



Cal Delta Spotlight

USC House Corporation of Phi Delta Theta | Summer 2012 | University of Southern California

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Alumni Spotlight: Les Weldon '83

I've always been interested in the dramatic arts. In high school, though, I was an athlete playing 3 different sports (football, soccer and golf) and at that time it wasn't really "cool" to be in drama. So, I did it rather covertly. I took classes and even acted in a couple of plays but never as a main lead. At that time I also started developing an interest in writing. It began with short stories and through college evolved into screenplays.



I rushed several houses and actually had some good feelings about a number of them. But, the warmth, friendliness, and open honesty were what attracted me to the brothers. They were true guys without any of the haughtiness I felt with other houses. And the Phi Delt tradition also weighed heavily. We have a great history.

As a student, my focus was on grades in case I had post-grad work to do. That should always be first. But a close second was the bond with the guys in the house. I knew back then that I would form friendships and relationships that would last a life time. And now, almost 30 years later, it still holds true. Some brothers I haven't seen in years feel like I just saw them yesterday.

After I graduated, I decided I was going to be a film writer. Of course, no one was banging at my door asking me what I was working on or what scripts I had to offer. So, I decided that first I needed to eat and then I would dedicate myself to writing at night. And that's what I did. I got a job working with a brother's father -- Ed McClements -- selling insurance during the day. Then, five nights a week I would write -- Sunday through Thursday -- reserving Friday and Saturday to do what Phis do best. Have fun. But it was a long, grueling road having to write four or five hours a night after working a full day at the office. In the end, though, I think it paid off.

My first experience working in the biz was trial by fire. I had written a script ("Freefall" starring Eric Roberts), and my partner and I decided that we should also be the producers -- and I had never produced anything before! The script called for the lead character to jump off of Angel Falls which is the world's highest waterfall -- at 3,200 feet high. It is

See MOVIES continued on page 4

Photos from top to bottom: Morgan Freeman; Mickey Rourke; Sylvester Stallone; Rin Tin Tin; Sir Ben Kingsley, Les (in sunglasses) on set.

Our Fall 2012 Milestone

By Stephen Scully '81

President – USC Phi Delt House Corporation

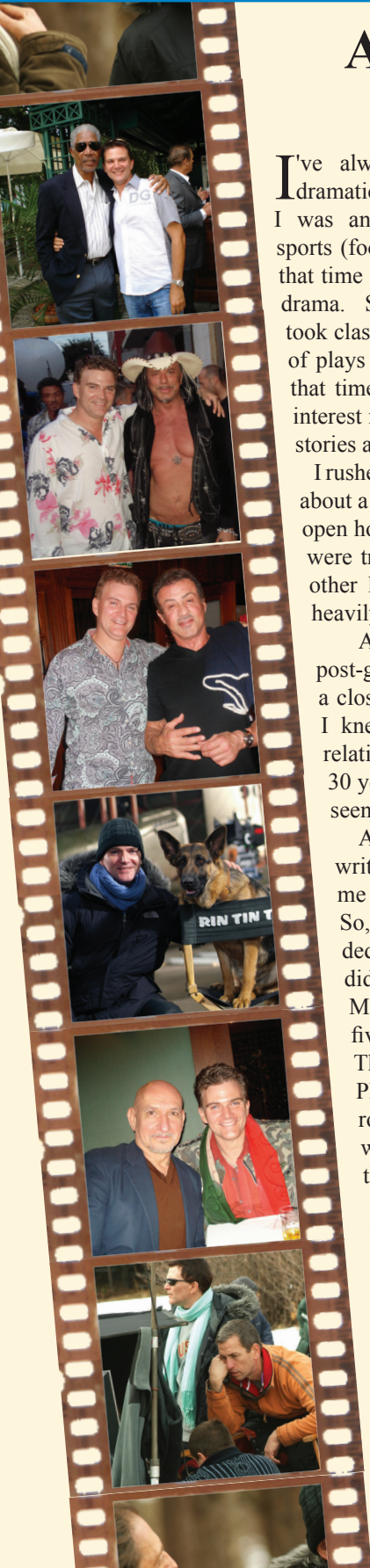
This fall 2012, we again will have a full Fraternity house with 39 members living in. In addition, this will be the fourth fall class to move into our House since we have completed the construction. I find it amazing how time has flown by from the days of fundraising and fighting the City of Los Angeles to rebuilding the House and seeing this chapter flourish to the prominence of today.



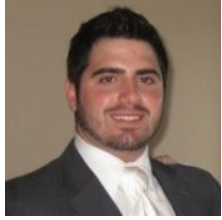
I am pleased to report that the chapter will return 92 active members this fall with the plan to secure a fall pledge class targeting 25 new members. Over the last three years our active chapter has done a tremendous job of building our membership and presence on the Row. Looking back even further, I remember the chapter meetings that had to be held in a VKC class room with less than 20 members, through today, enjoying one of the largest fraternity houses at USC.

This fall 2012 milestone is a testament to the effort that everyone who is or has been part of USC Phi Delta Theta. Through a core group of our alumni that stepped up, they provided the funds that were required to rebuild our house. The active chapter was seeded early on with a strong group of men who put aside the requirement to have a house and took the necessary steps to rebuild our chapter. Today our house is thriving, continuing to grow and has been recognized by the National Fraternity and the University as one of the premier fraternities in the United States. Without question, all of us together have accomplished a tremendous amount and 2012 is clearly a unique milestone.

In closing, I ask that you not forget this effort. Our journey is not over and our fraternity continues to need your support. As I have written in past newsletters, our House Corporation has taken on significant debt, and this must be paid off. Rents alone will not bring the principle balance down. We need our alumni to recognize what has been accomplished and to remember how USC Phi Delta Theta has impacted each and every one of our lives. Even in these challenging economic times, we have prevailed and it will be up to all of us to keep this chapter thriving and available to great young Trojans who will unquestionably choose Phi Delta Theta. **Fight On and Proud to be a Phi.**



Chapter News



President's Message

As I look back on the 2011-2012 school year, it is hard to imagine a more productive year for California Delta. In total, our house grew to an impressive 115 members this year with 37 initiates. At USC's 129th Commencement Ceremony, 17 of our brothers received their undergraduate degrees. They were an outstanding group that held over 25 officer positions in the house (including two Chapter Presidents), participated on campus in service organizations, varsity sports, music and entrepreneurship among others, and boasted a senior class GPA over 3.5. Their contributions to our house are innumerable and we will sorely miss having them around the house on a daily basis, particularly at our brotherhood events. Due to the tremendous work of our seniors over the past 4 years, we will begin next year with 92 active brothers, making us one of the largest fraternities at USC and truly demonstrating the impact of all the effort our graduating seniors put into improving our chapter.

This semester was fully of unforgettable events for our members. On March 25th, we partnered with the ladies of Delta Gamma for the third straight year to host the "Senior Prom" at the Belmont Assisted Living Center, which was a resounding success and left our members and the seniors with wonderful memories and continued our proud tradition of community service and philanthropy. California Delta also had a tremendous social semester with two invites, a formal, exchanges with Alpha Phi, Alpha Delta Pi and Delta Delta Delta, as well as weekly brotherhood events that all provided us with a great time and stories to

Congratulations Class of 2012!

J.P. Alanis, 1531	Logan Noblin, 1534
Naad Banki, 1564	John O'Hollaren, 1529
Michael Bannett, 1545	David Palic, 1563
Robbie Curl, 1530	Luigi Ramirez, 1560
Matt Dodson, 1527	Billy Rojas, 1572
Michael Elowson, 1546	Nick Stubberfield, 1526
Andrew Garvin, 1536	JonCarlo Topete, 1569
Brandon Hakim, 1541	Andy Winningham, 1550
Matt Luery, 1512	

tell for years to come.

Even with our very successful social year, California Delta still remained committed to ensuring the safety of all our members and guests. Because of our membership programming and clean record we were presented with the Excellence in Risk Management Award at the 2012 Greek Awards Ceremony by Chief John Thomas of USC DPS. This award was a testament to the hard work of every brother and to the commitment to safety present in our membership education programs.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like to come by the house; we'd love to host you. Also, please save the date on November 10th for the annual Alumni Tailgate prior to the Homecoming game against Arizona State; it's sure to be a great afternoon.

Proud to be a Phi,
Daniel Chai Moline, 1548

From the Alumni Chairman

As we end the 2011-2012 School year here at Phi Delt, we are proud that we continue to recruit large pledge classes while maintaining the highest quality in our membership.

Our programs and events over the past year have also expanded dramatically. We were pleased to host over twenty alumni for our Founders Day dinner, including General Council Treasurer Chris Lapple and our Province President Stan Gilson. It was great to have not only Cal Delt alumni, but also alumni from all over the United States who enjoyed a great meal and chapter meeting with our undergraduate brothers. Another successful event was a special alumni gathering at a USC baseball game where brothers and alumni enjoyed the game together. We hope to see more and more of our alumni at these types of events in the future.

Every year Phi Delt participates in Troy Camp, USC's official philanthropy. Many members of our house are involved with the organization year round, and the chapter as a whole participates in the Sandwich Making for Troy Camp event, which distributes meals to families in the impoverished USC/South Central area."

As always, we must thank the alumni for their continued and unwavering support of the chapter. Without our alumni this chapter would not exist today.

Yours in the Bond,

Andrew Christopher 1552



Chapter members and guests making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Troy Camp event.

Save the Date!

Homecoming

November 10, 2012 vs.

Arizona State University



See you there!



In Tribute

Jeff Carlton '84

On September 13th of last year, **Jeff Carlton '84** left us all too early after battling a long illness. Jeff's big brother in the chapter, **Dan Niemann '81**, made the flight from Los Angeles to Chicago to be with Jeff at the last. Upon returning home, Dan organized a gathering at the chapter house in Jeff's honor. The crowd of Phi Delt's in attendance on October 9 was honored to welcome Jeff's wife Anne and several family friends at the House before adjourning to the 9-0 to quaff some steins in Jeff's memory.

Regarding his Phi Delt brother, Dan said, "I was honored to be with Jeff and his family when he left us last year. As sad as it was for all of us, the outpouring of love and emotion made it very clear that Jeff had touched so many lives and in such a meaningful way. Jeff is a legendary Phi and a loyal friend to so many of his brothers."

We had the opportunity to honor Jeff at one of his favorite places, the Nine-O-One Club. Anne felt that it was very appropriate to pay our final respects to Jeff in a comfortable and fun environment; one of his favorite places. We had a huge turnout and knew that Jeff was still there with us.

Although he will be missed, we are all so fortunate to have known him. His laugh and sense of humor were contagious. He touched every one of our lives in a profound and memorable way. Good bye for now Jeff, you will never be forgotten."



John Davies '56

By Bill Bedford '57



John Davies was always relaxed and had a sly sense of humor. He was a fairly quiet person, but he was also a very strong and powerful person – a nice contradiction. He was always supportive in the chapter and was a good friend to have around. John became chairman of the University of California Board of Regents – which has nothing to do with USC and is one of our greatest rivals. We had a good laugh that he held that position, similar to the wolf being in the hen house. He was one heck of a guy. His fellow Cal Delta members always had a good laugh about this connection.

Obituary: John Davies, a major civic figure in San Diego for his work in education and urban planning, died of pancreatic cancer on May 20, 2011 at his home in downtown San Diego. John Davies was born June 28, 1934, in Chula Vista, California. Davies graduated from USC in 1956 and then served in the Navy for three years before enrolling at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law. He was a star student and member of the Law Review. While in Law School, Davies became friends with Pete Wilson, who would later become mayor of San Diego, U.S. senator and California governor. Throughout Wilson's political career, Davies served as a close confidant and political ally. As senator and then governor, Wilson turned to Davies to evaluate candidates for judgeships, as did Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. By Wilson's count, Davies' recommendations were responsible for the appointment of nearly 40 federal judges in California and 600 state judges.

Chapter Grand

*We are also saddened to have learned of the passing of these dedicated Phi's.
Our sympathies to their families and friends.*

Scott McClure '56 | Charles Lindberg '50 | Brian Silverthorne '71

Alumni News

Alumni gathered for the May 19th baseball game, and then set up camp at a nearby watering hole after the game.



Bruce Buettell '82 - I went to the Founders' Day dinner at the House recently and talked to **J.P. Alanis '12**, who graduated in May and has a job lined up with Lionsgate (nice accomplishment for a grad in this job market.) Hearing that J.P. was going to work for a movie producer, I mentioned that we have an Alum by the name of **Les Weldon '83** who has done big things in the movie business.

I have to hand it to J.P. because he said he was aware of Les and in fact had talked with him several times about the motion picture business. It's a great illustration of the Phi Delt network with a 30-year Phi mentoring a Phi who's a student currently.

Timeless Ideals for Future Generations

Not all estate gifts are complicated or require the help of an attorney.* Here are three easy ways to make an estate gift later by filling out a simple form now.

1. Make the U.S.C. Phi Delt House Corporation the beneficiary of your qualified retirement plan, such as an IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or SEP. Just fill out a Change of Beneficiary Form from your plan provider.
2. Make the U.S.C. Phi Delt House Corporation the beneficiary of a checking or savings account upon your death. Ask your local bank for a Payment on Death Form.
3. Make the U.S.C. Phi Delt House Corporation the beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Fill out a Change of Beneficiary Form. If you don't need your policy anymore, you can also transfer ownership of the policy to the U.S.C. Phi Delt House Corporation now.

Not sure what to do next? We can help. Contact Steve Scully at stephenscully.mail@gmail.com or call Bruce Buettell at 714-686-7186. If you have already included the U.S.C. Phi Delt House Corporation in your plans in some way, please let us know. We would like to thank you.

*It is always a good idea to seek appropriate professional advice.

also located in the middle of the jungle in Venezuela. So when the head of the studio greenlit the picture, he turned to me and said, "You speak Spanish, right? I want you to go to Venezuela and take care of that sequence." Well, it was definitely an experience. Aside from the physical challenges of getting to the waterfall -- which is truly one of the natural wonders of this planet -- we had a couple of very glaring snafus -- like the Director of Photography forgetting the film back in L.A.! Imagine that, you are stuck in the middle of the jungle, 400 miles from civilization and you realize you have no film to shoot a movie with! We resolved it, but that's the subject of a future tome.

Early on, acting was a passion for me. But acting is a very emotional profession, from role-playing to the emotional ups and downs of auditions. For me, the latter seemed randomly driven -- or, on the other extreme, completely connection driven.

There was no logic to how you got a role, unless you were someone's nephew. And it's difficult in a 30 second audition to really ply your craft. Writing, however, offered me the opportunity to really showcase what I could do. I always had a proclivity for writing -- even back to my early writing days -- that engaged readers. So that's what I focused on. After that, producing came naturally as I wanted the material I wrote to end up on the screen. That was idealism speaking. The reality is that even as a producer, much more often than not, your vision as a writer does not end up on screen. Now I primarily produce, unless it's a small controllable project that I can really make sure ends up just as I wrote it. Otherwise I would have already had numerous nervous breakdowns.

I just finished producing the sequel to "The Expendables" (which I also produced). It was a great experience having Sly, Arnold, Bruce, Chuck, Jason, JC, Dolph, and the rest of the guys all together. Like an 80's class reunion of the best action stars ever -- and to be honest, I don't think we can ever pull it off again. Do you know what it's like scheduling all these guys? It's like the perfect alignment of the planets. Hell, maybe it's easier to land on Mars. But we did it. It took some insane deal-making and scheduling but somehow it all came together. So now...everyone's talking about number 3. All I can say is, does lightning strike twice or three times? Maybe. In the meantime, I've got three projects to shoot between now and next June. "Expendables 3?" "When the moon is in the 7th house and Jupiter aligns with Mars..."



Les, girlfriend Diana, daughter Hanah, and newest addition, Sofia

A typical day can be prep, production or off-time. During prep, it's insane. 20 hour days because I mainly work in Europe, so my day begins about 8 am Eastern European time and ends at 8 pm. That's about 10 am L.A. time, and my "second" day begins then. I'm making phone calls to the studio, agents, managers, actors til about 2-3 am and then I collapse. Come 6 am or 7 am, I'm up and at it again. It eases off a bit during the actual shoot when all the deals have been made but it's still a good 14-15 hour day. Once the film is finished and post-production is on the way, then I get my 6 hours of sleep a night. And get to enjoy the family.

I try to enjoy every film I'm doing simply because I realize how lucky I am to be doing what I love to do. Don't forget, I started in the workforce just to put food on my table. But my passion was in show business. I kept my eye on that goal and when I finally reached it, it hit me like "Wow, this is what I've always wanted to do and now I'm doing it." But, it's not easy. Sometimes the personalities and situations are insane and many times I feel like a big baby-sitter to everyone on the production. But it comes with the territory.

So, the question of what was my most enjoyable experience? It was the first "Expendables" which was my WORST experience as everything went wrong -- from our shoot in Brazil to problems in New Orleans. At the end of that production, I went over-budget for the first time and wanted to shoot myself. I was miserable. But, the movie turned out to be a big summer success so it was all worth it in the end. "Expendables 2" was just the icing on the cake!

I've been lucky to work with Academy Award winners like Morgan Freeman and Sir Ben Kingsley, as well as good guys like John Cusack and Antonio Banderas. And big stars like Sly, Schwarzenegger, Willis, Van Damme, Chuck. And many actresses as well. Sly has been the best all-around film-maker. He has such an intuition about

what makes a successful film and franchise. In fact, he's the only actor in history with 3 successful franchises (Rocky, Rambo, and now Expendables). I learned a lot from him and we've had a great relationship.

Depending on the film, it typically takes anywhere from 2 to 6 months to plan before we shoot. Shooting a movie out of sequence actually makes the experience easier because you shoot everything out in one location and you move on, rather than having to come back time and time again to the same place or set. For me, it's more difficult to shoot it in sequence as some directors would like (and it can only be done if there are a couple of locations total).

As to how surprised I am about how a film turns out, the answer is ALWAYS. Early in my career, I thought that everything I wrote was in stone and would be interpreted and shot as I envisioned -- boy was I wrong. 90% of the time that is not the case. And 75% of the time, the film's success is unknown. For example, I had a feeling that the first "Expendables" would do well, but wasn't sure how well -- and it turned out to be a pleasant surprise. On the other hand, we were all sure that the "Conan the Barbarian" reboot we did would do well at the box office -- and it flopped. The old adage that nobody knows anything in this business still holds true.

To all of our active brothers, and for those of you trying to follow your dream, set your goal and work on it-even if it means working in the evenings when you could be taking it easy. Believe me, it would have been much simpler to go home from work start cracking the beers and watch TV. Which is, of course, okay if you are doing what you want to do. But, I wasn't. I was working during the day to pay the bills and at night I was working for my dreams -- which made that work infinitely more enjoyable.

Background photo: Les on set, as an actor in the movie "Finding Rin Tin Tin".