

## Philbrook mansion and Delta Upsilon chapter house have many similarities.

Philbrook mansion and the chapter house of Delta Upsilon fraternity in Bloomington, Indiana are architecturally similar and were built at about the same time. Philbrook is the former 70+ room grand summer residence of oilman Waite Phillips. It is now home of the Tulsa Art Museum.



This Italian Renaissance villa was designed by prominent Kansas City architect Edward Buehler Delk in 1926. The house was built by the John Long Company of Kansas City and was completed in 1927. The three-story mansion was constructed of steel and a reinforced concrete. The exterior of the house is stucco that includes ground white marble in the mixture causing it to glitter. The corners are quoined with Kasota limestone, quarried in Minnesota; it resembles Italian travertine. This stonework also decorates the doors and windows. The rear loggia has five arches with Corinthian columns and overlooks the formal gardens. The roof features wide eaves and is covered with oversized Italianate tiles. Under an elaborate rug in one of the rooms, the floor that looks like green tile is really a glass disco floor with multicolored lights underneath. These people knew how to have a good time.

The Delta Upsilon chapter house is of about the same shape, has five arches on the street side of its porch, a decorative railing above the porch, two windows on the upper floor of the side wings, wide overhangs, and a tile hip roof. The chapter house is surfaced in brick with corner quoins. The chapter house has a disco room but without a lighted glass floor; maybe the museum will send theirs.



Waite Phillips has an interesting personal history. Waite and his twin brother Wiate were part of 10 children raised on a 40-acre farm in Iowa. In 1899, at age 16, Waite and Wiate left home and bummed around the west doing odd jobs on railroads, mining, lumber, and fur trapping. Their adventure came to an end in 1902 when Wiate died of acute [appendicitis](#). He went with two of his older brothers, Lee Eldas ("L.E.") and [Frank, in 1905 when they](#) pursued the lure of oil in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. As wildcatters, they struck oil on their first try in June. They about exhausted their resources drilling more wells until September when they hit a gusher. 1914, Waite sold his interest to his older brothers and moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma and created his own producing, refining, and marketing business with involvement in banking, real estate,

and ranching. Waite & Genevieve Phillips lived in Villa Philbrook for only 11 years and then donated the entire home and 23 acre property to the city to be used as an art center. They also donated over 100,000 acres in New Mexico to the Boy Scouts to create Philmont Scout Ranch. Waite said he enjoyed the land with his son and their friends and that he wanted to share that great experience with others. They also provided an endowment to help keep camper fees affordable. He even included all the water & mineral rights with the donation. Waite's two older brothers also had great success, founding the Phillips Petroleum Company<sup>1</sup> in 1917.

Waite Phillips regularly carried a collection of epigrams in his pocket to inspire him in the way he lived life and ran his companies. A tiny sample of these epigrams follow:

*I have read that Winston Churchill, one of the greatest masters of English prose, has been known to re-write one paragraph of a book a dozen times. This proves there is no excellence without painstaking effort. -Waite Phillips*

*To be competent in governing others, we must first learn to govern ourselves. -Waite Phillips*

*Wishful thinking consists of dreaming without doing. It's a useless habit. -Waite Phillips*

*A man can fail many times but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame someone else. -Waite Phillips*

*Real philanthropy consists of helping others, outside our own family circle, from whom no thanks is expected or required. -Waite Phillips*

---

<sup>1</sup> Phillips 66 is the company's brand name; it was derived in 1927 when a car powered with their gasoline achieved the amazingly fast speed of 66 miles per hour on the famous Route 66 that passed near Bartlesville. Route 66 was a two-lane US highway that went from Chicago to Los Angeles. While the route no longer exists, sections of roadway that once were part of route 66 have many structures that attract interest today.