

An Interview with Matt Felts

I recently had the opportunity to interview Matt Felts of the Monument Quartet. Though somewhat new to the Monument Quartet, he has been around in Southern Gospel for several years, previously performing with the Gloryway Quartet, the Skyline Boys, and the Blackwood Gospel Quartet.

DJM: *Could you tell us a little bit about yourself? How did you get your start in Southern Gospel music?*

Felts: I grew up in St. Louis, MO. As a kid my Dad was a big southern gospel fan. I would hear the Goodmans or the Blackwoods playing about every time we got in the car. I was never a big fan until one day I walked in on him listening to a Cathedrals video. I was hooked. I started singing in high school and doing solos in church. I was accepted to the Julliard school of music in NYC but chose to accept a baseball scholarship instead. I graduated college with a business marketing degree. After college I spent some time in minor league baseball but that didn't work out so I found myself as head of Human Resources for a large company. I continued to sing but mostly solo dates and in church. One day a pastor friend called and said that he met a guy who was looking for a tenor for a local southern gospel group, the Gloryway Quartet out of Mansfield, Ohio. I sang with them for over a year before moving on.

DJM: *What groups have you performed with?*

Felts: I sang with the Gloryway Quartet and then left them to join the Skyline Boys. After that I briefly filled in with the Blackwood Gospel Quartet before joining Monument Quartet.

DJM: *Who would you name as your biggest musical influences?*

Felts: My biggest influence musically has been Ernie Haase. I have also learned a lot from Danny Funderburk, Bill Shaw and Rosie Rozell. I have studied their styles for hours on records. I never dreamed that I would someday be blessed to call Ernie and Danny friends and have the privilege to learn from them. I have submerged myself in the history of southern gospel. There have been so many great singers over the years and I have tried to learn from as much as I could from them.

DJM: *I understand you are a songwriter. Have any of your songs been recorded?*

Felts: Yes I have written several songs. I have recorded a few of my own songs on solo albums and I have been blessed to have a few groups pick up some of my songs as well. It's really exciting when you hear something you've written being sung by someone. I hope to have some recorded by us on some upcoming albums.

DJM: *Have you recorded any solo projects?*

Felts: I have recorded two solo albums and am currently working on a third. This time I plan on being joined on some songs by some other great artists (Danny Funderburk, Paul Lancaster, etc.) I hope to have that out later this year.

DJM: *What led to your decision to join Monument Quartet?*

Felts: The decision to join Monument truly was God led. My wife and I were praying on where God would lead us. We both felt led to move to Nashville. We decided to move to Smyrna so we could

attend Johnny Minick's church, River of Life. The day after we decided this, Marshall called asking me to come try out with Monument. When we found out that he was based in Johnny's church we were very excited. The moment I met Marshall I knew I had found God's direction for me and my family.

DJM: *Other than singing tenor, what are your duties with the group?*

Felts: Marshall allows all the guys in the group to use their abilities when needed. We all come from such diverse backgrounds. John has a degree in vocal performance, I come from the marketing and business field, Brad has over twenty years in Gospel music and Marshall has an extensive business background. We really are a team. When we are in town we spend most days rehearsing but we also help out with bookings.

DJM: *How can readers of this interview get in touch with you and/or your group?*

Felts: We love to hear from our friends. You can contact us through our website (www.monumentquartet.com) or through [our myspace account](#). I do my best to get back with the friends who email or write us. Hope to hear from you.