

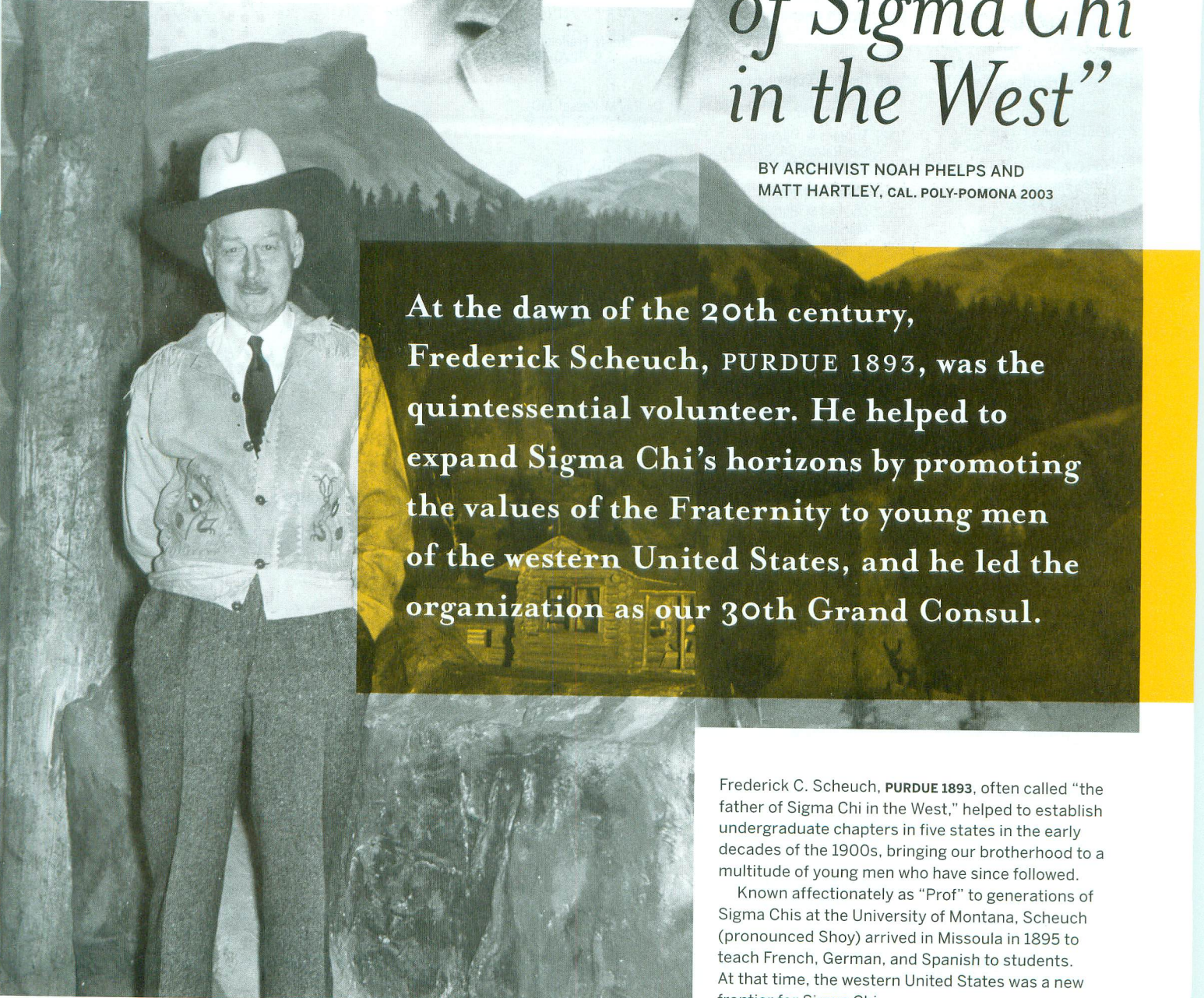
ARCHIVE

Strong principles and tradition

Frederick C. Scheuch, **PURDUE 1893**, is pictured here in 1889, shortly after his Initiation into Sigma Chi.

The "Father of Sigma Chi in the West"

BY ARCHIVIST NOAH PHELPS AND
MATT HARTLEY, CAL. POLY-POMONA 2003



At the dawn of the 20th century, Frederick Scheuch, **PURDUE 1893**, was the quintessential volunteer. He helped to expand Sigma Chi's horizons by promoting the values of the Fraternity to young men of the western United States, and he led the organization as our 30th Grand Consul.

Frederick C. Scheuch, **PURDUE 1893**, often called "the father of Sigma Chi in the West," helped to establish undergraduate chapters in five states in the early decades of the 1900s, bringing our brotherhood to a multitude of young men who have since followed.

Known affectionately as "Prof" to generations of Sigma Chis at the University of Montana, Scheuch (pronounced Shoy) arrived in Missoula in 1895 to teach French, German, and Spanish to students. At that time, the western United States was a new frontier for Sigma Chi.

Scheuch at the 1939 Grand Chapter in Los Angeles, where he was named the Fraternity's 30th Grand Consul.

According to Scheuch there were only four Sigma Chis living in Montana — all of them on the staff of the university. There was no undergraduate chapter at the University of Montana. The nearest undergraduate chapters were 1,200 miles to the west at Washington and 700 miles to the east at Minnesota. By the time Scheuch retired in the 1930s, he had actively worked on the establishment of our undergraduate chapters at the University of Montana and Montana State. After the establishment of the chapter at the University of Montana, Scheuch spent most of his free time in the chapter house. According to B. Franklin Thrailkill, **MONTANA 1931**, Prof often held court with students in the kitchen. He offered a cup of coffee and advice to all who sought his counsel.

In addition to Scheuch's Sigma Chi efforts in Montana, he also guided the establishment of additional chapters in the states of Wyoming, Idaho, Utah and Washington.

The key to Scheuch's success is that he led by example. Based on observations from articles and other artifacts from the time, it is clear that Scheuch genuinely loved the Fraternity and that nothing gave him more pleasure than guiding young people. In the course of his career at Montana, Scheuch served as interim university president on five separate occasions. When asked to assume the position permanently, he flatly refused saying that it would remove him from daily contact with his students.

Scheuch was born in 1871 Lafayette, Ind., but grew up in Spain where his father served as a U.S. consulate. He later returned to the United States to attend Purdue, at the insistence of his parents. When he started at Purdue he could barely speak English and employed the services of a translator until his command of the language improved. Despite this challenge, Scheuch excelled academically. He joined the university's Sigma Chi chapter, and his service to the Fraternity began.

Scheuch served as Purdue's undergraduate delegate to the 1892 Grand Chapter in Indianapolis where he was also appointed Kustos of his local chapter. At the time, the structure of the Fraternity was different, and such appointments were made at Grand Chapter.

Throughout Scheuch's lifetime, he attended 12 Grand Chapters. Before going west to Montana, he was Grand Praetor of the then-Fourth Province in Indiana. In Montana, Scheuch served as Grand Praetor of what was then called the 17th Province. He held that office until his retirement in 1936.

Retirement did not end Scheuch's service to the Fraternity. In August 1939, during the 44th Grand Chapter in Los Angeles, the Sigma Chi membership chose Scheuch to serve as 30th Grand Consul. In 1948, he was among the first group of Sigma Chis to be inducted into the Order of Constantine — the Fraternity's highest honor.



29th Grand Consul L.G. Balfour, **INDIANA 1907**, pins the Cooper Badge on Scheuch at the 1939 Grand Chapter in Los Angeles.

On Jan. 17, 1954, after a long illness, Scheuch closed his eyes and slipped quietly through the gates of the Chapter Eternal. In the aftermath of his death, expressions of grief from mourners turned into a joyous celebration of Scheuch's life and career. In the fall of 1954, at the dedication of the Scheuch Memorial Planetarium that was once on the campus of the Montana State University, which is now the University of Montana-Missoula, Significant Sig and president of Boeing Airplane Company, William M. Allen, **MONTANA 1922**, offered the following praise:

"Professor Scheuch was loved and respected by all who passed through the local chapter during his many years of connection with it. That connection spanned eight college generations, and his influence has continued through succeeding generations. He was part of our creed — an unwritten part of our Ritual—a fine and meaningful tradition."

In accepting the gift of the planetarium, Montana State President Dr. Carl McFarland said "no history of Montana State University would be complete without tracing the career of Prof. Scheuch." The same could be said of Sigma Chi — the history of the Fraternity would be woefully incomplete without acknowledging the service rendered to it by men such as Scheuch. He is the definition of Sigma Chi volunteerism.



The Scheuch Memorial

ON THE CAMPUS

In Remembrance of "Prof".....

The program for the 1954 dedication of the Scheuch Memorial Planetarium, located on what was then the campus of Montana State University.