

# WHERE DO THE AKD CORDS COME FROM?



The AKD Honor cords that you wear during graduation exercises travel a long road from their origins to your hands. Of course you know that your institution's chapter representative orders them from the national office. We in turn order them in bulk, approximately 4,000 a year, from our supplier Schoen Trimming and Cord Company. But what is much more interesting is what happens before the boxes of cords magically appear at our door.

On December 14, 2012, Bethany Titus (pictured to the left), AKD Executive Director, made a special visit to Schoen Trimming and Cord Company (<http://www.cordsandtassels.com/>) to learn more about the business and to see where the art of honor cord making takes place. Schoen Trimming has been producing Alpha Kappa Delta's honor cords for approximately 10 years. The company also manufactures honor cords for several other honor societies, including many who are a part of the Association of College and Honor Societies (ACHS).



Titus met with Martin Silver, President of Schoen Trimming and Cord Company, where she learned the company has been in the business for over 70 years from when they first opened their doors in 1939. Located in midtown Manhattan, Schoen Trimming has been the largest manufacturer in the trimming industry in the United States. All of the products are made in their own large factory by approximately 20 union workers, many of whom are first generation immigrants. Pictured to the right, you may see some of the union employees hard at work where About 80% of Schoen Trimming's production is done by hand.

Schoen Trimming is known for making graduation products such as honor cords, insignia tassels (pictured to the right), and honor satin stoles. Not only that, but as Titus discovered, they also produce religious cincture cords, menu tassels, fez tassels, bookmark tassels, and napkin holders. The religious cincture cords are made with a Monk's cotton cord and knotted along with a rayon braided cincture. They are finished with a crochet head which is over a chainette tassel. Fez tassels are made with what is called chainette yarn and has a wooden ball under the tassel which gives it its rounded form. They create window displays for many stores which include cords and tassels for the curtains. Schoen Trimming makes most products for the academic field and for churches.



The picture to the left is called a twist machine. The machine was built in 1930 with the purpose of twisting cords. The twist machine allows workers to twist cords by hand with the assistance of the machine. In 1960, the machine was reconditioned and converted to an electrical machine. Cords from 1/8" to 1" are made using the twist machine. A few other machines that Schoen Trimming uses the most are platers for the production of cords braiders for flat and tubular trimmings. Pictured below are several cords and stoles that have been made throughout



We have been happy working with Schoen Trimming and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. We hope that this little piece gives you some sense of the history of the regalia that you have in your