



OF OMICRON DELTA KAPPA

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA

Profiles of leaders redefining success
through integrity, and a closer look at the
rise of AI and its impact on humanity





The Circle® is a publication of Omicron Delta Kappa Society and Educational Foundation, Inc., and it has been published since 1923.

How to contact *The Circle*:

The Circle, Omicron Delta Kappa
The Johnson Center for Leadership
224 McLaughlin Street
Lexington, VA 24450
(540) 458-5344, odknhdq@odk.org
www.odk.org

How to update your name or address:

Please visit the OΔK website, odk.org, click on the members tab and submit your updated form. You can also email odknhdq@odk.org.

How to receive *The Circle*:

When you become a member of OΔK, a digital subscription to *The Circle* is included in your membership. You can access the digital version online at <https://odk.org/news/thecircle/>.

Where to send a notice of a death:

Please contact Michelle Dilk, micelle@odk.org, with the news of a recent death of any member of OΔK.

Publisher

Jennifer L. Waller, Ph.D., President and CEO
Washington and Lee University, 2024

Creative Director

Amy A. Newman, Director for Communications and Marketing
University of Louisville, 2023

Guest Editor

Buck Ryan
University of Kentucky, 2011

2025-26 Board Chair

Maureen E. Morgan
Marietta College, 1992

Omicron Delta Kappa Society, the National Leadership Honor Society, was founded in Lexington, Virginia, on December 3, 1914. A group of 15 students and faculty members established the Society to recognize and encourage leadership at the collegiate level. The founders established the OΔK Idea—the concept that individuals representing all phases of collegiate life should collaborate with faculty and others to support the campus and community. OΔK's mission is to honor and develop leaders; encourage collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and promote OΔK's ideals of collaboration, inclusivity, integrity, scholarship, and service on college and university campuses throughout North America. The Society's national headquarters are located in Lexington, Virginia.

ON THE COVER:

Leaders redefining success through integrity, and the rise of AI and its impact on humanity



Contents

Vol. 103, No. 2.



02

CHAIR'S LETTER

A message from Maureen Morgan

04

FINDING HUMILITY

Letter from the guest editor

06

BEYOND THE TITLE

Redefining Leadership in Government

10

Q&A WITH CRAIG BOWE

A conversation with Chartered Chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry

13

FIVE WAYS

How Mentors Model Authentic Leadership

14

YES, AND...

Stephen Kallas on Leadership, Adaptability, and Life Beyond the Stage

18

NAVIGATING THE ALGORITHM

Authentic Leadership in an AI-Driven World

22

LEADING WITH AUTHENTICITY

How to Build Meaningful Relationships

24

CAMPUS NEWS

A round-up of circle activities

26

MEMBER NEWS

Higher education news and appointments

BEYOND THE TITLE

How OΔK Members Are Redefining Leadership in Government

By G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL

At a time when faith in institutions is low, OΔK members on campus can find inspiration in leaders who have rejected ego for ethics. These are not politicians chasing power—they're public servants answering a deeper call.

IT STARTS IN ROOMS WITH BAD LIGHTING

Leadership doesn't always look like a podium and a nameplate. Sometimes, it looks like a conference room that smells like old pizza, with three people arguing about bylaws and one person stuck trying to decide who's right. Sometimes, it looks like voting between two people you admire... and knowing only one will get to wear the stole at graduation. Sometimes, it's staying silent in a student senate meeting... and later regretting it. That's where it starts.

Not when you get sworn into office. Not when your name appears in bold in the alumni magazine. It starts here, where many of us first learned how to lead—on campus.

Aristotle said it best: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." The decisions we make in those ordinary rooms—who to include, when to speak up, and how to move forward when no one agrees—are habits. And eventually, they become us.



“WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO. EXCELLENCE, THEN, IS NOT AN ACT, BUT A HABIT.” — Aristotle

THE DECISION YOU DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE

It was late. Tensions were high. Two qualified individuals, both respected, were vying for one final spot. Everyone had their favorite. But only one would be selected. The committee argued. Someone brought up GPA. Someone else whispered about personality. A few people looked ready to flip a coin. But the student leading the discussion didn't want to pick the easiest answer. She wanted to choose the right one.

SHE MADE HER CHOICE AND SHE STOOD BY IT

Fast forward to the present day, and, sure, the dorms have gotten nicer, the campus quad has Wi-Fi, and the school now boasts record-breaking enrollment. But despite all the upgrades, one thing hasn't changed: the challenge of authentic action. It still feels risky to be the one who disagrees. To say, “I don't think that's right,” when the group wants to move on. To raise your hand when the rest of the room looks down. You're not imagining it. That pressure is real.

Maybe you've already experienced it. You're in a group project where someone takes credit for your work. Do you speak up or let it go? Your student organization is planning an event that's more popular than meaningful. Do you go along or suggest a different idea? A friend is running for something they might not be ready for. Do you tell the truth or stay quiet and applaud?

These moments might not seem like leadership, but they are. They serve as practice for the tougher challenges ahead, with higher stakes and fewer safety nets. Leadership doesn't wait until your LinkedIn profile is perfect or your name is on a badge. It begins now—in discomfort, in dilemmas, and in decisions that make you ask, “What kind of leader am I becoming?”

And that's precisely how it started for one student who once sat in a room just like yours, facing a decision no one else wanted to make.

Hon. Rep. Dar'shun Kendrick Oglethorpe University, 2002

Title: Georgia State Representative, House District 95

Age: 43

Hometown:
Decatur, GA

Career highlights:
Representative
Dar'shun Kendrick
was elected in

2010 as one of the
youngest members

of the Georgia House. She serves District 95 and is Ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. She co-founded two bipartisan caucuses, leads on technology and equity policy, founded Kairos Capital Legal Advisors, and authored two books.



That student was **Rep. Dar'shun Kendrick**. Today, she's a Georgia State Representative. But long before earning her title, she was a student leader learning how to stay true to her values while navigating ambiguous situations. Her leadership didn't come from being the loudest voice. It came from listening carefully, making intentional choices, and standing by her decisions with integrity. The kind of leadership that begins in silence and shines in the spotlight.

THE MOMENT YOU COULD'VE STAYED QUIET

The campus was buzzing. A new policy had dropped. People were upset, but quietly. Whispers in group chats. Eye-rolls in the dining hall. Still, no one wanted to make it a big deal.

NO ONE, EXCEPT HER

She stood up at the meeting and asked the question no one else dared to ask. She didn't yell or posture; she simply asked why. Then she inquired about what could be done to fix it. The following week, she decided to run, not for the title but because she couldn't stay silent. She created a student government that opened space for more voices. She worked to earn trust. Not everyone liked her, but no one questioned her bravery.

Years later, she ran again. But not on campus. She ran to represent her district, to advocate for policy change at the state level, and to lead with the same clarity that once earned her side-eye in a student meeting.

Because it's difficult to push back against authority, even when it's polite. It's hard to challenge a professor's policy, or raise your hand when an administrator says, "Any questions?" but clearly doesn't want any. It's hard to ask why when your group's constitution has always been written a certain way, or to suggest changing a tradition that no longer works.

Even in the most open environments, you'll find the same unwritten rule: don't make waves. But if you want to lead with integrity, you'll have to break that rule—gently, clearly, and sometimes on your own.

You might not be protesting on the steps of a courthouse. You might just be at a meeting where the student organization's budget cuts are unfair, and no one else wants to speak up. You might be the only one advocating for accessibility, inclusion, or transparency, and people start treating you like you're the problem.

BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE NOT THE PROBLEM- WHAT IF YOU'RE THE PRECEDENT

That student was **Rep. Ruwa Romman**. She's now a Georgia State Representative, the first Muslim woman and the first Palestinian American elected in the state. But before she made history, she made waves—on campus, in meetings that weren't recorded, and in conversations where staying quiet would've been easier.

Hon. Rep. Ruwa Romman

Oglethorpe University, 2013

Title: Georgia State Representative, House District 97

Age: 32

Hometown:
Cumming, GA

Career highlights:
Representative Ruwa Romman made history in 2022 as the first Muslim woman and first Palestinian American elected to the Georgia House of Representatives. She co-founded the Georgia Volunteer Hub, worked in public sector consulting at Deloitte, and has led statewide efforts on civic engagement, equity, and community advocacy. Now she has officially announced that she is running for Governor of Georgia in the 2026 election.



HE MADE THE CHOICE NO ONE APPLAUDS

It wasn't a dramatic moment. No one clapped. No one posted about it. But when one student arrived prepared, once again, something shifted. It happened gradually. First in class, then in his campus organizations. He'd read the materials others skimmed. Asked the questions others avoided. He wasn't trying to outshine anyone; he was just always ready.

He wasn't loud. He wasn't flashy. He didn't run for every position. But when something needed to be done right, his name kept coming up. Reliable. Solid. Accountable. At first, it felt like overkill. Why care so much when no one else seems to? But over time, the habit of showing up prepared, listening before speaking, and following through became something else entirely. It became a standard. His standard.

And years later, that standard would be tested—not on campus, but on the bench.

That student was **Judge Gordon Murray**, known throughout Florida as “The Community Judge.” He didn’t arrive there by chance. He got there through repetition.

“Every ruling is a reflection of not just the law,” he says, “but the character with which you interpret it. The public doesn’t just want to know the decision. They want to believe the person making it.”

His decisions today carry legal weight, but the discipline behind them was built in quiet, everyday moments. A dorm room desk with a textbook open while others were out. A meeting where he stayed late to clean up. An email sent the night before instead of in the morning. Preparation, not just performance, is what set him apart.

You might think your quiet work goes unnoticed. That being consistent doesn’t count unless you’re charismatic. But authentic leadership, the kind that lasts, is built in the discipline no one sees. The notes you take when no one’s asking for them. The hours you spend preparing when others are winging it. The way you treat people when you think it doesn’t matter. It all matters.

Because you don’t rise to your title, you rely on your habits. Judge Murray didn’t wait for the robe to become a leader; he practiced long before the world gave him the bench.

WHO YOU'RE BECOMING

None of the people in this story were born to lead. They weren’t handed megaphones or résumés with gold stars. They were students—just like you.



They didn’t always know what was right. But they kept choosing to do the next right thing. And over time, those choices became part of who they were.

Remember Aristotle’s line about what makes for excellence. Every campus meeting you attend. Every voice you listen to. Every time you choose preparation over convenience, courage over comfort, you’re cultivating that habit.

You don’t need to wait for a title to start leading. You’re already doing it. The question is: What kind of leader are you becoming? Our society needs all the authentic leaders we can grow. ●

Hon. Judge Gordon Charles Murray, Sr.

National Circle, 2025

Title: County Court Judge **Age:** 65

Hometown: Miami Gardens, FL

Career highlights:

Judge Murray, known as “The Community Judge,” was appointed to the Miami-Dade County Court in 2017. He has been recognized with Florida’s highest judicial honors, including the Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence and the William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award.



G.C. Murray II, Esq., DPL, is the CEO and Managing Attorney of Association GC and a certified executive coach who helps high-stakes professionals build with integrity and impact. An award-winning attorney and internationally recognized speaker, he was inducted into OAK at Florida State University in 2011. Learn more about G.C. at <https://www.exec.media/GCMurrayII>.

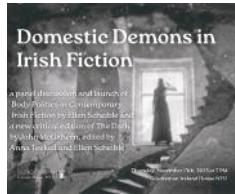
- **Felicia C. Smith** (*University of Kentucky, 2013*) named University of Louisville 2025 College of Education & Human Development Alumni Fellow.



- **Kewan Smith** (*Morningside University, 2001*) selected as Palm Beach Symphony's first Director of Development.



- **Anna Teekell** (*Rhodes College, 2000*) co-edited the recently published book, "Domestic Demons in Irish Fiction."



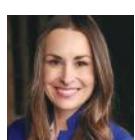
- **Emma Terry** (*University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2022*) was crowned Miss Alabama 2025, earning the prestigious title and representing the state in the national Miss America competition.



- **Anna Walker** (*Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus, 2007*) appointed new senior vice president for advancement and executive director of the GMC Foundation.



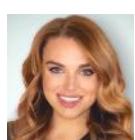
- **Rachel Watts Webb** (*University of Kentucky, 2004*) honored as a University of Kentucky 2025 Distinguished Service award recipient.



- **Robin E. Weiss** (*University of Louisville, 2011*) recognized as a University of Louisville 2025 School of Public Health & Information Sciences Alumni Fellow.



- **Samantha Wolf** (*Oklahoma Baptist University, 2019*) recognized as an Oklahoma NextGen Under 30 award recipient in the law category (2024). Received an Oklahoma Bar License in September 2023 and a Choctaw Nation Bar License in July 2024. Began serving as an adjunct instructor at Carl Albert State College in Fall 2024.



Active *Legacy* Members

*We proudly honor OΔK's Active Legacy Members,
whose lifelong commitment strengthens our
Society's enduring tradition of leadership.*

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| J. P. Anderson | Steven M. Harvey | Shawn M. Potter |
| Sally K. Albrecht | Brian L. Hager | Charles L. Pride |
| Johann A. Ali | Sarah A. Hancock | Robert D. Pierce |
| Madeline A. Alizadeh | Robert C. Hastedt | James B. Pyers |
| Trinette D. Ballard | Jason F. Hicks | Michael D. Prevatt |
| Willie L. Banks | Luoluo Hong | Moreen M. Provencher |
| Stephen M. Berman | Jeff S. Howard | Paula J. Phillips |
| Jennifer J. Bench | Linda M. Hooks | Christopher J. Rosa |
| Dannielle C. Boyer | Thomas E. Hiebert | Daniel L. Rosenthal |
| Michelle R. Burke | Pierce J. Ippolito | Randy R. Roberson |
| Jacob N. Brickner | Richard S. Johnson | Shane W. Rau |
| Chelsea Cherry | Joshua B. Jordan | Stuart L. Ritter |
| Jack V. Chesebro | Timothy L. Jenkins | Da'Shaun L. Scott |
| Peter A. Christiaans | Christopher T. Keams | Gene P. Siegal |
| Michael N. Christakis | Heather I. Keister | Grayson B. Smith |
| Thomas J. Clark | Anne I. Kirpes | Kari E. Smith |
| Nicole C. Close | Terrence M. Kungel | Loretta F. Smith |
| Eva L. Cowell | Joseph F. Lestingi | Shane M. Smith |
| Gerald H. Cowen | Curtis O. Liles | Richard J. Spontak |
| Tara M. Czepiel | Victoria A. Lilling | Nick L. Strimple |
| Michele Dames | Carla A. Lee | Michael S. Stretton |
| Richard L. Daugherty | Patrick A. Looby | Walter S. Street |
| Wayne E. Dillingham | Andrew L. MacQueen | Sandra B. Thurmond |
| Cory M. Dowell | Paula M. Marino | Tony P. Tsai |
| Betsy Dunn-Williams | Jeanine E. Martin | Robin K. Vinson |
| William L. England | Mark A. Medley | Stephanie M. Viehman |
| Melissa W. Earnest | Eric J. Menhart | Donald T. Whitley |
| Gerard Evans | Lowell A. Mintz | Ellwood F. Whitchurch |
| Molly F. Evans | Nancy B. Mizelle | Jennifer L. Waller |
| Giuseppe M. Di Iorio | Iyabo A. Morrison | Carol D. Walker |
| Robert T. France | Maureen E. Morgan | Sarah C. Williamson |
| Nona D. Fisher | Guy N. Molinari | Benjamin M. Williams |
| Thomas H. Fowler | Joseph P. Moore | James H. Williams |
| Lisa A. Fusillo | Matthew B. Nobles | Katherine D. Wilson |
| John J. Gardiner | Todd S. Nicholson | Elizabeth M. Wenzel |
| Gene M. Garner | Robert F. Olin | Qiana W. Wiggins |
| Miguel A. Galarza | Ramses D. Owens | Keith A. Wysocki |
| Jacob W. Good | James R. Okonak | Michael J. Wolyniak |
| Travis B. Goodloe | B. J. Parson | Francis J. Zankowski |
| William D. Gooding | Paul A. Pardee | Nicholas V. Zambelli |
| Johnny A. Guidry | Taylor C. Parker | Shyla L. Cochran Zafr |
| Cheryl D. Gunter | Karen P. Peirce | Ronald E. Zwierlein |
| Merlin T. Grim | Latauni M. Perez-Sims | |
| David K. Glenn | Andrea M. Peters | |



Johnson Center for Leadership
Omicron Delta Kappa National Headquarters
224 McLaughlin Street
Lexington, VA 24450-2002



YOUR LEADERSHIP NETWORK FOR LIFE

Enhance your leadership journey with exclusive scholarships, career resources, valuable discounts, and connections to influential leaders. Stay connected—for life.

Renew your **Annual Membership** to maintain your connection—or secure your future with a one-time **Legacy Membership** for lifelong access to OΔK benefits, programs, and recognition.

Log in to your MyODK Profile at my.odk.org to renew your membership today!



EXCLUSIVE *Legacy* MEMBERSHIP

A LIMITED OPPORTUNITY

The first 500 Legacy Members will receive a limited-edition commemorative coin and membership card symbolizing their commitment to OΔK's future.

