



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MHS Alumni Spotlight: Mark Stevenson: Musician Turned Firefighter

If someone had asked Malibu High School alumni Mark Stevenson, “where do you see yourself in five years” the expected answer would have been something related to music. No one could have predicted this talented musician would have chosen a life dedicated to helping others, as a firefighter.

A 2012 graduate from Malibu High School (MHS) in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Stevenson attended Webster Elementary School in Malibu followed by Malibu Middle School (MMS) and then MHS. Throughout his time in SMMUSD, Stevenson was very involved with the music program and his talent caught the attention of the staff and his teachers.



“I started playing the trumpet when I was in the fourth grade and met Mr. Steven Ravaglioli, a teacher at that time, who was a huge inspiration to me,” said Stevenson.



Stevenson began taking private lessons from Ravaglioli outside of school. By the time Stevenson entered MMS, he became involved with the District’s honors orchestra performing at the annual Stairway to the Stars concerts. While he was in the sixth grade, Stevenson met Bill Bixler, a MHS music teacher, who continued to encourage him. Bixler recognized Stevenson’s talent, leading to Stevenson’s acceptance into the high school jazz band and orchestra.

Stevenson’s path in music continued to evolve as he started taking trumpet lessons from renowned movie soundtrack musicians such as Jon Lewis and Darren Mulder.

“By the 10th grade I had traveled all over the country and even had the opportunity to perform with an orchestra in Vienna, Austria, and I knew that I wanted music to be my path,” said Stevenson.

After auditioning for many conservatories and universities his senior year, Stevenson chose to attend UCLA where he received a music scholarship and was able to study with world renowned soloist, Jens Lindemann.



It was Stevenson's time at UCLA that shifted his focus from music to humanitarianism.

"While attending UCLA I worked a part-time job at the campus police department, which piqued my interest in a public safety career," said Stevenson. "Shortly after, I began volunteering on the weekends with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, became a certified emergency medical technician (EMT) and began working as a 911 EMT, as well as volunteering as a Sheriff search and rescue member. I ended up loving EMT so much that I went to paramedic

school through UCLA David Geffen's Center for Prehospital Care."

Stevenson went on to apply to the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and since 2019 has been working as a firefighter and paramedic at Fire Station 9, which is located on Skid Row and happens to be the busiest fire station in the United States.

"I chose a career in public safety because I wanted to be a part of something larger than myself and to create solutions for those who have difficulty solving their own problems, often on the worst day of their lives," said Stevenson.

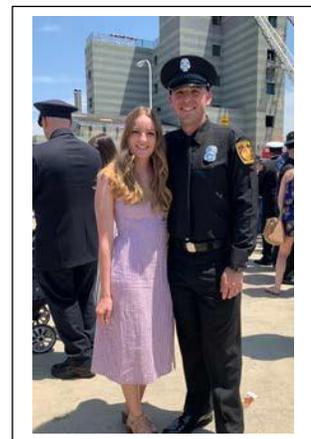
Ultimately, Stevenson went back to school and completed his bachelor's degree in classical music performance at UCLA.

Even though he has chosen to pursue a career dedicated to helping others, music is still an influential part of Stevenson's life.

"I still play quite often and I am actually one of the LAFD buglers / trumpet players assigned to the LAFD honor guard to play for department funerals and other events," said Stevenson. "I love it and it still keeps me active. I most recently performed during our annual 9/11 ceremony at the Frank Hotchkin's Memorial Training Center which was a huge honor."

When he is not helping others or playing music, Stevenson, now 28, can be found spending time with his wife, Emily, and their dog. Additionally, he is heavily involved with the Malibu Search and Rescue Team and currently runs the new member training pro, as well as responding to rescue call-outs on a 24/7 basis.

"My time within SMMUSD was incredible and I attribute much of my success to the schools, but particularly the teachers that I had while attending them," said Stevenson. "The staff always fostered an environment for students to pursue their passions. I think that without that support I would not have been able to pursue music as avidly as I did and therefore would not have ended up going down the path I did with UCLA and the LAFD."



Written by Diana Bouchaaya, Communications Specialist

Photos courtesy of Mark Stevenson

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