



Oracle Honor Society

Ithaca College

Founded 1928

"A Recognition of Excellence during the Freshman Year"

In March 1928, the faculty of Ithaca College, at the suggestion of Phyllis Spencer, Dean of Women, voted to establish a scholastic Senior Honor Society. Mrs. Spencer was named faculty sponsor and a committee of the faculty was appointed by President George C. Williams to choose students to become charter members of the new organization. Three seniors from each department who had achieved the highest scholastic standing and who were prominent in extra-curricular activities were chosen to be charter members.

April of the same year, these charter members initiated three juniors from each department to become members for the year 1928-29. In 1930, and again in 1933, the constitution was revised and the basis for membership was expanded to include consideration of the factors of leadership, loyalty, service, and character, in addition to scholarship.

During these early years, Oracle was the only interdisciplinary honorary at Ithaca College. The organization recognized seniors for their academic achievement and for their contribution to the College. In addition, members of the faculty and alumni, who were outstanding in their profession, were inducted into the Society.

A major activity of the organization for many years was raising money for a student loan fund since the College's resources for this purpose were very limited. "Scampers," a student written, directed, and produced variety or musical show was sponsored by Oracle every year. The proceeds of the shows were awarded as loans, and helped many students maintain themselves at the College during critical periods in their lives. The last Scamper production took place in 1969.

With the establishment of Phi Kappa Phi chapter at Ithaca College in 1978, a significant change took place in Oracle. Phi Kappa Phi is an interdisciplinary, national honor society that recognizes senior students with outstanding academic and personal characteristics. Oracle had been a part of the tradition and heritage of Ithaca College for fifty years and it was felt to be important to maintain that tradition on the campus. To prevent Phi Kappa Phi and Oracle from competing for the same students during their senior year, Oracle members, both faculty and students, determined to make Oracle a first-year academic honor society, recognizing students who had excelled academically during their first year at Ithaca College. Through membership in Oracle, first-year students could come in contact with and recognize other students who had achieved excellence and perhaps be encouraged in their academic endeavors.

Presently, selection of members takes place after completion of their first full year at Ithaca College. Students in the top ten percent of each school or division are invited to accept membership. Oracle members believe that these successful first-year students will indeed contribute leadership, loyalty, and service to Ithaca College during their subsequent years here.

The Oracle Honor Society is founded upon the symbol of the star. The five points represent the attributes of excellence for which members of Oracle aspire: Scholarship, Leadership, Loyalty, Service, and Character. The laurel wreath around the star represents the achievements of Oracle members. The wall represents the courage and fortitude shown in order to achieve the ideals of the society, and the light is a beacon for Oracle members in the future. The olive branch is the emblem of peace -- the talisman for all Oracle members.