

ALUMNI RELATIONS

FOUND: ONE FRATERNITY RING



Anyone who has ever lost something that couldn't be replaced knows just how Stephen Krauss (ENGL '69) felt when he lost his fraternity ring more than 20 years ago. He thought it was in the jewelry box, where it belonged. When he realized it was gone, he was heartbroken because the ring evoked so many great memories.

He abandoned the idea of recovering the ring, realizing that the chances of someone else finding it and taking the time to locate him were slim.

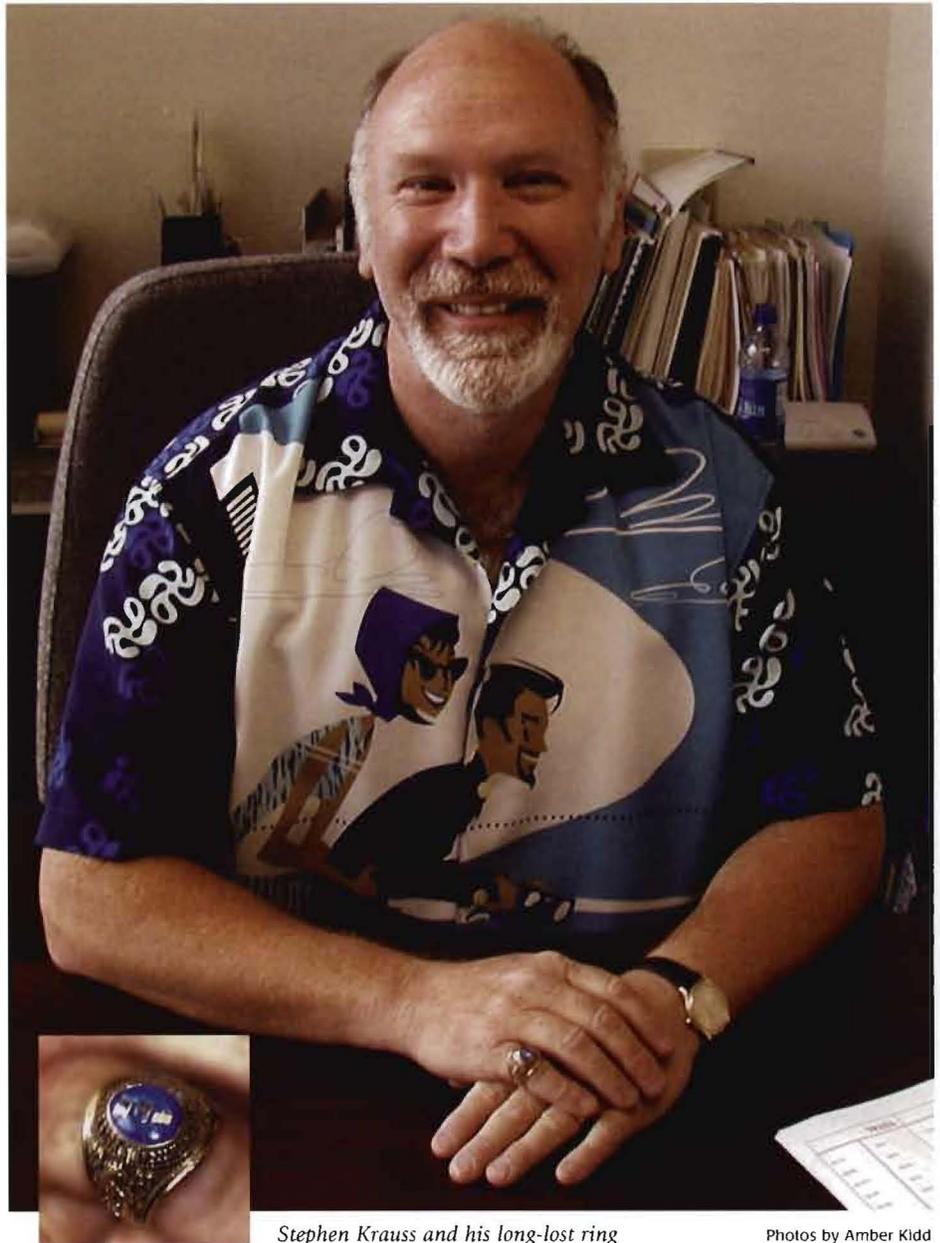
Little did he know that Jennifer Ward-Batts, an assistant professor of economics at Claremont McKenna College, would come to his aid.

Ward-Batts's mother, Linda Owenby Gillespie, found the ring in a North Carolina rental unit couch in the late 1990s. Not knowing how to find its owner, Gillespie put the ring in the back of her jewelry box, where it sat until her daughter's recent visit. Gillespie showed it to Ward-Batts, who noticed the owner's initials, the fraternity insignia and the engraved college name.

When Ward-Batts returned to California, she did a little Internet research, e-mailing the alumni associations at Cal Poly and Cal Poly, Pomona, but there were no solid leads.

Undaunted, she turned to the fraternal organization's national office, which deduced from the information on the ring that the owner was a Cal Poly graduate named Stephen R. Krauss.

Ward-Batts then contacted the Alumni Relations office, which let Krauss – a San Luis Obispo resident and longtime Cal Poly supporter – know that his ring had been found. He says he was simply "shocked." Within two days, Ward-Batts



Stephen Krauss and his long-lost ring

Photos by Amber Kidd

had solved the mystery of a ring 20 years lost.

"I was taught that people help people," she says. "You know, the golden rule. If it was my ring, I'd want someone to try to return it to me. And it was a challenge, like a treasure hunt."

For Krauss the ring's return only enriched his belief in the good that comes from this institution. As a student in the late 1960s, Krauss was a founding member of his fraternity, Alpha Epsilon

Pi, and later a leader in developing the cultural arts program on campus. He reflects fondly on the wonderful relationships between students and faculty members and the times that contributed to his special experiences at Cal Poly.

"Cal Poly changed my life. I loved going to Cal Poly," Krauss says.

And now he has yet another special memory – and a ring – to add to his collection of memories and mementos.

– Amber Kidd