

F



OCUS

A SIGMA CHI FOUNDATION PUBLICATION ■ FALL 2021

WADE BOWEN

TEXAS TROUBADOUR

THE SIGMA CHI FOUNDATION
AND IN HOC NAPA VALLEY
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO
THE ULTIMATE GETAWAY



IN HOC 2022

INAUGURAL IN HOC CRUISE MAY 24 - JUNE 2, 2022

From Barcelona to Rome, with the Monaco Grand Prix and islands in between, join Sigma Chi alumni and sweethearts for ten days of European elegance on the Mediterranean Sea aboard the luxurious, all-inclusive Crystal Symphony.



CABINS STARTING AT \$2,999 PER PERSON
VISIT INHOCCRUISE.COM TO LEARN MORE



in·hoc
NAPA VALLEY



COVER STORY:

Significant Sig and popular Red Dirt Country Music artist Wade Bowen, **TEXAS TECH 2000**, talks about his Sigma Chi experience, musical growth and much more. **PAGE 14**

INSIDE:

- 4** ■ Foundation announces partnership with Beyond Publishing, creation of Sigma Chi Foundation Press
- 5** ■ Foundation honors Past Chairman Durzo, announces committee changes
- 6** ■ Alumni engagement, recognition a focus during 83rd Grand Chapter
- 8-9** ■ Grand Chapter photo album
- 10** ■ Major Gift appreciation
- 22** ■ Snapshot: June's Roanoke Alumni Reception

FOCUS

A Sigma Chi Foundation Publication

Editor and Creative Design
Wes Holtsclaw, EAST TENNESSEE 2012

Printing
Royle Printing

Photography courtesy of
Jeff Burnside, WASHINGTON STATE 1979
Jay Ford, EASTERN ILLINOIS 1985
Greg Morgan, SOUTH FLORIDA 2009
Red Light Management
Sam Smith, DENVER 2009

CEO'S CORNER

Worthy Brothers,

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we all experienced COVID-driven changes to our professional and personal lives. Sigma Chi has adapted: our undergraduate chapters turned to virtual meetings, philanthropic campaigns, recruitment, pledgship, and officer training on campuses across North America. Our Foundation's professional staff and volunteers conducted work virtually through countless Zoom and other technology-enabled meetings.

As our country began to open its doors and restrictions were lifted in many states, our Foundation team immediately returned to in-person engagement with alumni eager to support our mission and benefit Sigma Chi undergrads as they slowly returned to on campus life. We also looked to provide alumni with opportunities to engage with one another through our shared bonds of Sigma Chi.

This summer brought a semblance of normalcy to Sigma Chi with the Fraternity's return to in-person events for the first time since the pandemic with June's 83rd Grand Chapter in Scottsdale, Arizona hosting over 900 in-person attendees (the second-largest in modern Sigma Chi history!), and July's Krach Transformational Leaders Workshop at our Fraternity's birthplace, Oxford, Ohio.

Our Foundation's primary mission for these events is to show appreciation for the generosity of our Sigma Chi brother donors and to provide additional opportunities for life-long engagement with Sigma Chi.

As you'll read in this issue, we were honored to recognize those brothers whose generous contributions have made our work possible. We were equally thrilled to give brothers an opportunity to enjoy fellowship through social events, receptions and our inaugural Sigma Chi Open golf tournament.

Our Foundation is eager to continue these mission-critical engagement activities during the current 2021 to 2022 fiscal year and beyond.

Keep an eye on your inbox and our new Focus section on the Sigma Chi Foundation website for invitations to exclusive alumni events across the country and other engagement opportunities, including our first-ever Sigma Chi Foundation European cruise with In Hoc Napa Valley in May 2022.

We are proud to serve you, and our amazing Sigma Chi undergraduate members for generations to come.

— — — — —

On a personal note, please join me in extending the Foundation's appreciation and congratulations to Significant Sig and Past Foundation Chairman Joe Durzo, SYRACUSE 1967, on his retirement from the Foundation Board of Governors (*see page 5 for more*). The efforts of Brother Durzo have been pivotal in our Foundation's success and forward mission to ensure every young Sigma Chi brother has the tools and opportunity to grow as a leader during their undergraduate journey with our Fraternity.

For the good,



Ashley Woods
EAST TENNESSEE 2000
Foundation President & CEO

THE NEWSROOM

✦ SPRING 2021 ✦

PARTNERSHIP WITH BEYOND PUBLISHING YIELDS NEW BOOK VENTURE FOR FOUNDATION

*Sigma Chi Foundation Press to feature array of
published works authored by Sig alumni*

The Sigma Chi Foundation has announced its new Sigma Chi Foundation Press (SCF Press), created in partnership with renowned Beyond Publishing, a Dallas-based publishing house specializing in writing print, distribution, and literary representation.

The Foundation's new publishing house will feature fresh and timely literary works beginning Fall 2021, available to readers everywhere.

Amid a booming book market, SCF Press invites avid and casual readers to enjoy a wide variety of literary works, including books from a variety of Sigma Chi authors and genres unique within the bookselling industry. SCF Press offers a simple platform for readers to peruse and purchase, which serves to clarify and enhance the reader's overall experience.

"SCF Press strives to inspire fresh thinking by seeking out and cultivating bright minds and engaging stories, giving them voice, reach and impact," says Jay Ford, **EASTERN ILLINOIS 1985**, Sigma Chi Foundation's Chief Marketing Officer. "The Press believes that scholarship is a powerful art form in fostering a deeper understanding of our world and affecting how people think, plan and live."

Given SCF Press' affiliation with Beyond Publishing, Sigma Chi Foundation guarantees that "there's no such thing as too many books." SCF Press is cementing a connection between its roster of authors to a larger audience of readers. In the forthcoming months, SCF

Press is releasing a steady stream of compelling literary works, providing the world with a pipeline of fresh voices, offering unique and timely works of literature for sale to readers around the globe.

"I am thrilled to be writing and releasing my new book, *The Storyteller*, with Sigma Chi Foundation Press" says Dell Technologies' Steve Wideman, **HOUSTON 2001**. "In a rapidly changing world, SCF Press is committed to the Foundation's mission and values. Its unparalleled tradition and long history offer a unique opportunity for Sigs to create dialogue and stimulate thinking."

The immense size and breath of the Foundation's community offers a unique audience and marketplace to share members' books one with another. This is great fit for me and my story."

For more information, contact Sigma Chi Foundation Press at sigmachifoundationpressinfo@scfp.com.



FOUNDATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Foundation Honors Past Chairman Durzo; Announces Committee Leadership Changes

Following a successful tenure that included service as both Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Sigma Chi Foundation Board of Governors (FBOG) announced the retirement of Significant Sig Joe Durzo, **SYRACUSE 1967**, effective at the conclusion of the organization's summer meeting.

Durzo, who joined the Foundation board in 2014 and was most recently serving as Chairman of the Foundation's Development Committee, was unanimously awarded Governor Emeritus status by the FBOG.

"The Foundation Board of Governors is proud to unanimously extend the honor of Governor Emeritus to retiring brother Joe Durzo following a successful and highly accomplished term on our board," said John Forst, **GEORGE WASHINGTON 1984**, Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Governors.

"During his tenure as Chairman, Vice Chairman and head of our development committee, our Foundation achieved record growth in academic scholarships, leadership curriculum and grant support for our undergraduate and graduate Sigma Chi members."

The Foundation also announced a pair of committee and board



(Pictured, L-R) Past Foundation Chairman and Significant Sig Joe Durzo, SYRACUSE 1967, Significant Sig Kim Caldwell, OREGON 1969, Order of Constantine and Significant Sig Jeff Muir, GEORGIA 1971.

leadership changes following Durzo's retirement.

Significant Sig Kim Caldwell, **OREGON 1969**, exits the posts of FBOG Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee to become the new Chairman of the Development Committee.

Order of Constantine and Significant Sig Jeff Muir, **GEORGIA 1971**, inherits the baton from Caldwell in both of his prior roles.

Foundation President & CEO Ashley Woods, **EAST TENNESSEE 2000**, offered that "Brothers Caldwell and Muir have been pivotal members of our board, and we're delighted to have these brothers undertake new roles as

our Foundation continues its important work financially supporting the growth and success of our young Sigma Chi brothers."

Brother Caldwell is retired Executive Vice President of Avery Dennison, a role he served from 1997 until his retirement in 2001. Since his retirement, he has served on the Board of Trustees of the Avery Dennison Foundation and as Chairman of the Volunteers of America, Los Angeles.

Muir is co-founder and Chairman of Fulcrum Equity Partners and its predecessor firm Fulcrum Ventures. A co-founder of Chatham Capital, he also serves Sigma Chi as President of the prestigious Order of Constantine.

83RD GRAND CHAPTER

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT, RECOGNITION EVENTS HIGHLIGHT FOUNDATION'S WEEK IN ARIZONA

Events included inaugural leadership forum, auction, golf tournament, revamped Significant Sig ceremony



Significant Sig Andy Teeter, ROANOKE 1971, is presented with his exclusive Lockwood Society pin by Sigma Chi Foundation President and CEO Ashley Woods, EAST TENNESSEE 2000, during a special recognition event at the 83rd Grand Chapter in Scottsdale, Arizona.

PREMIUM ITEMS HIGHLIGHT AUCTION

Whether it was signed sports memorabilia, including items signed by three of the National Football League's Sigma Chi head coaches, an exclusive vacation opportunity or rare historical memento, the Sigma Chi Foundation's 2021 **Sigma Chi Grand Auction** had something for everyone.

Launched online prior to the 83rd Grand Chapter at the Westin Kierland Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, bidders were able to compete for more than 100 items donated by alumni and friends across the United States through the closing Celebration of Sigma Chi banquet.

Overall, the auction generated more than \$50,000 to support the Grand Chapter event.

ROOFTOP SOCIAL BOOSTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Foundation kicked off Grand Chapter week for local Sigs and early arriving attendees with a special Wednesday night bourbon, craft beer and cigar social and fundraiser, **In Hoc Toast and Smoke**, at the Old Town Scottsdale venue Rockbar, owned by alum Alex Mundy, **ARIZONA STATE 1999**.

More than 60 alumni and sweethearts attended the rooftop event, raising funds towards the newly-launched Grand Canyon Provincial Scholarship Fund. Attendees a premium Buffalo Trace Distillery bourbon flight led by local Sazerac rep Justin Soto, **ARIZONA STATE 2012**, a flight of craft beers from the local Four Peaks Brewing Company, co-founded by Significant Sig

83RD GRAND CHAPTER

Jim Scussel, **WISCONSIN-MADISON 1989**, and the debut of the Sigma Chi Foundation inspired cigar “Constantine” from alum Jeff Borysiewicz, **CENTRAL FLORIDA 1990**, and the Orlando-based Corona Cigar Co.

KRACH HEADLINES LEADERSHIP FORUM

Thursday afternoon, the Foundation announced its partnership with Dallas-based Beyond Publishing and the creation of the Sigma Chi Foundation Press during the inaugural **Transformational Leaders in Business** forum.

Headlined by a keynote speech from 64th Grand Consul and former Under Secretary of State Keith Krach, **PURDUE 1979**, the event gave full package attendees an opportunity to gain insight from a quartet of Significant Sigs also including William McGinley, **CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES 1991**, former assistant to President Donald Trump and White House Cabinet Secretary; Arizona real estate developer and philanthropist Tom Lewis, **KENTUCKY 1971**; and Brandon Chaney, **INDIANA 1993**, proprietor and CEO of Fairwinds Estate Winery and In Hoc Napa Valley.

LOCKWOOD, CALDWELL MEMBERS HONORED

Thursday evening, more than 40 brothers who have earned membership in the Foundation’s William Lewis Lockwood or James Parks Caldwell societies were honored by the Foundation during an exclusive recognition ceremony.

Lockwood Society members have given more than \$100,000 to the Sigma Chi Foundation during their lifetimes, benefiting academic scholarships and/or leadership initiatives. Each member receives an exclusive, jeweled Life Loyal Sig pin in honor of their contributions to Sigma Chi.

Caldwell Society members include all brothers, sweethearts or friends who have listed the Sigma Chi Foundation as a beneficiary of a legacy gift upon their passing.

SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE FOR HONOREES

Members of the 2020 and 2021 Significant Sig award classes were treated to an exclusive evening at the Scottsdale home of Brenda and Significant Sig Rick Smith, **HARVARD 1992**, founder and CEO of Axon.

The Friday night event saw guests treated to both dinner, libations and a special aquatic and acrobatic performance underneath the Arizona sky by the Lucent Dossier Experience, which Esquire calls “the greatest show on earth.”

NEW-LOOK SIGNIFICANT SIG AWARDS

For the first time since the award’s inception, the more than 70 in-person recipients of the Significant Sig award from the 2020 and 2021 classes were honored by Sigma Chi in an exclusive awards show-style format helmed by the Foundation.

The event headlined a memorable weekend for awardees, who also engaged in a closed-door round-table session to discuss their Sigma Chi experiences and were treated, alongside guests, to a reception sponsored by Order of Constantine and Significant Sig Bob Georges, **FLORIDA SOUTHERN 1973**.

GOLF TOURNAMENT CAPS WEEKEND

More than 90 golfers braved the Arizona heat for a morning of fellowship and competitive play at the Kierland Golf Club during the inaugural **Sigma Chi Open powered by Technogent**.

Thanks to the support of sponsors and participants, the tournament successfully raised in excess of \$16,000 for the Foundation.

Participants were able to take advantage of a drone-powered golf ball drop, given an opportunity at one of five hole-in-one opportunities, including a customized truck, and treated with samples from three premium beverage vendors.

83RD GRAND CHAPTER PHOTO ALBUM



Top Left: Significant Sig Rob Reifschneider, SAN DIEGO STATE 1957, (second from right) is recognized alongside son, Eric, SAN DIEGO STATE 1988, by Foundation Board of Governors Chairman John Forst, GEORGE WASHINGTON 1984, (right) and President and CEO Ashley Woods, EAST TENNESSEE 2000, (left) during the Foundation's Lockwood and Legacy Giving recognition event. Top Right: Old Town Scottsdale's Rockbar was decked out for the In Hoc Toast and Smoke bourbon, craft beer and cigar social. Bottom Left: 69th Grand Consul Mike Ursillo, BROWN 1978, and wife, the Hon. Diane Ursillo, are recognized by Forst (right) and Woods (left) during the Foundation's Lockwood and Legacy Giving recognition event. Bottom Right: The Foundation's Transformational Leaders in Business Forum.

83RD GRAND CHAPTER PHOTO ALBUM



Top Left: The Westin Kierland Resort and Spa serves as a backdrop for the Acacia section of the Kierland Golf Club during the inaugural Sigma Chi Open powered by Technogent. Top Right: Phoenix Alumni Chapter President Chris "Vegas" Loughney, ARIZONA STATE 2006, prepares for a tee shot. Bottom Left: A player aims for the hole. Bottom Right: From left to right, the team of William Chick, ARIZONA STATE 1970, Dr. Ronald Castro, ARIZONA STATE 1970, Dave Young and Jeff Carlberg, NEW MEXICO 1984, earned the inaugural Sigma Chi Open team championship with a scorecard playoff.

MAJOR GIFT APPRECIATION

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

With the support of more than 3,500 alumni and friends, the Sigma Chi Foundation recently closed a successful 2020 to 2021 fiscal year. Every individual gift advanced our leadership and scholarship mission and helped meet each of our funding commitments.

We look forward to recognizing each of these brothers, chapters and friends while highlighting the many successes of the past year within December's 2021 Annual Report.

Whether it was a contribution toward our unrestricted Life Loyal Sig Annual Fund, ensuring benefits for their home chapter through the Thomas Cowan Bell Chapter program, funding a leadership initiative, donor-scholarship or benefiting Sigma Chi through an estate gift, the following brothers, chapters, alumni groups and friends were especially pivotal to our end goal with their major gifts or commitments of \$25,000 or more.

John Henry Allen, **OKLAHOMA STATE 1969**

Jim Barksdale, **MISSISSIPPI 1965**

Daniel Benoit, **DRAKE 1986**

Beta Phi Educational Foundation, Inc.

Beta Phi House Corporation

Beyond Publishing

Martin Bicknell, **PITTSBURG STATE 1991**

Robert Birdsall Jr., **ROANOKE 1972**

Ric Campo, **OREGON STATE 1976**

Brandon Chaney, **INDIANA 1993**

Randy Coppersmith, **SOUTH FLORIDA 1979**

Dr. Donald Davis, **MISSISSIPPI 1958**

Epsilon Upsilon House Corporation

Arthur Fields, **MURRAY STATE 1966**

Sam Forrer, **KANSAS STATE 1963**

John Forst, **GEORGE WASHINGTON 1984**

Jeff Gill, **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 1978**

Jeffery Greene, **WYOMING 1975**

Charley Hodges, **TENNESSEE-KNOXVILLE 1974**

Bret Holden, **VIRGINIA 1983**

Wilson Hood, **MISSISSIPPI 2006**

Carl Huber, **HANOVER 1959***

Anthony Huck, **WISCONSIN-MADISON 1985**

Huntsman Foundation

University of Alabama Iota Iota Chapter

David Kem, **MONTANA STATE 1967**

Hon. John Koskinen, **DUKE 1961**

Thomas Lang, **SAN DIEGO STATE 1967**

Col. William Reese Liggett, **MIAMI (OHIO) 1963**

Robert Loftin, **ALABAMA 1979**

MAJOR GIFT APPRECIATION

- Brian Loucks, **MONTANA STATE 1964**
Zack Mabry, **PITTSBURG STATE 2006**
Neal Mackay, **WYOMING 1950***
Wayne Maddux, **ILLINOIS 1946***
J. Willard & Alice S. Marriott Foundation
Joe Martin, **HOUSTON 1976**
Larry Mathis, **PITTSBURG STATE 1965**
John McEntyre III, **MISSISSIPPI 1989**
James McFerrin, **WASHINGTON (ST. LOUIS) 1967**
John McMullan, **GEORGIA 1958**
Sanjay Meshri, **TULSA 1992**
David Newell, **SOUTHEAST MISSOURI 1981**
Thomas Parsons, **MARYLAND 1992**
John Pasquantino, **NEVADA-LAS VEGAS 1984**
Mike Patton, **CAL. STATE-FRESNO 1966**
Laurence Peters Jr., **CALIFORNIA-IRVINE 1975***
David Pyle, **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 1980**
Kenneth Randolph, **TEXAS A&M-
COLLEGE STATION 1978**
Robert Rapp, **CASE WESTERN 1969**
Col. Robert Bruce Roehm, **CENTRE 1987**
Mark Ruhe, **WESTMINSTER 1976**
Don Schefmeyer, **SYRACUSE 1969**
Jim Schroeder, **KANSAS STATE 1962**
Stace Sewell, **TEXAS TECH 1983**
Don Shockey, **ROANOKE 1964**
Rick Smith, **HARVARD 1992**
Richard Stoneburner, **TEXAS-AUSTIN 1976**
Gregory Surabian, **ROANOKE 1976**
Jeffrey Taft, **TULANE 1989**
Thurman Taylor, Jr., **FLORIDA 1950***
Andy Teeter, **ROANOKE 1971**
Mark Tipton, **TULANE 1978**
Chuck Thatcher, Ph.D., **MICHIGAN 1947***
Michael Ursillo, **BROWN 1978**
Chris Walters, **ROANOKE 2000**
Dr. Daniel Walsh, **SOUTHEAST MISSOURI 1971**
David Walton, **TEXAS-AUSTIN 1979**
Pedro Wasmer, **MARYLAND 1962**
Chuck Watson, **OKLAHOMA STATE 1972**
Clayton Williams, **UTAH 1953**
Bill Yates, **MISSISSIPPI 1963**
Bob Zorich, **CALIFORNIA-SANTA BARBARA 1971**

* – *Chapter Eternal*

"To me, the White Cross symbolizes solid values and strong character. Sigma Chi provides the order and disciplines that help young men to understand and aspire to them in their daily life, for life. I contribute to Sigma Chi as I believe it is a solid foundation for worthy young men to embrace and practice, without apology, high character, and solid values, the basic ingredients of a fulfilling and worthy life. I was fortunate to be invited into the brotherhood."

— Sam Forrer, **KANSAS STATE 1963**



Founded in 1939, the Sigma Chi Foundation serves to fund the creation, development and operations of leadership initiatives impacting our members, including the 2021 launch of Sigma Chi's new Transformational Leader platform – a series of certificate programs delivered to every Sigma Chi undergraduate member by the Sigma Chi Leadership Institute (SCLI).



Our annual funding also includes robust academic scholarship support for graduate and undergraduate members, and grant support that directly impacts our chapters at the local level.

We couldn't do any of this without **you**.

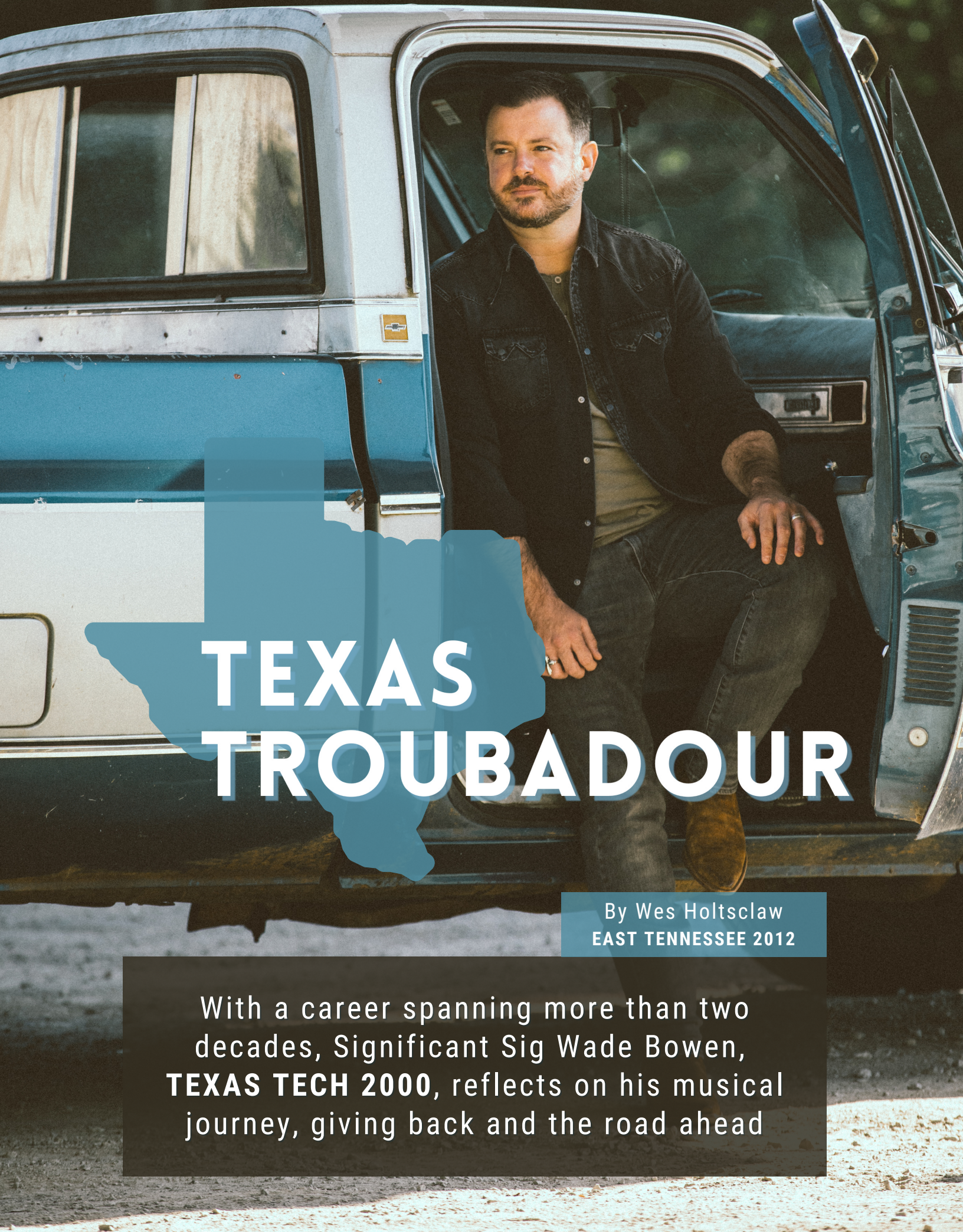


Last year, thanks to the support of our 3,500+ donors during the 2020 to 2021 fiscal year, the Sigma Chi Foundation:

- Granted **over \$2.6 million** in direct funding to the Sigma Chi Leadership Institute, including the development and delivery of programs.
- Delivered **more than \$700,000** in direct grants to the General Fraternity including Regional Chapter Support Coordinators who directly impact each chapter at the local level each year.
- Issued **over \$350,000** in academic scholarship awards to graduate and undergraduate recipients
- Contributed **6.7 times** more grant support, on average, when compared to other Greek-letter foundations over the last five years.



Sources: 2020 Pennington & Company Fraternity & Sorority Foundation Report; 2020 Sigma Chi Foundation Annual Report; 2020-2021 Grant & Scholarship Committee Report



TEXAS TROUBADOUR

By Wes Holtsclaw
EAST TENNESSEE 2012

With a career spanning more than two decades, Significant Sig Wade Bowen, **TEXAS TECH 2000**, reflects on his musical journey, giving back and the road ahead

Listed by Wide Open Country as one of the “Top 15 Most Iconic Artists in Texas Country Music,” Significant Sig Wade Bowen’s career journey has been filled with milestones and memories.

From his 1999 self-released debut through his most recent collaboration with his lil’ buddy Randy Rogers, Bowen, **TEXAS TECH 2000**, has accumulated seven top 30 albums, three inside the top 10, on the Billboard Country Albums charts, more than 20 number one singles on the Texas music charts and millions of plays on the national streaming services.

Not to mention, he has played over 4,000 shows in the United States and abroad, with multiple appearances on the Grand Ole Opry.

Bowen’s path to stardom as an artist in the Red Dirt Country Music sub-genre began while attending Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, where, at age 20, during his sophomore year of college, he and Matt Miller founded the band West 84.

It was also at Texas Tech where Bowen discovered Sigma Chi, and was initiated in Spring 1997.

“It’s funny, one of my best friends was a Phi Delt (at Tech),” Bowen said during a June interview. “I was kind of following his footsteps, then I went through rush and was immediately blown away by the guys in the (Epsilon Nu) chapter. (I) just immediately fell in love and changed my mind. I never looked back.”

EARLY CAREER AND COLLEGE DAYS

The son of Jim and Glenda Bowen, Wade’s love of country music was instilled from an early age through his parents and three sisters, who took their brother to concerts as mainstream country music hit the 1990s with artists like George Strait and Garth Brooks.

In high school, after discovering a knack of writing short stories and poetry, Bowen began playing guitar, putting chords and lyrics together.

During his freshman year in college, while attending a Robert Earl Keen concert, the light bulb went off.

“I always had the dream that I would move to Nashville and wait tables, wait my turn and get a

chance,” Bowen said. “Then I saw (Keen) and it changed my life forever. ‘I immediately said, ‘I don’t have to go to Nashville to do that? I can go play shows now if I want?’”

Bowen and Miller found some friends over the next year and began practicing in Wade’s garage.

The new band, West 84, named after the U.S. Highway 84 that traverses from Lubbock to Bowen’s hometown of Waco, played their first show at an open mic night at Stubb’s in Lubbock. As the band grew and received opportunities elsewhere, a strong showing of support from his Sigma Chi brothers and friends gave Bowen more opportunities to hone his craft.

“When I first started my band, we were terrible,” he said. “We were trying to figure out what to do with our music, then I started writing songs. The venues, the bars wanted us to come back because we had so much support from Sigma Chi and all of the girls they brought with them.

“It really gave us a chance to learn how to put a show together, to learn how to write songs, to learn how to entertain people. My first show was at Stubb’s, and then I moved over to The Blue Light.”

It was at The Blue Light where Bowen developed the sound that endeared his early audiences.

“The Blue Light’s a small place, but they’d pack them in there for us,” said Bowen. “There were nights where it was nobody when we first started. Then there were nights where they were sneaking them in the back door and stuff.

“I got to where I played every Tuesday night with (Miller), who started the band with me. We made 100 bucks and thought it was a million dollars. Then they started paying us \$125 and thought we had something really cool going, and we did.

Before the band’s following and road schedule expanded beyond Lubbock, and they self-released the 1999 album, *Just For Fun*, Bowen was able to carve time in his academic, work and music schedule to serve the Epsilon Nu chapter as Magister.

■ See BOWEN, 16



Bowen (front) with West 84 in the early 2000s.

■ BOWEN continued

Alongside his pledge semester, his term as Magister was among his favorite memories as a Sig undergrad. “(I had) the chance to be Magister before things got super, super crazy for me musically,” he recalled. “I was still starting the band and we were playing a lot, but I found the time, somehow, to be a Magister. That was a lot of fun. It’s fun to teach kids about the importance of Sigma Chi, and how much fun we had doing it.”

Bowen graduated in 2000 with a degree in public relations and marketing, working temporarily for his family company Bowen Electric as his following and live opportunities expanded across Texas.

Thanks to the support of his brothers and friends in Lubbock, he was ready for the road ahead.

“It (still) means so much to me the support we got back then,” he said. “I don’t think any of those guys understand how special it was and how much I often think about them giving us so many more opportunities than we should’ve (received).”

A STAR ACROSS TEXAS (AND BEYOND)

Bowen’s career truly took off in 2002 with his second album, *Try Not To Listen*, whose title track rose into the top ten on the Texas music charts alongside a steady stream of more than 200 shows.

His follow-up 2003 live album, *The Blue Light Live*, recorded in Lubbock was named 2004 Album of the Year and earned Bowen Male Vocalist of the Year honors by MyTexasMusic.com. The lead song from the project, “Who I Am,” has since received more than 12 million streams on Spotify.

In 2006, Bowen headed to Nashville to record *Lost Hotel*. Between that album’s regional success and collaborations with a number of country music standouts, including a co-write on Pat Green’s top-40 country single “Don’t Break My Heart Again,” Bowen’s audiences grew beyond his home state of Texas where he was packing out storied venues such as Billy Bob’s Texas and Gruene Hall.

As a songwriter, the 2008 follow up album, *If We Ever*

Make It Home, showed a more mature side of Bowen as he explored the challenges of life.

On the road and in the studio, by the close of the decade he was one of the biggest artists in the Red Dirt genre, and he began making waves on the mainstream Billboard Country Albums Chart with consecutive top-10 releases via the 2012 album, *The Given*, headlined by the top 40 single "Saturday Night," and his self-titled 2014 album, *Wade Bowen*.

As Bowen's popularity grew, so did that of his long-time friend Randy Rogers.

"We kind of grew up musically together and we made a pact, the first time we ever met, that we were going to stick together," Bowen said.

By 2014, the pair had collaborated on so many acoustic shows and gigs over the prior decade-plus that a new partnership under the touring umbrella "Hold My Beer and Watch This" was born.

What began as a fun three-song studio session to add to an eventual live album turned into a full-on LP collaboration.

"We got in there and had so much fun, that we went back into the studio and did a bunch more. We were getting texts from our management companies in Nashville, 'What are all of these studio invoices from in Austin?' I'd say, 'I'm not sure yet, but I'll get back to you when we're done.' It really took off."

Hold My Beer Vol. 1 was released in 2015 to wide acclaim. The often-critical country music website SavingCountryMusic.com gave it the ultimate "two guns up," listing it as "one of the best traditional country records of the year." The praise didn't end there. The album rose to number four on the Billboard Country Albums Chart — Bowen's highest to date.

The pair followed with a live acoustic album, the 2016 release *Watch This*, and were invited to bring their show to the world-famous Red Rocks Amphitheater as opening act for female country superstar Miranda Lambert.

"We had really done well with our shows, but once we started releasing the records it was a game-changer for us," Bowen said. "It's been really cool.



Bowen (left) with longtime collaborator and fellow Country Music artist Randy Rogers.

The whole idea behind it was one plus one equals three and I think it's done that for us. It's a lot of fun and we laugh about how we can't believe we get paid to hang out about this."

MAKING AN IMPACT OFF THE STAGE

From his early youth, giving back to the community is something Bowen learned first-hand from his parents.

"Growing up I was taught — my dad, he's the one that handed me a check folded up and he'd drive up to the Salvation Army, fold up the check and tell me not to look at how much it is," Bowen said. "(He'd) make me walk it in there and not tell them who it was from. That's the kind of leadership I had with my dad, showing me those things in life. My mom's the same way."

Those lessons throughout his formative years stayed with Bowen as his career in music took off in the early

■ See BOWEN, 19

HOLD MY BEER AND LISTEN TO THESE...

From an early career live staple to Texas' 2021 summer anthem, our pick of Wade Bowen songs for your playlist



NO. 1 – HOLD MY BEER

A play on the Hold My Beer albums and tours with longtime collaborator Randy Rogers, this duet lived atop the Texas music charts for multiple weeks between May and August 2021.

NO. 2 – WHO I AM

A staple from his early days with West 84, and originally released on a 2003 live album from Lubbock's The Blue Light, this ballad is one of the most-used "first dance" songs in Texas.

NO. 3 – GOD BLESS THIS TOWN

In 2012, *Dallas Observer* called this 2006 song about small town gossip one of the Top 15 Red Dirt songs released between 1997 and 2012.

NO. 4 – SATURDAY NIGHT

The debut single from his 2012 album *The Given*, this song reached Billboard's Country Top 40 Singles chart while notching a No. 1 on the Texas music charts.

NO. 5 – SONGS ABOUT TRUCKS

This clever response to the songs about trucks, tailgates and dirt roads that filled mainstream country radio in 2014 rocketed up the Texas music charts.

NO. 6 – WEST TEXAS RAIN

This 2014 ballad from the self-titled *Wade Bowen* album is a favorite of other Texas-based artists like fellow Texas Tech alum Josh Abbott



Scan the QR code (left) with the camera on your mobile device to view Wade's exclusive acoustic performance of "West Texas Rain," the second single from his self-titled 2014 album.

■ BOWEN continued

2000's. In 2000, Bowen called upon some friends and started Bowen MusicFest in Waco, and later added the Bowen Classic golf tournament as a way to raise funds to give back to pivotal causes impacting children and families in and around his hometown.

Over 20 years later, the concert festival is one of the hottest annual tickets in Waco, featuring an array of country and rock legends and standouts. (Although the 22nd annual event was twice impacted by the global pandemic, the event is slated to return in June 2022.)

Due to the success of these events and other philanthropic endeavors, Bowen and his family were able to launch the Bowen Family Foundation in 2012. The board, including Bowen, his parents and sisters, meet three times annually to review grant requests.

"It's something we love doing," Bowen said. "My family loves doing it. That's why we call it the Bowen Family Foundation. We're that kind of family, we love to help and get other people involved to help each other."

Proceeds from the festival and tournament, community donations and more have allowed Bowen and his family to hit beyond the \$3.5 million mark in support, according to Wade, impacting such entities as the Boys & Girls Club of Waco, the March of Dimes, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children, NICU support at the Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Medical Center and much more.

The foundation's work was recognized amongst the Texas music community with the Humanitarian of the Year award at the Texas Regional Radio Awards in 2019.

"It's definitely the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my life next to having kids."

On a national level, Bowen and his wife, Shelby, were inspired by their own experiences with postpartum depression to advocate for PPD and give back to Postpartum Support International to help increase awareness and promote prevention and treatment of mental health issues that impact new mothers and fathers worldwide.

Wade's highly-lauded 2008 song, "Turn on the Lights," was an in-depth look at the Bowens' personal experience — one he shared at PSI's national conference in 2009.

Bowen also spoke up publicly about the mental health issues he faced during 2018 through his 2019 documentary "Inconsistent Chaos."

The 17-minute short film chronicled a difficult year that included a struggle with vocal cord issues that required surgery, forcing a sabbatical from singing following the release of his 2018 album *Solid Ground*.

In a 2019 feature by *Rolling Stone Country* Bowen said, "Hopefully we can use [the film] to help others understand that you can go through a rough time and still come out on the other side okay. People don't always see that side of us in the music business."

THE PANDEMIC AND THE ROAD AHEAD

After returning to the road full-time in late 2018 and 2019, Bowen and artists across the globe saw their livelihoods impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which forced many from the road.

For Bowen, however, it was another opportunity to hit the reset button, take a break and focus on life, quality time with his wife and sons, Bruce and Brock, and his future.

"I think what I learned most was that I needed a break," Bowen said. "I was pushing myself too hard. The silver lining in all of that — I don't look back at it and think of it as a terrible year. I feel like it's one of the best years of my life.

"I got to be home and see my kids, and for a guy who's always been on the road — and I have been for over 20 years — who never stopped, kept my head down and kept working, you never stop to take a break from all of that. To have that chance to do all of that and be around my kids and wife more. Honestly, to hit the reset button on my career and rethink all of that has been wonderful.

■ See BOWEN, 20

■ BOWEN continued

"As much as I hate that we've lost so many people with this pandemic and crazy virus over the past year, me personally, I feel like I grew from it and became a better person."

The break didn't completely pause Wade's career.

In May 2020, the second studio volume of the "Hold My Beer and Watch This" partnership with Randy Rogers, *Hold My Beer Vol 2*, was released to wide acclaim, with the video of its humorous lead ballad "Rodeo Clown" accumulating more than 600,000 views on YouTube.

He provided his fans with an opportunity to remain connected with the June 2020 launch of the Facebook Live series *Wades World: The Ultimate Quarantream*, which saw Bowen reconnect with an array of friends and artists from around the music community, special acoustic performances and stories.

Secondly, Bowen surprised fans with the September release of a special extended play titled *The Waiting*, which included four studio versions of popular live songs including the aforementioned fan-favorite "Who I Am," a Phil Collins cover and an original cut, "Fairest Lady," co-written with Brent Cobb.

As COVID restrictions slowly eased in Texas into 2021, Bowen and his band returned to the road with private shows and public performances in front of socially distanced crowds, and later returned to full audience and festival shows across the state.

Bowen and Rogers released the self-titled single from their 2020 album, "Hold My Beer" with a special video including clips submitted by their fans. The single became an immediate smash, rising to the top spot on the Texas music charts three times over the course of the summer.

Then in June, while in the midst of a heavy summer touring schedule, Bowen was formally honored for his career achievements as a 2021 recipient of the prestigious Significant Sig award.

During a special presentation ceremony in Lubbock, prior to his headlining set at William Clark Green's

CottonFest, Bowen reflected proudly upon his Sigma Chi experience.

"I want to send a huge thank you to Epsilon Nu for initiating me in Spring 1997," Bowen told an audience of Epsilon Nu alumni, undergraduates and friends.

"I made so many lifelong friends, and memories that still make me tear up when I think about them."

"I don't play music to collect and receive awards, but when you do, especially ones like this one, I just want (people) to know that I'm beyond honored and do not take for granted any moment in my life that involves Sigma Chi. ... To this day I still get texts, emails (and) surprise visits all over at shows (from brothers). I really believe in my life I have an unbelievable amount of respect, honor, friendship, strength, spirit, high ideals and love because of Sigma Chi. I will never ever be able to repay it for all it has given me."

The good news continued for Bowen following a series of joint shows with Rogers, with announcement of a worldwide publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music Nashville.

Following performances at Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium and the Grand Ole Opry, he headlined Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, and shared the bill with rock legends ZZ Top at the Born & Raised Festival in Oklahoma.

"I'm older, but I feel like I'm just getting started again," Bowen said. "It's kind of weird. I feel like I'm now better than I've ever been, so I'm anxious to see what's going to happen."

Much like the 19-year-old writing songs in his Lubbock garage, Bowen says he feels the same drive as he completes his 24th year in the music industry.

There are many songs to write, plenty of stories to tell and thousands of fans to entertain.

"I feel like I've got some cool stuff left to do in my career. And that's a real good feeling — to know I've been doing it this long and have that same feeling I had when I started, 'Let's go conquer the world and figure this out.'"

— — —

For more about Wade Bowen and a list of tour dates visit
www.wadebowen.com

WADE BOWEN

LUBBOCK, TEXAS | JUNE 2021



Top Left: Wade Bowen headlines night one of Lubbock's annual CottonFest; **Top Right:** Bowen (center) is pictured with Epsilon Nu alumni following his Significant Sig presentation; **Bottom Left:** Bowen performs "If We Ever Make It Home" for the Significant Sig Awards at Grand Chapter; **Bottom Right:** Bowen and the Epsilon Nu undergrads are pictured with the Sigma Chi flag.



SNAPSHOT: ROANOKE ALUMNI RECEPTION

When 14th Grand Consul and Significant Sig George Ade, **PURDUE 1887**, eloquently delivered "The Sigma Chi Creed" in 1929, he urged all Sigs to "endeavor to retain the spirit of youth" over the course of their lives.

That phrase was quite evident among two special attendees of June's Foundation alumni reception hosted by Foundation Governor Chris Walters, **ROANOKE 2000**, at the Ballyhack Golf Club in Roanoke, Va.

Pledge brothers Heath Light, **HAMPDEN-SYDNEY 1951**, and David "Red" McClung, **HAMPDEN - SYDNEY 1951**, (pictured above left and center,

with Robert Rude, **HAMPDEN-SYDNEY 1970**) pledged Sigma Chi on January 18, 1948 and were initiated on April 15, 1948. This year marks their 73rd as members of Sigma Chi.

According to Foundation Senior Director of Development Greg Morgan, **SOUTH FLORIDA 2009**, Light and McClung were delighted to be amongst the group of alumni from the region.

Said Morgan: "They're both over 90 years old and still excited about Sigma Chi and our mission. Not to mention, they're lifelong friends since college and spend every Tuesday together playing cards."

Welcome to the In Hoc collection.

The Fall 2021 releases!



Join the 1855 Club today.
Visit www.inhocvino.com

in·hoc
NAPA VALLEY



AFICIONADOS GIVE BACK.



COMING **THIS FALL** AN EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY
TO SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES



MICHELIN-INSPIRED DINING.
WORLD-RENOWNED PORTS OF CALL.
EUROPEAN ELEGANCE.

JOIN AN EXCLUSIVE GATHERING OF SIG ALUMS
AND SWEETHEARTS AS WE SET SAIL DURING AN
EXCLUSIVE 9-NIGHT MEDITERRANEAN ADVENTURE
ABOARD THE CRYSTAL SYMPHONY

VISIT [INHOCruise.com](https://www.inhocruise.com) TO LEARN MORE.

in·hōc
NAPA VALLEY

