

# Creating heirlooms of life events on film

Paul Korver recalls being followed by his parents with a Super 8mm camera practically his entire childhood. Today, Korver runs Fifty Foot Films and Paper Tape Films, two Hollywood-based companies, dedicated to memorializing major life events on film.

"I had fun shooting some Super 8 growing up, but never thought of it as a possible profession," Korver says. "I'm inspired by films that explore the human condition mixed with a great score."

He started taking still photographs in college, while studying medicine and then anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). When Korver moved into an abandoned apartment in New York City, he found a working Minolta Autopak-8 camera in the rubble. "I put in batteries, pulled the trigger, and my obsession with celluloid was rekindled," he says.

**"We believe that when it comes to documenting your life, film is more organic, human, and emotionally accessible than video."**

A few years later, Korver filmed a friend's wedding with his Super 8mm camera. When it was his turn to get married, he wanted to hire someone to document his special day on film. However, he was unable to find anyone who offered that service. Korver and his wife, Kristine, envisioned an opportunity for doing work that they both loved.

"We believe that when it comes to documenting your life, film is more organic, human, and emotionally accessible than video," Korver says. "When we started Fifty Foot Films five years ago, it felt like an idea that was totally foreign to the general public. But film looks better than video. You can buy a 20-year-old camera online and create images that are so much more authentic than the latest, more expensive video cameras at an electronics store."

Korver began by shooting, editing and mixing music for all the company's Super 8 projects. Now, Fifty Foot Films offers all film

formats including Super 16 and 35mm. The Korvers recently launched a sister-business called Paper Tape Films that solely offers Super 8mm services in over 13 cities across the United States.

"The idea that we had for Paper Tape was to go back to our roots of making quality Super 8mm films accessible to more people at a competitive price," Korver says. "When KODAK VISION2 500T 7218 film became available in the Super 8 format, it totally changed my ability to shoot a low-light wedding or reception."

Korver also points out the archival benefits of making a Super 8 movie of those special moments in life. "Not only will it be more beautiful, but it will easily outlast anything shot on video in terms of its resilience," he says.

"I've seen wedding footage from the 1930s that has been in a box in someone's attic that looks gorgeous after a transfer. Conversely, my neighbor pulled out his 20th wedding anniversary video shot in 1987. There was barely an image on the tape."

Korver says their film gets processed all over the place, depending on the stock and the needs of the job. All of their Super 16 and 35mm negative gets transferred on a Spirit DataCine at HD resolution. For Super 8 and 16mm telecines, Korver recently purchased a Rank-Cintel URSA Diamond and da Vinci DUI telecine suite to bring those transfers in-house, providing efficiently-priced transfers to small format and independent filmmakers.

Some high-profile projects produced by Fifty Foot Films include the nuptials of *Private Practice* star Kate Walsh to studio executive Alex Young, pop star Christina Aguilera to producer Jordan Bratman, baseball player Mike Piazza to model/actress Alicia Rikter, and actress Mariska Hargitay to actor Peter Hermann.

"The beauty of film is that each format has its own personality," Korver remarks. "We offer all formats, so our clients can choose what look resonates with them. That way, they get to take part in the creative process too. We just shot a huge wedding in France with the new ARRI 416 Super 16 cameras, but I'm still waiting for that chance to do one in IMAX®!"



1 One of the many high-profile projects produced by Fifty Foot Films included the wedding of baseball player Mike Piazza to model/actress Alicia Rikter.  
2 Filmmaker Paul Korver of Fifty Foot Films.