

This program was first used in 1983 at a Grand Rapids, Michigan, Founders' Day program. It was updated in October 2023 for posting on the Georgia State Chapter website. It can be used for Founders' Day or any time the light of our sisterhood is celebrated.

I AM P.E.O.

I was born on January 21, 1869, in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and the P.E.O. Constitution is my birth certificate. I am many things and many people. I am nearly 200,000 living souls and the spirit of many who have lived and died.

I am Alice Bird (Babb), Mary Allen (Stafford), Alice Virginia Coffin, Suela Pearson (Penfield), Hattie Briggs (Bousquet), Ella Stewart and Franc Roads (Elliott). I was conceived in the hearts and minds of these seven young college girls and have grown beyond our fondest dreams. I sprawl now from the Atlantic to the Pacific. My arms reach out to embrace Canada, Alaska, and Hawaii.

I am the Educational Loan Fund, International Peace Scholarship Fund, P.E.O. Scholar Awards, P.E.O. Foundation, the Program for Continuing Education, the STAR Scholarship and Cotter College.

I am Faith, Love, Purity, Justice, and Truth.

Yes, I am P.E.O., and these are the things I am. As I mature physically, may I continue to possess always those virtues which characterized my beginnings, and may my growth in spirit be commensurate to my size. This is my wish, my goal, my prayer, ____ years after my birth.

I AM THE SPIRIT OF P.E.O.

I am the spirit of P.E.O. I am an elusive, intangible quality, but I am found in the heart of each one of you.

I came into being many years ago when seven girls believed so completely in me that they fashioned a star to wear as an emblem of their devotion to me. I am reborn each time an initiate takes my vows. Thousands of women have dedicated themselves to the task of preserving and developing me so that you and others like you might have the privilege of wearing an emblem and repeating my vows.

I am a vital force in the life of each one of you, but if I were to ask you what I stand for, I would, I am sure, have many different answers. To some I mean friendships, warm and sincere; to others I am understanding. To one I would mean high ideals and to others I am understanding. To one who has worn my emblem for many years, I am perhaps a loving relationship; and to a new member, I might be the sharing of joys and sorrows alike. I am precious to many of you because I demand the best from each of you; I am Faith in a higher power applied to every day living. To some I have given confidence, to others ambition. I am a philosophy to be shared and a goal to work toward. I am the spirit of P.E.O.

I AM THE CANDELIGHT OF P.E.O.

Candles are for birthday cakes and anniversaries and power failures and dinner parties and altars and ceremonies. Candles put stars in the eyes of young lovers and wishes on the lips of little children. They soften the lines of life-hardened faces and warm tired old hearts with nostalgic dreams.

Candles are like people because both are loveliest when giving of themselves. Candles can light rooms that have lost the power of electricity and hearts that have lost the power of love. It is good to light candles of wax to brighten up a room, but it is better to light candles of love to brighten a world.

The P.E.O. star has lighted many candles. It has built a candle of learning at Nevada, Missouri, which grows taller as it burns. Our star has reached across oceans to light International Peace Scholarship candles, which bring the light of American friendship to foreign shores. Through the Program for Continuing Education and the Educational Loan Fund, our star has caused many candles to burn which might otherwise have missed the chance to give their light. Our honors to our Golden P.E.O. sisters are candles which burn with a soft, warm glow that say we care.

A candle can be many different things, but most of all a candle is a light that touches the heart with a special glow.

WE ARE SISTERS OF P.E.O.

(The candle-lighting ceremony is performed as follows: A candle is lighted for each stanza and a large letter placed on the table in front of the candles, so that the word SISTERS appears at the end.)

- S** is for Spiritual beauty, the gleam
That shown forth from Mary (Mary Allen Stafford), a strong, constant beam.
- I** is for Intellect, fine and devoted
For which lovely, warm-hearted Allie (Alice Bird Babb) was noted.
- S** Sociability, charming and true
That endeared sweet Suela (Suela Pearson Penfield) to all whom she knew.
- T** is for Talend for tasks of great worth
That Franc (Franc Roads Elliott), the progressive crusader showed forth.
- E** is the Earnestness, noble, sincere
That marked Ella's (Ella Stewart) self-sacrificing career.
- R** is for Radiance, the trait that is sure
To make Hattie's (Hattie Briggs Bousquet) memory ever endure.
- S** is the Standards of living and thought
That Alice (Alice Virginia Coffin) portrayed and faithfully taught.

May our hearts be inspired with the undying glow
Of the light of our first sisters shed forth long ago.
Will you all rise and join us in our Prayer for Founders' Day?

PRAYER FOR FOUNDERS' DAY

Dear God,
We thank You for the privilege of meeting here.
We remember with both pride and humility the
exemplary qualities of the Founders of our organization.
Those other women who have been our P.E.O. sisters in the
years since its founding inspire us to live in its great tradition of worthy ideals.

Grant us Faith to light our souls,
Love to warm our hearts,
Purity to cleanse our thoughts and words,
Justice to free us from prejudice and hypocrisy,
and Truth to guide us in life's never-ending search for Your answers to life's questions.

In a chaotic world where society's pressures are great and the world is constantly challenging,
We thank You for the unselfish acceptance, loyalty, and friendships we embrace which bind us
together in the close relationships we Cherish this day.
May the divine spirit bless us as we work together.

AMEN