



2022
INDUCTEE



John Markus

Media, Pitmaster, Celebrity, Educator, Author, Humanitarian, Business/Industry

Born in central Ohio, at a time and place where only hot and fast grilling was practiced, Markus left the Buckeye State to attend four years of college. He worked hard, but loved playing the tenor saxophone more, so the college degree he received was accompanied by only above average grades. After college, Markus moved to Southern California and caused his parents' anxiety to ramp up by taking a job writing Mighty Mouse cartoons. After a year writing the adventures of Mighty, Pearl Pureheart and Oil Can Harry, Markus hoped to avoid his parents' new dream of him attending law school. Motivated by a continued career in television, he traded writing cartoon figures and began writing for live actors. The series, TAXI, led to The Cosby Show; he co-created Different World, and began scripting episodes of The Larry Sanders Show, then Lateline-- well, the story takes a turn there...

In 1998, Markus' writing partner on Lateline claimed to be the "best grill-meister" in New England" and, after a long day's work, this self-acclaimed pitmaster from Minnesota grilled Markus his signature spare ribs. In a mere 45 minutes. As you can imagine, these spares would've be scored "rawhide" on the tenderness scale and, after a lot of gnawing, a switch flipped in Markus' head: what is this cuisine, why is it beloved, and how do you make it right? After some research, he ended up on a plane to Kansas City, apprenticed to legendary World Champion Paul Kirk, and his journey in Low & Slow began. Along the way, on East 26th St. in Manhattan, while cooking with Kirk at The Big Apple Block Party, he met Chris Lily at 4am, while he was refueling his Jedmaster. Which led to the creation of The All Star BBQ Showdown series on The Outdoor Life Network. Then, re-imagined as BBQ PITMASTERS, a docudrama about 7 teams competing on the circuit, the show was picked up by TLC. To this day, after 12 years and scores of episodes, the show continues its run on The Discovery Network: Destination America.

Continued on Next Page



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In 2010, sponsored by the USO, Markus recruited five of the tv series' winningest pitmasters and organized a mission to bring authentic low and slow barbecue to our men and women of the military stationed at two bases in Kuwait. The team traveled Camp Buehring, 8 miles from the border of Iraq, and Camp Arifjan, a forward deployment base in the south. Under a full moon over the Kuwait desert, over 5,300 soldiers and marines were served hot smoked brisket and chickens and all the fixin's. Markus is currently working on completing a documentary about the mission, "The Kings of BBQ Barbecue Kuwait."