

calling all sistas

A SEARCH FOR BLACK SISTERHOOD



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SWING PHI SWING



A MEMBER OF A LITTLE-KNOWN
SORORITY SEARCHES FOR HER
LONG-LOST SISTERS AND THEIR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BLACK
HISTORICAL RECORD.

logline

SWING PHI SWING
SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP INC.
FOUNDED APRIL 4, 1989

Synopsis

In the summer of '68, fresh off the pain in losing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., three HBCU students conspired to form the perfect Black sisterhood. They envisioned an afrocentric one centered on intelligence, activism, individuality and the denouncement of Greek/European ideologies. As first generation students with futures they couldn't afford to lose, this was the closest they felt to joining the forthcoming Black Power Movement. This wasn't just another Black Greek sorority. The following year on April 4, 1969, the anniversary of King's death, twelve Black women emerged as the founding sisters of Swing Phi Swing, Social Fellowship at Winston Salem State University.

Little did they know, the fellowship would grow faster than they could ever imagine, impacting the lives of generations of Black women on the fringe. Swing's presence on southern HBCU campuses is the stuff of legends. Their stories of power in this era of Black history and culture makes one question why Swing (and their male counterparts, Groove Phi Groove) is barely mentioned anywhere. Were these just a bunch of old head, overhyped memories or are these women badasses who were erased from the HBCU legacy? This filmmaker's experience as a 20-year member left her questioning just who Swing is, was and could aspire to be in a world that has moved on.

Calling all Sistas explores the intimate inner thoughts of Black women searching for, defining and deconstructing sisterhood. At its core, the film examines this inexplicable yearning to belong to something bigger than yourself and will pull you into an emotional tug-of-war with an organization suffering multiple identity crises.

filmmaker's connection

I became a member of Swing Phi Swing Social Fellowship on April 8, 2002 at the University of Memphis in Memphis, TN. I was afforded the opportunity to travel to quite a few sister chapters during my undergraduate years, building life-long friendships and strong bonds along the way. By the time I entered graduate school, I came to terms with my complex relationship with the organization. It was years of having to explain yourself whenever you left the house in your Swing paraphernalia and mixed emotions attached to your commitment.

How can something that brings you so much joy and love also elicit feelings of shame and disconnect?

In growing and maturing as a member, I've had a lot of time to think about if I want to continue but could never bring myself to denounce my letters. I love my sisterhood so much and I'm also one of its biggest critics.

key topics



**BLACK
SISTERHOOD**



**EARLY HBCU
CAMPUS LIFE**



**CIVIL RIGHTS
AND BLACK
HISTORY**



**AFRO-
CENTRICITY**



COMMUNITY

film comps



BAMA RUSH (2023)

This look at four young women as they prepare for rush at their southern university similarly provides a window into the intersection of womanhood and sisterhood.



HAZING (2022)

Similar to *Hazing*, which premiered on PBS in 2022, our story will explore principles of power, long-standing traditions and the desire to belong.

artistic approach

VISION: We all remember Common's homage to hiphop in his classic song "I Used to Love H.E.R." – what if hiphop responded? We plan to lean on the love letter format for this film and give the entity we're personifying a chance to reflect with us. There's also something to say about those deep, life-reflecting, 3+hour long conversations you have with your good girlfriends. We envision capturing the moving spirit and joy that comes from bonding.

SHOOTING & EDITING STYLE: We'll be incorporating elements of the Black oral storytelling tradition, using straight to camera style interviews primarily with traditional documentary style interviews interspersed and including voiceover narration from the protagonist at key points.

SOUND/MUSIC: If I could use the instrumental to "They Reminisce Over You" as this film's theme song, I would! Definitely funk, jazz and soul on the first half; transition to Black Power Mixtape, neo soul and underground hiphop on the second half.

STONE: - Warm, comforting, kickback with the kinfolk, inspiring, nurturing, reminiscent - "I got your back" "Down for whatever" "Power to the People" "Black is beautiful"

INFLUENCES: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and Elvis Mitchell's The Blacklist for their use of "direct to camera" style interviews; Kurt Kuenne's Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father for storytelling that addresses a character in a letter-style format.; Shukree Hassan Tilghman's More Than a Month | Debating Black History Month for his willingness to be vulnerable, see himself in the story and engage with others on the importance of Black history.