

Father and son Mike and Josh Smith building legacy of philanthropy



“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” – Winston Churchill

By investing in the community that has invested in their business, Mike and Josh Smith have established their company, Insurance and Risk Managers, as a fixture of philanthropy in Lincoln County.

That’s been his philosophy since Mike, president of IRM, entered the insurance business over 40 years ago and much of the Brookhaven community has benefitted from his support through the years.

Often presented with opportunities by groups seeking their support, the Smith’s prefer not to focus on branding their company, but saving that money and investing it back in to the community.

“When we’re approached with giving opportunities we prefer to help fund anything youth-oriented,” Mike said. “I understand that youth programs like BA’s Robotics Club can’t support itself, so we need to get involved.”

Both were solicited at the same time for *Building on Tradition*, a Capital Campaign for Brookhaven Academy, by Head of School, Julie Wright and J.F. Smith Group Vice President, Laura Robertson. They knew by the time the meeting was over what they were going to do.

“We went into that meeting with a number in mind and we actually gave a little more than that,” said Josh. “We were impressed with the proposal and we saw the need was there to upgrade academic technology, so we pledged even more.”

Currently the vice president of the Board of Trustees and a Brookhaven Academy graduate, Josh has continued his father’s legacy of giving.

“I know that BA has always had support in athletics,” Josh said. “We made sure that our gift would only be used to fill academic needs because as a two-time board member, I understood what our needs

were.” Mike added, “We always want our gifts to lean towards academics and technology.”

The Smith’s believe in the future of BA, beyond today. Future teacher development and funding the faculty endowment are at the top of the list. The Smith’s have a history of upgrading academic technology at BA. They gave 50 percent of the cost of all the SmartBoard’s needed in the elementary school and purchased iPad’s and MacBook’s for all of the teachers. All of this began with the tour of campus Julie Wright gave Mike Smith a few years ago.

“We support the schools in Lincoln County as well Pike County, since we also have an office there,” Mike said.

The Smith’s are perhaps best known for organizing the Tucker Golf Tournament, played in Brookhaven, for the last 18 years. Habitat for Humanity and more recently Folds of Honor have benefitted from the successful tournament. The tournament is held in memoriam to Mike’s son and Josh’s brother Tucker, who was killed in a tragic accident in 1996.