



# Alpha Tau Omega

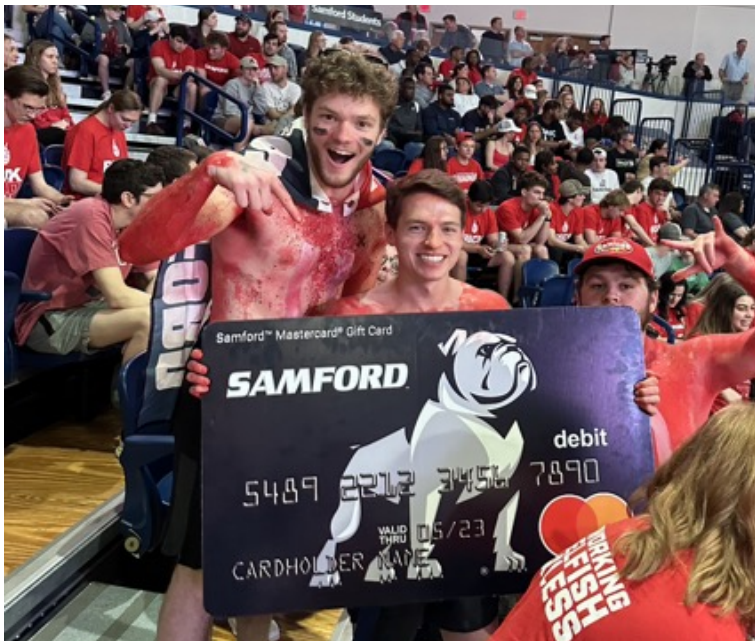
## Kappa Rho Alumni Newsletter

Sunday, March 5th, 2023

Vol. 3, Number 1

### Kappa Rho Awarded \$10,000

Recently, ATO Kappa Rho was awarded \$10,000 from the Samford Athletics Department for being the Greek organization with the most attendance at games during this basketball season as a part of the Superfan Sweepstakes, established as a promotion to increase hype around basketball games. Being still a very young chapter, this \$10,000 award is historic for Kappa Rho, providing an instant deposit of needed funds for the fraternity. With hopes of a house in their hearts, the fraternity needs money to make the payments on a house when that time inevitably comes. ATO KP is extremely excited about the future of the fraternity and continues to grow its House Fund, being ready and willing at the notice of university administration to take the necessary steps towards acquiring an on-campus house for ATO. Funding both through intentional savings and generous donations from alumni and other individuals are paramount in Kappa Rho being able to acquire the on-campus house that they so deserve.



### Step Sing

Seventy-five brothers recently competed in Samford's annual Step Sing competition, earning ATO a second place finish as first runner-up and this year's best men's group. Judges also scored our show the highest overall in the "creativity" category, earning us the Excellence in Creativity award. Sophomore brothers Ryan Cruz, JT Ellison, and Sam Gould led the chapter to its best-ever Step Sing result as the show's directors. All three were recently re-elected as ATO's 2024 Step Sing directors, and we cannot wait to see how they follow up on this year's show. Titled "Saved by the Bell," ATO's show followed winless boxer Lonesome Loser (Chris Berggren) as he prepares for a seemingly insurmountable fight against the reigning world champion, Him (Ian Lansing). In this comeback story for the ages, highlights included brothers' outstanding vocals and an incredible storyline that kept judges and audience members alike on the edges of their seats. ATO's show saw tremendous cheering from all four sold-out crowds, and many mothers and grandmothers alike told brothers that our show was their favorite. Clearly, the forty hours brothers spent practicing over the preceding three weeks were very well-spent. The praise ATO received for our show extends beyond the awards we earned. Because of the talented vocals displayed throughout our Step Sing performances, Samford's Sports Marketing and Communications Department invited the brothers of ATO to sing the national anthem at a Samford men's basketball game. Around a dozen brothers once again wowed Samford when they sang the anthem at the game against East Tennessee State University on February 4. Our show's success is a source of great pride for Kappa Rho because it demonstrates the unwavering love and respect we share with one another year-round and the unmatched quality of these men who share our sacred oaths.



## Brother Spotlight - Step Sing Directors

Step Sing is one of the most important and exciting events that the brothers of ATO have to look forward to every year. Choreographing and planning a show is a tough job that requires creativity and dedication to pull off. The job of executing and planning the dance moves, song choice, and implementation of new ideas falls on ATO's wonderful Step Sing directors. This year, our directors were Ryan Cruz, Sam Gould, and JT Ellison; all first-time directors in their sophomore year. The task of directing a show would be difficult for most, but this year, the show's results proved just how talented Sam, Ryan, and JT were. Being a director, especially as a young member of the chapter, can be stressful. Director Ryan Cruz, when asked about his feelings going into January, responded, "Being all sophomores made it very intimidating going in. We were going to be leading guys older than us. Being sophomores may have been a disadvantage in some ways, but I think it gave us the advantage of having a different perspective." Along with the benefits for the chapter and, as a group, all the directors agreed that this show benefited them on a personal level. Cruz added, "I learned to trust my gut, there were a lot of tough executive decisions we made as directors." From hours upon hours of practicing, to dress rehearsals, and late nights, the efforts of the directors cannot be understated. Sam Gould, when asked to reflect on his time with the committee replied, "Working with the Step Sing committee is an intense process that you are thrown into with little to no

preparation."

A common theme among the directors was the difficulty of leading seniors when going into rehearsals. However, from the moment practice began it was evident the directors developed and meshed well with senior leaders to be able to direct the best show possible. JT Ellison added that the difference of personalities benefitted the directors." He further commented, "Sam, Ryan, and I worked well together and balanced each other out. We all brought fresh perspectives to what Step Sing should be." The directors noted that the results, in part, were thanks to the hard work of all the brothers involved. They added how much fun Step Sing is and encouraged those who were not involved this year to join next year. "I would encourage them to give it a shot. It is a humbling journey going through the intensity of rehearsals—especially being so out of your comfort zone. However, the connections and memories you make are well worth it. There truly is no experience like it." says Ryan Cruz.

The show's success revolved around a myriad of factors. Everyone's dedication to the show each and every day, the creativity and planning of the committee, and the hard work from the brothers involved in tangential roles were all key parts of the show's resounding success. However, without the professional and exceptional skill of the directors the show would truly not have been possible. From the artistic genius reflected in the show being given the creativity award to personalities that covered each important aspect of a show's direction, the directors not only put on an amazing show but also helped to forge new bonds of brotherhood. We cannot thank JT, Ryan, and Sam enough, and we are excited to see their impact on Step Sing in their next two years as undergraduate brothers.



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## ATO Serve Day

On February 11, the chapter took part in an incredibly special chapter serve day. Brothers partnered with Christian Service Mission to serve Huffman Schools by sanitizing their surfaces throughout three different school campuses. As brothers sanitized the entirety of each of these campuses, they prayed for the teachers, kids, and general communities of each school. Brothers sanitized Sun Valley Elementary, Huffman Middle School, and Smith Middle School.

Nate Bass, freshman social service chair who set up this serve day, said, "The intention of our service opportunities is to cultivate community among our brothers and offer a sense of connectedness to those we serve. Serving others creates a bond that cannot come from anything else. Through creating meaningful serve days, our hope is that brothers are equally as impacted by serving as the places we serve at are. Serving is about far more than meeting material needs—heart change happens when we meet with those who have different life experiences than us. As we serve others, we are learning to show mercy. In mercy, hope is born. And because of hope, community is built." Going forward, ATO seeks to continue to better communities within the Birmingham area through these acts of service, and, as Nate articulated, ATO brothers seek to grow personally and as a chapter through the enriching activity of selfless service.



## Alumni Spotlight - Robby Defelice

Robby DeFelice is an ATO alumni that graduated in the spring of 2022. His degree from Samford is a bachelors in health science with a minor in nutrition. Post-graduation, Robby worked at Jeni's ice cream in Pepper Place before receiving a position at Bettola. Bettola is an upscale casual Italian restaurant in the heart of one of Birmingham's entertainment districts. At Bettola, Robby is a waiter's assistant, food runner, and host. In his free time, Robby enjoys spending time with his fellow ATO graduates, playing video games, and going to the gym. He is extremely personable, intelligent, and able to pick up tasks easily. The highlight of his first year out of college is ski trip he took. He said it was a great experience to spend time with some close friends and get a break from working. He enjoyed being in nature and being able to ski several day without worrying about other obligations. In the future, Robby plans to go to either physical therapy school or graduate school to become a chiropractor. He is unsure of where he would go to PT school but would want to attend Life University in Georgia if he decides to go down the chiropractic route.



## RECRUITMENT EVENT - MILK NIGHT

On February 1, Alpha Tau Omega held one of their annual spring recruitment events, Milk Night. Milk Night is a unique tradition of Kappa Rho spring recruitment where brothers and PNMs gather to drink a variety of milks and play games that involve drinking said milk. One of the main reasons we host Milk Night is to differentiate ourselves from other fraternities and to show off our originality and creativity to potential new members. Several activities took place that evening to keep the guys entertained, with “milk pong” being the most popular. Even if guys did not want to drink milk, they had the opportunity to connect and enjoy time with active brothers. Actives and PNMs alike had a blast, and the event was a great way to meet and help determine who will be representing ATO’s newest pledge class in the spring. Will Downs, a member of the newest pledge class, said, “ATO Milk Night was a fun experience that allowed me to get plugged in and see the amazing amount that ATO has to offer.” Milk Night remains one of ATO’s most attended recruitment events, and it looks to remain this way for many years to come.



## BROTHERHOOD EVENTS - GOAL BALL & ASSASSINS

The Art of Brotherly Competition: Goal Ball. Nothing quite matches the feeling, the high of walking onto the court with two of your brothers and securing your goggles to your face. Your eyes see darkness, but your ears see a sideline of cheering brothers. A silence drowns the crowd as the echoing sound of a ball bouncing toward the goal strikes your ears, and your team dives to stop it. Cheering erupts, but you still have no clue if the ball went in or not. Five minutes later you are still completely unaware of who is in lead and if you are still on the court or not. As you take off your goggles, you realize that your team lost and your chance at victory has fallen flat on the floor, much like the goalposts when a slight breeze defeats the might of the masking tape keeping it upright. Unless you are Ryan Cruz, Reeves Mileski, and Brennan Smith who are this year’s Goal Ball champions! Ryan Cruz stated, “I am thrilled with our win in goal ball. It’s always a team effort, and we worked hard to execute our strategy and stay focused throughout the game. I’m proud of my teammates, Brennan and Reeves, and we are grateful for the opportunity to compete at this level. We’ll savor this victory for now, but we know we have more challenges ahead and will keep working to improve.” These men fought hard and rolled harder, which earned the respect of all goal ballers alike. Assassins is a beloved Kappa Rho tradition where participating brothers have to utilize “kill words” to eliminate one another from the game, hoping to win the cash prize that waits at the end of the game for the last man standing and brother with the most eliminations. On Monday, February 20th, the campus became silent. No brothers to be seen. The usual ATO table in the university center was abandoned and left to other students of an unfamiliar crowd. It was the start of this great tradition, the game of assassins. Brothers were either avoiding contact or plotting their first moves, and everyone was watching their backs and listening closely to the leaves moving behind the bushes. The freshman dorms became a hunting ground for those with experience and a scary place to live for those calling it home. Deals were made; alliances were formed; brothers were

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betrayed; and bribes were attempted. No one was ever quite sure if today was the day they would hear their kill word. With the days passing by, more and more brothers are seen again enjoying the fresh air and not fearing but instead hoping to see another brother around the corner. These brothers have been cursed with failure but blessed with tranquility. Yet the game treads on slowly and silently for those willing to sacrifice everything.



## SPRING RECRUITMENT 2023

One of ATO's many major successes this spring was spring recruitment. This year, ATO had a smaller spring pledge class of seven compared to previous years, but this was intentional with the chapter's goals. Recruitment this year was led by Will McClain. When asked about the goals for spring rush, Will said, "Participating in Spring Rush has proven fruitful for Kappa Rho's past, and this year has shown much of the same. ATO is proactively cementing itself on campus to have the most stand-up guys who aren't afraid to make an impact on their campus. This spring, we focused on building personal relationships outside of rush to foster tighter bonds with the soon-to-be pledges. Watching us grow as a chapter has been the most rewarding part of my time at Samford and I cannot wait to keep it going." Spring recruitment was so successful in achieving these goals because of the simple events. By having such simple and fun events, such as milk night and watching the Birmingham Bulls hockey game, brothers were able to learn the potential new members (PNMs) personalities and how they

would integrate in the chapter. These simple events also helped the PNMs learn about the culture and brothers of ATO. This process allowed personal connections to form, leading to a tight-knit pledge class with a strong connection to active brothers. This approach to recruitment has continued ATO's growth and points to a bright future on Samford's campus.

## MOCK TRIAL

Recently, a few brothers in Kappa Rho had the privilege of being a part of the Mock Trial Regional Competition in Jackson, Mississippi at the Mississippi College School of Law. In this event, mock trial teams from all over the Southeast and East regions of the country came to compete in a mock trial tournament. Each team acts as either the plaintiff or the defense in courtroom style settings for each round. The brothers had a fantastic experience, utilizing and developing their law skills. Samford's team is fortunate to include members of Kappa Rho, including sophomore Preston Brent who played as an attorney at mock trial, sophomore Nate Davis who acted as a witness, and junior ATO Health and Safety Officer Matthew Gurley, who also served as a witness.



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## EXECUTIVE BOARD

Since the beginning of the semester, the newly elected 2023 executive board has already been hard at work to better Kappa Rho. David Sputh, who is from Tuscaloosa and is studying Economics, really enjoys the work he gets to perform as the new chapter President. Talking about what has excited him the most, he said, "I have enjoyed getting to represent the chapter to campus administration. Seeing the fraternity and being able to oversee the direction of the fraternity has been extremely rewarding." David has quickly taken on the mantle of this new role and we are all very excited to see what is in store for our chapter. He has experienced personal growth from being President. "I have seen myself grow in my patience and assertiveness. Being in this position lends itself to some tough decisions, and being able to execute when necessary is something I have grown in." David said, "I'm looking forward to leading the chapter through some exciting times. I truly think that we are at one of our most exciting times in the history of the chapter." He also loves getting to grow closer to the other members of the executive board. One of the other executive members is Evan Potter, the Vice President. Evan is from Franklin, Tennessee and is studying Law, Politics, and Society. Evan loves "serving as the Vice President because it means I can fully plug into the fraternity that has given so much to me. I truly enjoy dealing with all the aspects of running this fraternity, whether positive or negative, because it means I get to give back to ATO." Pouring his heart and soul into this new role, he has set an excellent example of what a leader looks like. Not only is he impacting the chapter in this role, but he is also being changed by it. "Being the Vice President has been a humbling experience because I have learned that I need to watch my words and actions much more carefully than when I was the Brotherhood Chair. I have also learned to appreciate and depend on the support of my brothers around me. I still hope to grow into my position and as a leader during my tenure." These gentlemen are leading the chapter into a bright future. Serving as our Chaplain, Birmingham local and Philosophy and Religion major John Porterfield

also contributes heavily to the culture of Kappa Rho. What John most enjoys about his role, "is just having the opportunity to meet guys where they are." He has also loved "diving into difficult conversations and really getting to know brothers in a deeper capacity." Our weekly Bible study is one way that he gets to really connect with the chapter, supporting and encouraging them through a message.

Jake Wilson, a Business Management major from Birmingham, is our treasurer. He is really pushing towards helping our brothers succeed and find the best ways for them to be financially stable. Our Secretary, Sam Gould, has represented our chapter well through his roles in the Samford Recruitment Team and as one of ATO's 2023 Step Sing directors. Additionally, as Secretary, he is really helping keep the brothers informed on what is happening in chapter by keeping the minutes and encouraging members to attend chapter. From Rome, Georgia, and studying Marketing, Will McClain is currently over our recruitment. Will really focused on finding ways for the brothers to get to know the potential new members in a better way. He successfully handled spring recruitment and provided the chapter with an excellent new pledge class of seven. In charge of educating this new pledge class about ATO and the Kappa Rho chapter, Reeves Mileski is from Hoover, Alabama studying Sports Administration with a Business minor. As a member educator, he is finding the best ways to bring up an upstanding pledge class and integrating them well into the chapter. Mitchell Drennen is our chapter Historian, and is in charge of keeping everyone up to date about what is happening within our chapter through the newsletter, website, and annual reports. As our chapter continues to evolve in new directions, Mitchell is able to share that information through our quarterly newsletters. Matthew Gurley has been really working towards helping brothers stay safe and be aware of how to best take care of themselves as the Health and Safety Officer. The 2023 executive board has a bright future ahead of them, and will lead Kappa Rho in our efforts to cultivate a place where brothers can become better men and grow during and beyond active membership.

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## Thank you

If you are reading this newsletter, we in Kappa Rho would like to thank you for your continued interest and support of the chapter that you helped create. Everyone that has been in Kappa Rho thus far has helped to shape the culture and brotherhood that we enjoy today. From the bottom of every undergraduate's heart, Thank you.

## Credits

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"Kappa Rho Awarded \$10,000": Written and Edited by Mitchell Drennen

"Step Sing": Written by Trey Wooley, Edited by Luke Bice

"Executive Board": Written by Noah Letcher, Edited by Logan Sanford

"Serve Day": Written and Edited by Mitchell Drennen

"Step Sing - Directors Spotlight": Written by Brian Jones, Edited by Luke Bice

"Alumni Spotlight - Robby DeFelice": Written by Hayden Humber, Edited by Mitchell Drennen

"Recruitment Event - Milk Night": Written by Michael Gurley, Edited by Mitchell Drennen

"Brotherhood Events - Goal Ball & Assassins": Written by Grant Fiala, Edited by Wesley Ledbetter

"Spring Recruitment 2023": Written by Michael Gurley, Edited by Mitchell Drennen

"Mock Trial": Written and Edited by Mitchell Drennen

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