

The following was spoken from the podium at the 2025 National Convention by National Conductress Valerie Helms-Mejia.

2025 Lifetime Achievement Award

I'm baaaack! We have the honor of recognizing not one but two outstanding sisters this year! If you have ever served on this committee, you know how difficult it is to choose just one winner. This year we decided to spice things up a bit and add another award category.... the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Psi Ote of the Year award goes to that sister who has gone above and beyond for her chapter, her community, and our organization for the current year.

The Lifetime Achievement Award goes to sister who has been in our organization for at least 20 years and continues to go above and beyond for her chapter, her community, and our organization year after year!

The POOTY committee became the POOTY and Lifetime Achievement Award committee this year. Since they did double the work, I am going to give them double the recognition! Again, the committee members are Pam Gunterman, Beth Vipond, Carol Good, Jane Patton, and Brenda Bonner. Thank you, sisters, for doing double duty this year in selecting both 2025 award winners!

We had seventeen chapters submit a nomination for our Lifetime Achievement Award. A big thank you to those chapters for supporting our new award!

As with the POOTY award, all nominations were checked to make sure that they met the award criteria. Also, all tell-tale signs of the nominee were blacked out on the committee copies. I also only facilitated the discussion and was not a voting member of the committee.

I will now read this heart felt original nomination letter that includes personal testimonies from her sisters. Please remember that this is not the blacked-out version the committee members received. Again, the committee members do not know who they selected and will be as surprised as you when the winner is announced!

Psi Iota Xi Lifetime Achievement Nomination to the Selection Committee,

When you are part of an organization like Psi Iota Xi—where the mission to promote art, literature, music, and speech and hearing touches so many lives—you learn that success is rooted in people. And often, if you look closely at a chapter's accomplishments, you'll find one individual whose steadfast presence, both behind the scenes and out front, ensures the work gets done.

For our chapter, that person is this nominee.

This member doesn't just serve—**she lives and breathes Psi Iota Xi**. Her decades of unwavering commitment have helped shape the very culture of our chapter. She has consistently shown up, leaned in, lifted others, and moved things forward—always with humility and a heart full of service. After earning National Honorary Conferred status and serving as National President, she chose to remain actively involved at every level. She once said:

"I would like to think I have done my share for Psi Iota Xi. I know there are other Sisters who have done as much—maybe some have not done it as long as I have. After being National President and receiving Honorary Conferred status, I chose to stay active. I still have the love of what we do, and the health and desire to continue."

This is the spirit that defines her. Her presence at conventions over the years has created countless fond memories. We always knew she would be **deeply involved**, leading by example and embodying the mission and values of Psi Iota Xi. Her energy, her passion, and her dedication have always been a driving force in making Psi Iota Xi well respected—not just in our chapter, but across the entire organization.

One sister reflected:

"At my new member meeting seven years ago, I was told how lucky we were to have a past national president in our chapter. I came to understand why. I remember saying I couldn't serve as Recording Secretary due to my hearing, and she didn't miss a beat: 'Well, all right, how about Corresponding Secretary?' That moment led me down a path of leadership I hadn't expected—including serving as chapter president and eventually a district officer. She was there at every step, believing in me before I believed in myself."

Another shared:

"When I joined Gamma Nu 12 years ago, I was drawn by the mission—especially because I have a non-verbal daughter. I stayed because this sister always inspired and encouraged me to get involved. In return, she supported an event I started for kids with disabilities and even petitioned for chapter funds to help. She truly finds talents in people and mentors them."

A member reflected on her national influence:

"At my first national convention, I saw how deeply invested our past national presidents are. They run their own raffle and play an active role in shaping Psi Iota Xi's future. At that first convention, I remember one of us saying, 'I'm just going to watch her and stand when she stands!' That's the kind of respect she commands. The year she couldn't attend, everyone asked where she was."

And another sister noted:

"Though I've stepped back from chapter involvement for now, every time I run into her at the grocery store, she greets me with a huge hug and a warm smile. She is one of the most genuine women I've ever met—and a blessing in my life."

Even newer members are deeply inspired by her:

"I have been with Gamma Nu for only a few years, but I have been more than impressed by her as a person and sorority leader. She opened her heart and home to me from day one and motivated me to become a leader myself. She not only leads our chapter, but supports and participates in most of our activities, which makes others want to do more. I don't know if I've ever met anyone that is truly in love and dedicated to their organization as much as she is. I find her to be a role model and the ideal of what being a lifelong member of Psi Iota Xi should look like."

Her service also extends well beyond our organization. She has taught Sunday School for 14 years, led Vacation Bible School, served on church leadership teams, and even sat on the Hendricks Community Foundation Board. She's also a dedicated volunteer with Sheltering Wings, supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse. Whether she's shopping for gifts, coordinating drop-offs, or simply reaching out with compassion, her devotion to helping others is remarkable.

She embodies the true spirit of Psi Iota Xi—her servant heart, unwavering dedication, and inspiring leadership have left an immeasurable impact on our chapter and beyond. She leads with kindness, lifts others with her generosity, and sets a standard of excellence that we all strive to follow. Her legacy is one of compassion, commitment, and community—making her truly deserving of this lifetime honor.

She is an inspiration to all those around her.

It is with deep admiration and sincere gratitude that our chapter submits this nomination for your consideration.

It is my distinct honor to present the first ever Psi Iota Xi Lifetime Achievement Award to Bette Yeager of the Gamma Nu chapter in Brownsburg, IN!