

JERRY M. BLESCH ***CENTRE '60***

Atlanta, Georgia, August 8, 2004 — Former Beta Theta Pi General Secretary Jerry M. Blesch, *Centre '60*, was presented with the Francis Wayland Shepardson award at the 165th General Convention of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 8.

Blesch, retired Navy captain and veteran of the Gulf War, is a member of the Beta Theta Pi Advisory Board after serving two three-year terms as General Secretary, the Fraternity's CEO (1995-2001.) He is also a volunteer chairman of the Major Gift phase for Beta Theta Pi Foundation's *Upon These Principles* Campaign, spending numerous hours making gift appeals for the Campaign.

After studying pre-engineering at Centre College, where he was initiated into Beta Theta Pi and lettered in track as a half-miler, Blesch attended the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating in 1962. He retired from the Navy in 1990 after a distinguished 28-year career, which included command of the battleship *USS Wisconsin* in the Gulf War. Previously, he commanded the *USS R. L. Page* (1977-80) and the *USS Puget Sound* (1981-83), was assistant director of the Tactical Training Group Atlantic (1980-81), was commanding officer of the Destroyer Squadron 25 in Pearl Harbor (1983-85) and was executive assistant to commander of the Naval Sea Systems Command (1985-87.) Among many honors and recognitions, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and U.S. Navy John Paul Jones Leadership award runner-up.

From the day of his retirement, Blesch has served in volunteer roles with Beta Theta Pi. He was assistant general secretary (district chief) for the chapters at the Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky and Louisville Universities and Centre College. All four chapters earned the Fraternity's highest award in 1995, the Sisson award, which was achieved by only 25% of all chapters. He also served as the Fraternity's leadership advisor and was keynote speaker at the 152nd General Convention.

He and his wife Karen make their home in Danville where he is on the Centre College Alumni Board, is active in Habitat-for-Humanity and is a frequent lecturer and motivational speaker.