forever bright within our hearts the memory of her living presence.

Speech cannot contain our Love,

She was, she is, our sister.

I’d like to read this poem about our rose:

( **I will hold up a yellow rose while I read this)**

**THE YELLOW ROSE   
  
As the sheen of precious metal   
Or summer run on high,   
This rose proclaims our friendship   
In Beta Sigma Phi.   
  
Its promise holds fulfilled desire   
For everything that's good,   
Its precepts followed faithfully   
Bring gracious womanhood.   
  
I offer now this gift of love   
A symbol bright and true   
May it remind you evermore   
Of our regard for you.   
  
It signifies you've reached the heights   
Of grace and this is why   
You've now become as one of us   
In Beta Sigma Phi.   
  
A heart welcome, a sister dear,   
Accept this rose so true   
And always in our hearts there'll be   
A special place for you.**

Beta Sigma Phi’s join with me now and repeat our closing Ritual and Mizpah.

**Closing Ritual**

Eternal Father, Shepherd of the Stars, guide us that we may follow only the Good, the True only the Beautiful. Hold aloft to us the guiding torch of wisdom and help us to push o, undaunted toward its light. Illume our souls with thy wisdom that we in turn may light the way for those who follow us. If the road we take seems obscured in dist, give us skill and grace to pave it with stars, to transmute the dust into stardust. Grant us such clearness of vision, such sweetness of sprit, such earnestness of purpose, that we may follow the torch to our goal.

**Mizpah**

“May the Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from the other”.

All pass by and place their rose on the table and return to your seats.

Setting Up for this Ritual:

Table draped with a black table cloth.

One black candle, in a black candle holder

Black vase with greenery and one single tall yellow rose.

(I add the small fine colored ribbons in the order in our Rituals

Red, orange, yellow, green blue, violet tied in this order on the yellow rose with long streamers hanging down the table.)

I had a table big enough that the candle and rose to back and room for the members who are in a semi circle who are holding long stemmed yellow roses tied in a knot, no bows, with long streamer to the end of the long stem one the Mizpah is said they will file by and place the yellow rose on the table and back to their seats.

I had someone designated as I started the Ritual to light the candle,

And then be the last person to extinguish the candle before she placed the last rose on the table (however the last person of her chapter could also be the one to extinguish this candle) and then the rest of BSP’s to place their roses.

You can also display her pins on a badge near the vase if you desire.