



Wisconsin Union

Experiences for a lifetime

Timeline – Porter Butts’ Student Years at UW-Madison

(as it relates to the student honorary society known as the Ku Klux Klan)

- Fall 1922 - The national Knights of the Ku Klux Klan started recruiting members on the UW-Madison campus.
- Spring 1922 – Butts was chosen by his fraternity to be its representative in the honorary society called Ku Klux Klan – a student group sanctioned by UW-Madison at the time, representing the campus fraternities. Five other universities across the country have similar honorary chapters at this time.
- March 1923 – Representatives of honorary society Ku Klux Klans across the country met in Chicago and provisionally agreed to change the organization’s name (source: <https://archives.library.illinois.edu/blog/ku-klux-klan/>).
- April 17, 1923 – The honorary UW campus KKK chapter officially changed its name to Tumas. Society President Gordon B. Wanzer said, “We changed the name of the organization, because so many people confused it with the name of the non-collegiate secret organization of the same name.” (source: The Daily Cardinal, April 18, 1923, p.1)
- 1923-24 – Butts, in his senior year, was an active member of Tumas and president of the Haresfoot club and managing editor of the Daily Cardinal.
- 1924 – The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan made its first public appearance when 2,500 hooded and robed Klansmen assembled on the shore of Lake Mendota to burn a cross and initiate several men (source: <https://www.uwalumni.com/askabe/1924-badger/>).
- March 11, 1924 – The Daily Cardinal, under Butts’ leadership, published an editorial calling the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan undesirable and unneeded and condemned the organization’s secrecy and terrorism.
- May 29, 1924 – The Daily Cardinal, under Butts’ leadership, published an editorial reaffirming the Cardinal’s stance against the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.
- 1991 – The Main Gallery in Memorial Union is renamed the Porter Butts Gallery, following Porter’s death – in recognition of his vision, creativity and dedication to the Wisconsin Union.

*All dates and information have been confirmed by University Archives at UW-Madison