

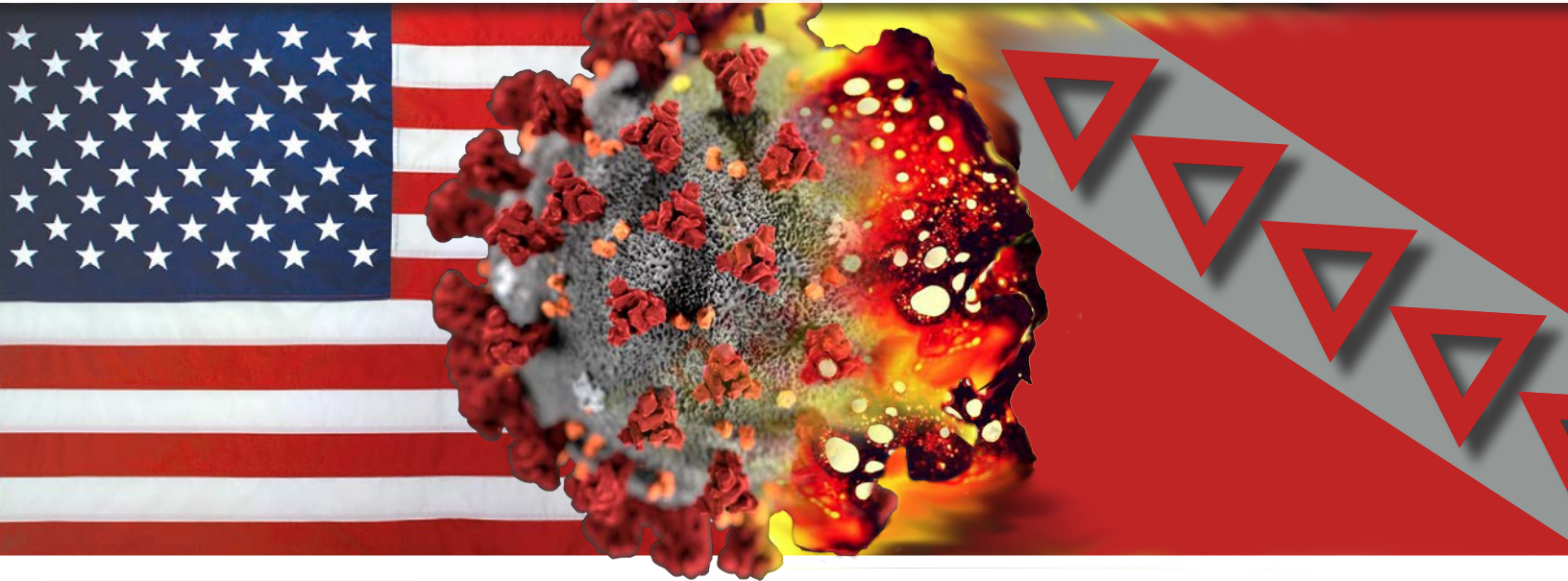


BETA-SIGMA TKE

Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity | University of Southern California | Summer 2021
Alumni Relations Office | 531 Main Street #902, El Segundo, CA 90245 | www.tkeusc.org

FIFTEEN DAYS IN MARCH

THE TRUE STORY OF HOW BETA-SIGMA STARED DOWN THE PANDEMIC



In This Issue:

Fifteen Days in March	1
From the Prytanis.....	2
Brotherhood & Social	2
Spring Rush.....	3
Spring 2021 Pledge Class	3
Chapter Officers	3
Leadership Across the Row ...	3
Beta-Sigma Investment Group ..	4
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ...	4
The Sand Bowl.....	5
2021 USC Football Schedule	5
Heard From the Bond.....	6
From the Archives	6
Chapter Eternal	6

By David Bohline, Beta-Sigma Board of Trustees

It was early March 2020. The members of TKE were preparing for spring break travel across the country and around the world. Everyone had heard about a new virus, but no one expected life as they knew it to change dramatically. On March 10, USC cancelled in-person classes “temporarily,” and on March 15 our members took off for spring break. Everyone thought classes would restart in person in April for finals and graduation. But that changed when USC told students not to return after spring break and instead go home to take classes online until further notice. Uncertainty and concern started to rise.

Board of Advisors members Tom Rule and Mike Ranshaw were the first to suggest that a large-scale shutdown of USC might last through the spring, summer, and fall semesters. I didn’t believe it. I didn’t want to believe it. But most of all, I didn’t want to think of the devastating consequences a shutdown might have on the USC Greek system. If USC closed, would our members come back? Would they live in the houses? How would we survive?

Across the Row, chaos and uncertainty, fueled by a lack of USC transparency, reigned. Sororities locked out their members, preventing them from retrieving personal items left in their rooms. Some fraternities announced they might close. No one knew what to do and the consensus, default position was to remain closed if USC was closed. The future for the upcoming school year seemed bleak.

The first sign of optimism came from our members. Not only did they plan on coming back to school after spring break, they wanted to return to TKE in the fall even if USC was closed—if it was possible. Soon after, parents started inquiring if TKE would remain open. Amazingly, they wanted TKE to stay open. They wanted a place for their sons to return to in the fall. What everyone really wanted was decisiveness and a plan.

Our Board of Advisors started thinking about how TKE could remain open safely during this pandemic. We realized that we had operational advantages due to the
(continued on page 5)



From the PRYTANIS



In this year that has been plagued by uncertainty, scare tactics, and wishful thinking, many across the world have turned to their close friends and family for guidance, hope, and a sense of normalcy. Luckily for us here at Beta Sigma, it feels that our family and friends are one and the same, and we have had all of our brothers here to turn to while we battle through this pandemic and to keep us strong.

As the COVID-19 has made it hard for the previous cornerstones of Greek Life at USC to thrive (philanthropy, social events, athletics, etc.), here at Beta Sigma we have done our best to keep our tradition of pursuing excellence alive. While most other houses are struggling to maintain members living in, Beta-Sigma has over 65 members residing at the compound, as well as three meals being served Monday through Thursday, and we take great pride in being one of the only fully running houses on the row. In addition, we stand at around 185

brothers, maintaining us as one of the largest fraternities at USC.

One main focus for my term of Prytanis is an emphasis on our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). An initiative that was started by our past Prytanis, Parker Lansberg, this newly formed committee looks to educate and create conversation on matters regarding DEI issues across our country and the whole world today. Whether this comes from one of our various educational movie screenings, scheduled conversations in our chapter room, or teaming up with various sororities for a fundraiser, our goal to educate is felt.

It is with great pride that even with a non-preferable learning situation, such as 100% online classes, our brothers posted a GPA of 3.5 for the spring 2021 semester, substantially higher than the row-wide average. This has been in part due to our new VP of academics, Axel

Youngdale, who took an initiative to host his own 'office hours' for both new members and active brothers to come to him with any questions from homework, to how to balance academics with free time, and everything in between. Our very own investment group has also surpassed 50 members, which has been very informative for both beginners and experts regarding the recent flux of the stock market.

Although it is no secret that this is a year unlike any other, my other officers and I are incredibly optimistic about the direction Beta Sigma is taking and accept the challenge this semester brings to us. Through this adversity, we have maintained our values and traditions like the many alumni brothers before us, and I can say with absolute certainty that we are ready for the next chapter on our terms, in which we will return next semester to a world of normalcy, and continue this great legacy. I cannot wait for what the future holds.

Yours in the Bond,



Connor Smith #1,834

Brotherhood

by Axel Youngdale #1,834

In a year like no other, TKE appointed brotherhood chairs like no other. That's right: Daniel Bomier and myself have been charged with continuing the good work of fraters Owen Higgs and Aidan Banfield. Daniel and I knew that with all the extra free time brothers would have at the house, it was important to host brotherhood events as often as we could. Not only would this boost the morale of the house as a whole, but specifically, more events mean more opportunities for our new members to meet as many brothers as possible. For similar reasons, Daniel and I had a senior from each satellite house give us updates on the availability of seniors so we could make sure to foster as many

connections as possible between fraters.

The events Daniel and I host with the greatest frequency are sports tournaments. During these events, whether the sport is basketball, wiffleball, volleyball, spike ball, or football, new members are encouraged to be on the same team as their big brother. This way, games offer bragging rights and encourage a healthy sense of competition. That being said, it's far more important that these games are remembered fondly by all participants.

Daniel and I joined TKE last spring because we could tell this house has the closest friendships. Nowhere was this clearer to us than our first brotherhood event, where we first met our big brothers but moreover, where we grew to appreciate the community of young men who represent our house. As such, Daniel and I take great pride in and understand the responsibility we have as the fraters responsible for maintaining the beating heart of this community. This starts with honoring tradition—but it doesn't work unless Daniel and I continue to leave our own footprint on the position, and therein the house.



This year's backyard brotherhood event

Social



Spring Rush

by **Anthony Francalancia #1,761**

With COVID-19 preventing in-person rush, spring 2021 recruitment was conducted virtually for the second consecutive semester. By utilizing Zoom and interacting through social media, we were able to mimic the in-person experience by showcasing our house, our previous social events, and our brotherhood online over a two-week rush period.

Even though it was through a screen, we were still able to make it a fun experience for our brothers and a welcoming environment for all 500 men who rushed this spring. And our hard work paid off: we were honored as the #1 most referred fraternity during recruitment, and as a result, we took a 24-person pledge class consisting of the most exceptional gentlemen on the row. We are proud



Some of the guys from the pledge class.

to welcome these members into our Beta Sigma community, and we cannot wait to see what leaders they become once the row fires up again next year.

CHAPTER OFFICERS 2021

Congratulations to our Chapter Officers!

Prytanis (President): Connor Smith

Epiptytanis (VP): Max Karz

Grammateus (Secretary): Donovan Henry

Crysochylos (Treasurer): Grant Mellinger

Histor (Historian): Max Dresner

Hypophetes (Chaplain): Trevor Marvin

Pylortes (Sergeant-at-arms): Micajah Stude

Hegemon (Educator): Jon Milton

Rush Chairmen: Brett Polson, Anthony Francalancia, Niall Tighe

Brotherhood Chairmen: Daniel Bomier, Axel Youngdale

Social Chairmen: Eli Murphy, Jack Munoz, James Nugent

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chairman: Ibrahim Mokhtar



Leadership Across the Row

(Dylan Strobe serves as VP of Recruitment for USC IFC)

by **Dylan Strobe #1,776**



It is no secret that this is a tough time for fraternities across the nation. At USC, it seems that every year another house is removed from the row. This trend

concerns me deeply. My grandpa was a FIJI at USC in 1951, my dad was a Chi Phi in 1981, and both of my brothers are alumni of TKE Beta Sigma. I've seen firsthand how meaningful the Greek experience has been for my family, and it saddens me to think that in a few years new admits to USC may never be able to experience



what it's like to be a brother in the bond.

Now more than ever, it's crucial that Greek life unites together to correct the course. This is why I joined the Interfraternity Council. It has been a few years since a TKE served on the IFC executive board, and I look forward to continuing to strengthen our ties with the Greek community and the university at large.

Aside from representing TKE, I am responsible for planning and operating the rush process. As L.A. County requirements loosen, we are hoping for in-person recruitment in the fall. Until then, we are working hard to ensure that virtual recruitment runs smoothly.



THE SPRING 2021 PLEDGE CLASS

Armando Angeli
Miami, FL

Holden Arnett-Zhang
San Francisco, CA

Burke Bloom
Boca Raton, FL

Tucker Bruce
Aspen, CO

Riley Buchanan
Tampa, FL

Jed Choi
Seattle, WA

Donovan Econn
Los Angeles, CA

Tucker Ezrine
Denver, CO

Reade Hansen
Marin, CA

Billy Harrington
San Diego, CA

Andrew Hollomon
Seattle, WA

Like Hopkins
Bridgeport, CT

Cade Howard
Cleveland, OH

Jack Hutchins
Cincinnati, OH

Nevin Johnson
San Diego, CA

Will Quinn
San Diego, CA

Spencer Rowley
Westchester, NY

TJ Richardson
Potomac, MD

Max Rovner
Long Island, NY

Danny Ryan
Marin, CA

Johnny Schantz
Phoenix, AZ

Ty Shamblin
Santa Barbara, CA

Bennett Vasquez
Tiburon, CA

Miles Wilson
Corona, CA



Beta-Sigma Investment Group



by **John Lochtefeld #1,830**

The Beta Sigma Investment Group (BSIG) was formed in 2017 to philanthropically support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, provide scholarships, and prepare its members for a potential career in the financial services industry. Over the past four years since its inception, BSIG has garnered hundreds of alumni and dozens of current members, all of which were, or currently are, entrusted with an endowment of more than \$190,000 that has been donated by undergraduate members and alumni.

With meetings every Tuesday night, members of BSIG pitch stocks of varying categories and interests, the group analyzes the presentation, the data is provided, and the group collectively votes if the stock will benefit BSIG's portfolio and future. Through pitching and voting, BSIG has

amassed thousands of dollars in capital allowing for more opportunity to pay their success forward in annually donating money to St. Jude along with the "Jack Jablonski Foundation". Along with this, most recently, BSIG has created the "Jonah Spiegel Memorial Scholarship" in honor of our late brother and former president of BSIG, Jonah. The scholarship will provide one BSIG member who best reflects the values, energy, and positivity Jonah placed on us all, with a semester of dues.

Our mission statement is as follows: Beta Sigma Investment Group seeks to educate fraters about the financial markets through hands-on investing experiences focused on both capital preservation and opportunities for stable returns benefitting philanthropic causes while maximizing fraters' chances for future success in securing a job in financial services.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

by **Ibrahim Mohhtar #1,798**

As a fraternity that prides itself on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), creating a DEI Chairman position last semester was a celebrated change to our executive board. Knowing the importance of this role and the potential it carried, the previous president and I worked diligently to form Beta Sigma's first official DEI committee. As the head of a new committee, I continue to work hand in hand with my fellow executive board members to ensure this committee will be a structure that long outlasts our years at USC. Our focus this year is to plan events where we facilitate an environment that allows people to be open with and learn from each other. In the midst of pivotal racial unrest last summer, we wanted to ensure that we dedicated some of our events to conversations about equity.

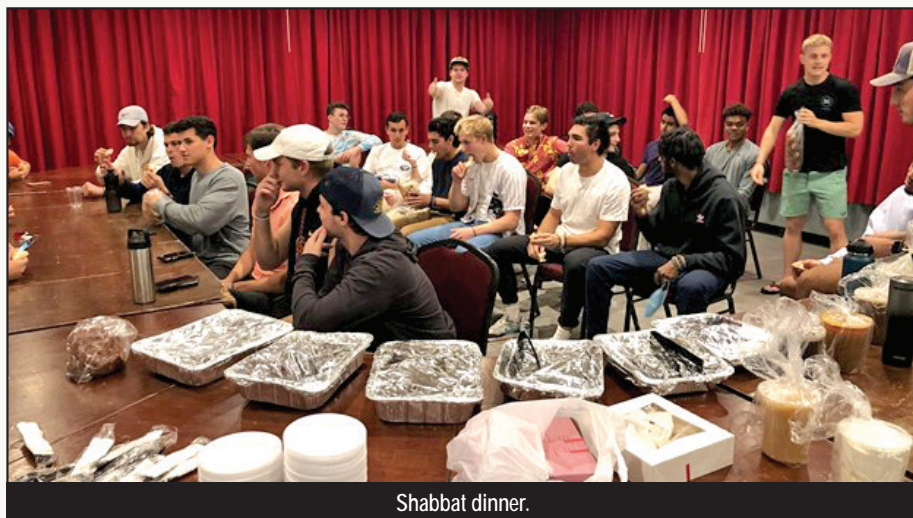
The events have discussed cover a wide range of topics and had various themes. For example, the committee put together a Shabbat dinner event for the house which was led by the Jewish members of the committee. During this dinner, we ate traditional Jewish foods, learned about the different ways Shabbat is celebrated by different families, and prompted discussion about Jewish culture.

Another recurring event has been an outdoor

movie night in our backyard with a projector. We have watched movies such as "LA 92," "I Am Not Your Negro," and "Stand and Deliver," among many others. We've used these movie screenings as an opportunity to conduct an assortment of valuable discussions. We have also organized a series of small group discussions each led by a different member of the DEI committee. During these discussions, each member of the committee is responsible for leading a conversation with a group of fraters and after 20 minutes the groups rotate to a new

member of the committee who leads a different discussion.

The focal point of these discussions and many of our other events has been mental health. Promoting an environment at these events where mental health can be openly talked about has been one of my biggest goals from the start. Although forming this new position has come with its challenges, my committee has been outstanding and together we have catalyzed important change. We look forward to passing the torch to the next chairman and his committee.



Shabbat dinner.

The Sand Bowl – 23 Years...and Counting

by Jason Rzutkiewicz #929

The Sand Bowl started among a bunch of TKEs (from primarily the early- to mid-'90s) in 1998 when a few of us decided to play a bowl game of our own the day before the Super Bowl. In the early days, the game was followed by a Super Bowl party at my place in Hermosa before Cragin Orr #873 took over the hosting reins. As kids started to make their way into the picture, Super Bowl weekend became more challenging—especially for those of us flying in for the game. We have regular players from Vegas, Seattle, San Francisco, and Texas. After a while, we consolidated with one of our other annual events in March—the Tikiboyz fantasy baseball draft, which originated around the same time. Draft Friday night, Sand Bowl Saturday. This worked for a number of years until kids started playing baseball and March weekends were a mess. At that point, we moved to the bye week the Saturday before the Super Bowl. This has been serving us well for the last five-plus

years. A few years back, we passed Sand Bowl XX and had nearly 20 fraters make an appearance. Like I tell them every year, it's easy to find a reason to say no (not to attend) but try hard to find a way to say yes. No one who has ever taken the time to join has ever regretted it.



Fifteen Days in March

(continued from front page)

organized and professionally managed systems that had been employed at TKE for many years. We were already open year-round with just a 10-day turnover at the end of the summer. We had a dedicated House Director, staff, and catering company that were all committed to continue working. And we knew what was required to keep a fraternity clean because our cleaning staff had been doing it five days a week for years. We also learned that TKE, like an apartment building, was not going to be required to shut down. Encouraged, we started putting together a formal written plan for operation. It started with a commitment to build a six-month stockpile of essentials like 648 rolls of toilet paper, 32 cases of paper towels, 12 cases of hand sanitizer, disinfectants, bleach, gloves, face masks, and face shields. If there was ever a shortage of essentials, TKE was not going to run out. Our plan included protocols for move-in, meal service, cleaning, safety measures, signage, guest access, and what to do if one of our members was infected. The chapter appointed COVID risk managers to oversee the policies. We started sharing draft versions of our plan with members and parents and asked for suggestions and input. Our members didn't have much to add, but their parents sure did, and it was almost entirely positive. Based on parent suggestions we expanded cleaning to seven days a week and refined our meal service protocols for a possible quarantine.

Our final decision was permitting members to be released from their lease obligation if they chose not to return for the fall 2020 semester. If TKE was going to stay open, we wanted everyone to be fully

committed. By the end of March, we were ready to go public and we wanted to make a statement that would resonate with members, parents, and the entire Greek system. I am going to share the opening and closing paragraphs of our open letter:

“TKE Fraternity at USC will be open and operational for the 2020-2021 academic school year regardless of how USC conducts classes and learning. If USC decides not to open the campus and holds all classes online, TKE will still offer housing, food service, cleaning service, live-in management, and, most importantly, a place where college-aged men can be together, in person, sharing life and having fun as brothers in a fraternal bond...”

...TKE believes that we are uniquely positioned to operate safely during this period due to our policies, procedures, systems, and support that we have developed over the last decade. We also believe that fraternity is an equally important and equally valuable part of the college experience for our members. And our decision to remain open is substantially based on our desire to not deprive our members of this once in a lifetime experience that has a profound effect on the rest of their lives.”

Every sorority except for Kappa Kappa Gamma closed for the entire school year. Most fraternities remained open at a 50% occupancy or less; 50 members returned to live at TKE this fall and by the spring that number rose to 60. The chapter pledged and initiated 50 new members this year, the most of any fraternity at USC and the most of any TKE chapter in the country. USC says it plans to reopen in fall 2021 but the details are sparse. This story will continue.

2021 USC FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

SEPT 4TH

VS.



SEPT 11TH

VS.



SEPT 18TH

@



SEPT 25TH

VS.



OCT 2ND

@



OCT 9TH

VS.



OCT 23RD

@



OCT 30TH

VS.



NOV 6TH

@



NOV 13TH

@



NOV 20TH

VS.



NOV 27TH

VS.



Due to the pandemic, details on the TKE TENT this year have yet to be defined. Updates will be posted on the TKE website once available.



HEARD FROM THE BOND

Richard Haskell #136 has shared meals with Beta-Sigma fraters **Harvey Palash #186** and **John Stephen #103**. Both are healthy and still active. Rich also sees Bill Hyde (Cal '55) and Rich Doss (UCLA '57) against whom he played tennis when playing for USC. Rich hopes to come by the next alumni event, but has given up his season football tickets due to too much travel and too many night games. Rich's life now centers around his lady friend, Joan Kasman, who lives about a mile away from him. The two enjoy dining out regularly, bird watching, walking, and visits to the gym. Rich has joined the Laguna Woods Yacht Club and enjoys sailing on the club's 25-foot Catalina boat. Rich and Joan have traveled a bit, enjoying two recent trips: a cruise on the Rhone River with fascinating stops like Pont de Gard and a restored Roman aqueduct, and a motor trip through Washington, Western Canada, and Montana featuring Vancouver Island and Glacier Park.

Conrad "Connie" Solum #171 shared that he voluntarily changed his California Bar status to "inactive" after 60 years of practice. Back in 2019, Connie and his wife, Alli, welcomed their first great grandchild, Lucy. Connie and Alli celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with their entire family of 19 people at the Laguna Beach Ranch in 2020. Congratulations Connie and Alli!

Gary Bane #343 has retired for the third time, but has a minority investment, plus consulting duties, for a new startup company called Consolidated Ocean Technology, located in Washington, D.C. and Ventura, California. Gary shared the sad news that he lost his wife, Sally, (Gamma Phi - USC '58) due to cancer. We are sorry for your loss, Gary. Gary's granddaughter, Tessa, is at Oregon State studying engineering.

Walter Dozier #353 passed away on July 19, 2019, at the age of 88 years old and is now in the Chapter Eternal. Walter, you will be missed!

Leigh Mateas #386 has moved from Windsor, California, to Washougal, Washington. Hope you like your new home, Leigh.

Steve Schultz #527 retired from Moss Adams LLP as a senior business development executive after 22 years with the company. Hope retirement life is going well, Steve. Hope to see you again soon.

Dr. **Justin Nast #829** extended his assignment as commander of the 60th Aerospace Medicine Squadron at Travis AFB in Fairfield, California. Justin's oldest daughter is a junior now at Berkeley studying environmental science. Thanks for your service, Justin!

USAF Lt. Col. **Todd Meyers #1,056** reached out to check in and share a bit about his whereabouts. As his active-duty service takes him to some interesting places, he's happy to report that he served alongside Frater Alex Mol (TKE Colony 748 at the University of Tennessee). The two of them were both deployed to Iraq, sharing many combat experiences with each other, and commanding separate Air Force squadrons. They were both considered the senior Air Force officers, in country, for their respective Air Force career fields. Thanks for touching base, Todd, and for your service to our country!

Chapter Eternal

Remembering our Departed Frater

Remembering NASA Astronaut, Commander of Skylab 4, and Beta-Sigma Distinguished Alumnus Gerald P. Carr



Gerald P. Carr #124

We are very sorry to report that Frater Jerry Carr, Beta-Sigma #124, passed away on August 26, 2020, at the age of 88. After graduating from USC, Jerry went on to become a NASA astronaut, ultimately commanding the final manned flight supporting Skylab 4 in 1973 and 1974. Jerry spent a record (at the time) 84 days in space circling the globe 1,214 times and traveling an astounding 34.5 million miles on the trip.

Frater Connie Solum #171 had the following recollections about Jerry at TKE: "Jerry was two years ahead of me in engineering so I had some additional contact with him about classes, professors, etc. He was an outstanding student and active in the chapter, including serving as president in his senior year (spring of 1954). He pledged as a freshman and lived in the 625 house most of the time because his home was in Santa Ana. He was in NROTC for his tuition and a stipend but still had to work to make ends meet. Jerry was a natural leader, sociable, and very well liked. He played freshmen football for USC, back when they had such a team. In short, Jerry was a normal, hard-working, dedicated, focused undergrad fraternity man that graduated in four years despite a heavy load of engineering (18 units per semester) and NROTC. (Unlike Neil Armstrong, the astronaut USC likes to point to with pride, who only received a graduate degree at USC while in the military!)

There are a lot of us Tekes from the '50s who proudly remember Jerry as a true life hero."

TKE IS THE FRATERNITY FOR LIFE ...

... share your photos, including TKE fraters from past friends and family trips, vacations, weddings, and other special occasions. Send them to Erik Brannon at brannon@apollointeractive.com with a brief caption and the names of TKEs pictured and we will showcase them on the website and in future newsletters.

STAY CONNECTED WITH BETA-SIG

Take a minute right now to look yourself up and make sure that we've got the correct email address and phone numbers so we can keep you up to date throughout the year.

Go to www.tkeusc.org and click the alumni directory link. Enter your last name to access and update your profile information.

10.31.23

