**Fund Highlights**

**Josiah Hibberd Scholarship in Memory of Margaretta Durnall Hibberd**

- Established 2013

During his 43 years in education, Josiah “Joss” Hibberd influenced the lives of thousands of Great Valley students. Josh was known for keeping a cluttered desk, taking students on thousands of field trips, and ceaselessly helping students. When he passed away in 2012 at age 86, he left a legacy that will reach new generations of students in perpetuity.

A West Chester native, Josh was an extremely athletic young man. He joined the Navy while a senior at West Chester High School. From 1944-46 Josh served in World War II primarily in the Pacific Theatre. The ship he served on was one of the first to enter Japanese waters during occupation. Josh remained in the military reserves for 30 years.

After returning from WWII, Josh earned his teaching degree from West Chester State Teachers College. In 1952 he began a 36-year career at Malvern Elementary School, first as a teacher and, in 1956, as principal. Beginning in 1961, Josh taught at Sugartown Elementary before capping his career with a decade at Great Valley Middle School. After his 1993 retirement, Josh continued to head intramural sports programs.

Great Valley School District Business Manager Chuck Linderman recalls when two now administrators came to the school to meet Josh for the first time in 1969. “They went into the gym, and there was a guy with a tie talking to some kids. There was also another boy wearing an untucked white shirt sweeping with a push-broom,” Linderman said. “They went up to the guy in the tie. But that was the custodian. Principal Josh was the untucked other guy.”

Josh got to know his future estate planning attorney over many cups of coffee at Gee’s Restaurant in West Chester. Timothy Knauer Esq. remembers, “We both enjoyed a good breakfast. Gee’s was just around the block from my office and Josh’s home.”

Over time, we struck upon interesting conversations about history, the military, travel, the future of our country… Josiah was a Cold War expert and I was a novice. Then one day Josh realized that as an attorney, I could draw up his will.”

Josiah’s will is relatively brief. Yet it was a complex puzzle to figure out. Notes Tim, “Josiah had no family. No relatives. No heirs. Although money didn’t mean much to him, certain things did. So, we had to figure out how to handle Josh’s collection.”

Tim adds, “When we started to consider a charitable scholarship, and also to honor Josh’s mother, I needed to better understand philanthropic estate planning options. That’s when I reached out to some other well-respected estate planning attorneys from other firms, to get some ideas. Sometime around 1998, I ran the question by John A. Featherman III Esq., who was at MacErlean Harvey at the time. John mentioned that the Community Foundation could be a charitable conduit for complex assets, and that the Community Foundation could be entrusted to follow Josiah’s intent forever.”

At the same time, Linderman recalls, “Josh had a chat about charitable foundations with Dr. Rita Jones, Superintendent of Schools for Great Valley School District. Rita was on the Community Foundation Board of Directors, and she mentioned the Community Foundation to Josh as an option.”

The massive scale of Josh’s collection created quite a challenge for the estate. Thankfully, William H. Bunch Auctions & Appraisals was up to the challenge.

Bill Bunch enthuses, “I’ve seen a lot of homes ‘filled to the brim’ in my career. The Hibberd homes on Minet Street are in the Top 3. Every time we thought we’ve culled through the valuables, at the bottom of a pile we would find another gem. Josh was an incredible collector. He collected massive amounts of beloved collectibles. He had an eye for the amusing, the unusual, the colorful. An incredibly unique guy. Josh collected what he liked. He didn’t care if it was valuable. If it was pleasing to his eye or his mind, he collected it.”

The first Hibberd auction took place at Bunch’s Auction House on February 9, 2013. Over 400 people attended the all-day event. Many alumni, students and teachers from Greater Valley attended and spoke fondly of “Josh” or “Hibbs” as they called him. Additional
Josiah Hibberd Scholarship

The auctions included huge numbers antique military items, coins, clocks, books, musical instruments, fine art, and historic autographs. Notable items include a shrunken head, a larger-than-life wooden pirate, 100+ rubber duckies, 1,000+ bobble head statues, and 19 suits of armor.

While Josh’s collections were being auctioned by Bunch and Josh’s homes were being sold by the Jean Gross Team & Keller Williams, Josh’s IRA was in transition. With the help of Jack Karakelian, Peter Snelling and Karen Kasper of Merrill Lynch in Exton, Josh’s $1.1 million IRA was transferred to the Community Foundation and invested for the long term.

From the IRA proceeds, the first $50,000 was awarded to scholars at Great Valley’s June 2013 graduation ceremony.

“The first scholarship award ceremony was incredibly touching,” notes Dave Elderkin, Community Foundation Board member who volunteered to help with the myriad of estate transition details. “I was sitting onstage with Tim Knauer and the scholarship envelopes were awarded. Teachers and parents in the audience sure remembered their beloved Josiah Hibberd. But they didn’t have any clue about the amount of money his legacy fund would generate for scholarship awards.”

“After the graduation ceremony ended, one of the four scholarship winners made a beeline for Tim and me. She was shaking and there were tears in her eyes. She explained to us that the night before, she and her parents sat at their kitchen table and made a terribly hard decision—they decided they didn’t have enough money to send her to college. She showed the scholarship envelope to her father, and he burst into tears. He was elated. Inside the envelope was a five figure scholarship award from Josiah Hibberd’s fund. That kid’s going to college. Josh changed a life that day.”

Josiah Hibberd’s life was well lived. His military service preceded an incredible teaching career. Under his caring, energetic, watchful eye, thousands of students were inspired to become life-long learners. He surrounded himself with his collections – of treasured items, lists of field trips, and beloved friends.

And in the end, it is really another beginning. The things Josh treasured during his lifetime created a legacy for future generations of inspiring teachers to come. A life that changed lives.

Godspeed, Mr. Hibberd.

~ BM, Phoenix, AZ