

MALTESE CROSS

Our Creative Legacy

Matthew Belter (Beta Rho, UC-Riverside 1989) is an entrepreneur, a Phi Kap volunteer, and photographer of the biggest names in rock. And he's just getting started.





Passion. Hard Work. Rebirth. Re-Engagement.

Men of Honor volunteer Matthew Belter (Beta Rho, UC-Riverside 1989) is melting faces with his camera.

MATTHEW BELTER (BETA RHO, UC-RIVERSIDE 1989) is a businessman; he is also one of the Fraternity's most active volunteers and, in any free time, a highly sought-after photographer.

This is quite a turnaround for Belter, who, just in the last three years, has become reengaged with the Fraternity, devoted his spare time to concert photography, and made it a point to improve the fraternity experience for as many undergraduates as possible. He's part volunteer, part entrepreneur, and part music enthusiast who is living proof that hard work and perfect practice makes anything possible.

"It all started with Phi Kappa Sigma. My rebirth as a photographer, it overlapped with my reengagement with the Fraternity into this overarching transformation of myself."

How Matthew became one of the Fraternity's most active volunteers started when then-Executive Director Tim Schug asked if he would facilitate Men of Honor. "At the time," he says, "I was uninvolved for 20 years, but I thought maybe I had something to offer, and I was totally fired up, so I thought, 'Yeah! Let's do this!'"

He's been to every Men of Honor since and found that volunteering and giving back to the organization has opened up new doors personally, professionally, and spiritually.

"I was always an amateur photographer," he tells me. "I always had a camera, and I really enjoyed going to concerts. But I couldn't afford to go all the time like I could when I was in college and tickets to a rock show were twenty-five bucks."

At a time when decent seats at a big-name concert can run several hundreds or even thousands of dollars, Matthew focused his passion in a way that allowed him to go for free.

He started small: photographing unknown bands for legendary music publisher John Anderson (aka Hot Tub Johnny) at his bi-weekly show at The Mint in Los Angeles and posting them on his Facebook

page. The realization that he had to sharpen his skills if he was going to get to go to the big concerts sparked a shift in mindset that would guide Belter in all aspects of his life.

As he began to focus his energy on photography, he found all areas of his life improving. When one facet of his life was nourished and supported, everything else seemed to follow. He practiced, becoming more confident as a photographer, which made him more comfortable requesting press passes to bigger, better concerts until one day, by chance, he scored the last press pass to see Disturbed.

"Those pictures were terrible!" he admits. "My first big concert, and the photos were just awful. That was when I got really motivated and decided I needed to practice more seriously."

Belter learned the hard way that the pursuit of his passion couldn't be passive. He had to put real work into it if he was going to make it worthwhile—the philosophy he wants to spread throughout the organization.

"To follow your passion—because your dreams can come true—you have to work for it. Nothing is given to you. There are a million people interested in the exact same thing you are. You have to work hard to be the best."

Now Matthew is a regular contributor on Hunnypot, where he posts pictures and reviews of the concerts he goes to, including, finally, the biggest names in music like Depeche Mode, Iron Maiden, and Metallica.

I ask if there was one moment he remembers when he knew he had made it. "As a volunteer or as a photographer?" he asks.

Both.

"It's between getting to photograph Metallica in front of 50,000 screaming fans and being asked to say the prayer at the Men of Honor gavel pass." There's a pause. "It all started with Phi Kappa Sigma. My rebirth as a photographer, it overlapped with my reengagement with the Fraternity into this overarching transformation of myself. I haven't made it. Not yet. But I'm on the right path." ■

Find out more about Matthew Belter at IceBoxPhoto.com or HunnypotUnlimited.com. Prospective volunteers should visit PKS.org or email us at staff@pks.org.

