

Directions: The first verses are read by a narrator, standing beside a white cloth covered table, on which sits a candelabra or candlesticks with seven (7) white tapers. Pictures of each founder were taped to the candles. There is also a lighted small candle in a holder on the table (to light other candles). Each founder is represented by a P.E.O. who enters, carrying a spray of marguerites. (or one marguerite). She places it in the vase, reads her verse or verses, and lights the candle in memory of that Founder, then takes her place behind the table, forming a semi-circle.

When all candles have been lighted the narrator reads the last 2 verses.

Program

Today, let us travel down memory lane
And, to you, our P.E.O. founders, explain.
'Twas on January 21. 1869. that the story of P.E.O. began
In Mount Pleasant, Iowa, when two women said "We can!"

Franc Roads and Hattie Briggs on a stile did sit
Discussing the I. C.'s Sorosis, the new campus "hit".
And Franc and Hattie decided right then and there
They should have their own society, not I. C.'s share.

They dashed to the music room, and there they shared
With five others, for whom they deeply cared.
These women were friends during their college days
And were always ready to participate in a new phase.

They were very enthusiastic, and excited as well
To have a new sisterhood, whose secrets they wouldn't tell.
Right away they put themselves to work
Each added something. not one did shirk.

With remarkable speed they made plans so fine
They had to work fast to get it all done in time.
A name, a purpose, constitution, oath, colors, and a pin
Were the first things they put their heart and effort in.

Very shortly they met and did white ruffled aprons make
To wear as a group, for their first appearances sake.
With left side higher, the pin to show
They worked into the night, before chapel to go.

Next morning before their first appearance they made
In the hallway janitor's closet, they stayed.
Until the I. C.'s down the hall did appear
Then the P.E.O.s filed out, and marched inside, and not to the rear.

They made a deep and lasting impression
Eventually it almost led to a student body suspension.
For the rivalry between the P.E.O.s and the I.C.s became so strong
It threatened to break up the school, if they wouldn't get along.

The president ordered all pins to the vault at the bank
Until these women could live peacefully in rank.
Not all pins were deposited, we've been told
That some P.E.O.s pinned theirs to their underclothes.

Would you believe, three dollars was the initiation fee?
This also included the P.E.O. pin--it wasn't costly.
And, if this pin was touched by the first finger of the right hand
'Twas a sign of distress, perhaps to get away from a dull man.

There are many tales that have been told
Of the meetings, soirees, and happenings in those days of old.
So that the time and place of meetings were not open to detection
The women arrived alone and in a roundabout direction.

When graduation time was nearing
The women those black dresses were a-fearing.
Costly too, 24 yds at \$3.00 each was no small fee
So tarlatan in pastel hues was substituted very happily.

When college days were coming to a close
The questions of leaving their P.E.O. sisters arose.
So a chapter was established off campus as well
And this is how our ranks began to swell.

The purpose of the club was to show love and care
To each sister, and any others whose company they would share.
To be temperate in opinion, and learn all they could
To cultivate talents and be honest, just, and good.

As we place our marguerites in this vase
And light a candle for each, in place.
We picture these women as they looked back then
Not knowing what a mighty force they began.

Hattie, Franc, Ella, Allie, Suela, Alice Virginia, and Mary
These girls, P.E.O. ideals did start and carry.
To them they were really very ordinary girls
But to us, they've become very lustrous and shining pearls.

Hattie Briggs was happy and smiling, always the same.
She said "let's form a society of our own," and then conceived the name.
Although shy, she loved debate, and had the courage of her convictions.
With a radiant spirit, sweet and understanding, she was also a trained musician.

IN MEMORY OF HATTIE BRIGGS, I LIGHT THIS CANDLE.

Franc Roads was lovely, exceptionally talented and smart
Calm, courageous, and self-controlled; she even taught art.
She's the one who thought we should band together
And that women should have equality, then and forever.

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF FRANC ROADS.

Ella Stewart symbolized dignity, patience, and sacrifice--to name a few.
She proposed great things, and delegated authority too.
She carried her convictions to conclusion, knowing they were right.
It was she who chose our colors of yellow and white.

IN MEMORY OF ELLA STEWART, I LIGHT THIS CANDLE.

Dark-haired Alice Bird was capable, the literary one, a good speaker too.
She wrote the constitution and the pledge so new.
She chose the oath to bind them together.
And Alice became the first P.E.O president, ever.

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF ALICE BIRD.

Suela Pearson with brown eyes, and dancing curls, was the prettiest one.
Very happy and sociable, she thought P.E.O. should also be fun.
Talented in music and dramatics, she had the most money and beaux.
She was the youngest member, and had the finest clothes.

IN MEMORY OF SUELA PEARSON. I LIGHT THIS CANDLE.

Blonde, poised, idealistic Alice Virginia Coffin.
'Twas she who chose the star as our P.E.O. pin.
She loved beauty and rhythm, and how she liked to dance.
Even becoming an Episcopalian, instead of a Methodist, to get the chance.

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF ALICE VIRGINIA COFFIN.

Mary Allen's religious convictions were deep and true.
But she was fond of parties and fine clothes too.
Her strength of character and sense of humor stood her in good stead,
When for forty-eight years to a minister she was wed.

She was the first to publicly wear her pin
And for years was the one who helped P.E.O.'s battles win.
Since she lived the longest, she lived to see.
A national loan fund established, and Cottey College a reality.

IN MEMORY OF MARY ALLEN, I LIGHT THIS CANDLE.

As we look ahead, let us remember
We carry the torch for each future member.
We are founders for tomorrow's P.E.O.s.
And have a duty to the sisterhood, since we were chose.
We should be an example based on the founders' creation
To show love, concern, and care to each sister in the nation.
We have projects to do, a college for which to care
And may each one of us try to do her share.

Source: Helen Schuette, M, Cut Bank, MT