

## **2022 Tribute Recognition to Brother Lewis**

Good morning beloved.

First giving honor to God, our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Sheppard of this flock, Pastor Holden, officers, members, and friends, I am humbled and blessed to have the opportunity to be in the house of believers one more time and stand before you.

I am Tantalous A. Smith, a native of Benton, LA, a 1980 initiated member of Omega Psi Phi, fraternity, Inc. by way of Theta Delta, and a 1983 NSU alumnus.

I first met Brother G. Stanley Lewis, or as we affectionally referred to him as “Bruh Lewis” in the Spring of 1980 during a membership interest meeting for Omega.

His presence was undeniable and convincing. His speech was elegant. His demeanor was delightful. His impact has been lasting and enduring.

Bruh Lewis was many things to many people.

- He was an outstanding husband, father, and friend
- He was an accomplished educator
- He was incredibly respected in his community
- He was a “home away from home” Father, Uncle, Mentor
- He was a man full of wisdom, knowledge, and vision
- He was a difference-maker in my life and a symbol of God’s purpose for a MAN!

Bruh Lewis provided for us. He protected us. He loved us.

One evening, my brothers and I decided to entertain the student body in the Sabine parking lot, that is, the parking lot of the dormitory for the ladies. The entertainment was what we used to call “stomping.” Stomping was a percussive, highly-energetic art form developed through song and dance rituals by African American fraternities and sororities. This stomping entertainment highlighted the body becoming an instrument using

footsteps, claps and spoken words. Before my brothers and I completed our stomping entertainment, Bruh Lewis received word regarding his undergraduate chapter entertainment.

Suffice it to say, Bruh Lewis was not pleased with our entertainment performance. Early the following day, he visited the campus and shared with us his unquestionable disappointment with us, our decisions, and behavior.

There were two things he shared with us that morning I will always remember. First, he told us we should never participate in stomping entertainment that our mothers or grandmothers would not approve of. That was very piecing for me because I knew my mother and grandmother would not have sanctioned the entertainment as appropriate behavior. In fact, they probably would have asked me where I learned to speak and behave in such a manner.

The second thing Bruh Lewis share with us that morning after our disgraceful stomping entertainment was what he called “the three C’s.” The 3 C’s, he explained are Choices, Consequences, and Change. He highlighted that men of excellence understand the consequences of their choices and make positive corrective changes. Average or foolish men make repeated poor choices, suffer recurring negative consequences, and never make constructive or restorative changes. Bruh Lewis asked me “which man are you, which man will you be?”

It was that day I received clarity on symbolism! I mentioned earlier that Bruh Lewis was a symbol of God’s purpose for a MAN. He also wore symbols on his chest. Those same symbols I proudly wear on my chest. Bruh Lewis was responsible for providing me the honored opportunity to wear those symbols. I still wear those symbols; not because I represent disgraceful behavior or unreceptive language. Rather, I still wear those symbols to constantly remind others and more importantly my fraternity brothers that the symbols are a loud and constant reminder that those symbols “OPHELEMA PHILI PSURKIS” depict Friendship is Essential to the Soul. That significance should never be lost among men of OMEGA! That’s why I wear the symbols.

My FRIEND, My Father, My Brother, G. Stanley Lewis, thank you for introducing the symbols to me and serving as a lifetime symbol of FRIENDSHIP.