

# fund highlights



## JOSIAH HIBBERD SCHOLARSHIP IN MEMORY OF MARGERETTA DURNALL HIBBERD

- established 2013

During his 43 years in education, Josiah “Josh” 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 28-year career at Malvern Elementary School, first as a teacher and, in 1956, as principal. Beginning in 1981, Josh taught at

Sugartown Elementary before capping his career with a decade at General Wayne Middle School. After his 1993 retirement, Josh continued to head intramural sports programs.

Great Valley School District Business Manager Chuck Linderman recalls when two new 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 a guy wearing an untucked white shirt sweeping with a push-broom,” Linderman said. “They went up to the guy with the tie. But that was the custodian. Principal Josh was the untucked other guy.” Adds Linderman, “If you caught Josh in the morning, he might have his tie on, loosened a bit. By the end of the day, the tie was gone, and his shirt was usually out.”

In 1992, the Philadelphia Inquirer published an article on Josh, just prior to his retirement: “It’s hard to see Josiah Hibberd when he sits at his desk in his classroom at the General Wayne Middle School. He’s surrounded by sand paintings in bottles, wooden sailboats, a suspension bridge, a hamster, a mouse, a parakeet, a cockatiel and several dozen bottles filled with colored liquid that simulate ocean waves. In the back of the room, there are volcanoes, some active (with a little baking soda and vinegar, that is), and a ping-pong table that doubles as a place for papers and, after school, for actual games.”



### And there were the field trips.

Over his career, Josh took students and parents on 7,800 trips. Students remember the log book Josh kept, as he made them sign in before he let them in his car. In the 1992 Inquirer article, Josh said, “I got the idea for the trips when I

was in Sunday school as a youngster. The teacher Mr. Troutman said he’d take students with the top attendance on a trip. I went to the New York World’s Fair, Annapolis, West Point, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. ... The chief goal in social studies and teaching is to try and get children to become future good citizens for society. If people had hobbies of some nature, they’d be happier and wouldn’t get bored. Field trips can get the kids interested in something, and then they’ll learn more.”

As he neared retirement, Josh spoke with Linderman about his dreams for the future. Linderman recalls, “Of course he wanted to do something for students, and to carry forth his convictions about the importance of teaching. So a scholarship fund was a natural. He also wanted to somehow honor his mother, Margeretta. Her death always pained him deeply, as she died while Josh was overseas in World War II.”



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 up interesting conversations about history, the military, travel, the future of our country... Josh was a Civil War expert and I was a novice. Then one day Josh realized that as an attorney, I could draw up his will.”

Josh’s will is relatively brief. Yet it was a complex puzzle to figure out. Notes Tim, “Josh 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 how 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 MacElree 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 Josh’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.”



These two referrals, combined with the Community Foundation’s location in the historic Lincoln Building,

“sealed the decision” for Josh. Josh had Tim Knauer Esq. write the Community Foundation into his will as his sole beneficiary. Josh asked that his wishes not be formally communicated to the Community Foundation. However, Josh informally communicated the possibility--as long as the Foundation never ‘bothered’ him. The Community Foundation sent an annual report to Josh once a year, and didn’t bother him otherwise.

In Fall 2012, the Community Foundation received its first formal communication from the Estate of Josiah Hibberd. His executor, Timothy Knauer Esq., noted that Josh had died in September, leaving the Community Foundation as the sole beneficiary of

his estate. Josh’s will stated that the Community Foundation create an endowed scholarship fund to help Great Valley High School graduates pursue teaching careers.

When the Community Foundation met with Dr. Alan Lonoconus, Superintendent of Schools for the Great Valley School District and Chuck Linderman, Business Manager, they already knew of the scholarship. Josh had told them about it in general terms.

**However, they were astounded at the amount of the estate, which should settle at over \$1.5 million.**

Amazed, Chuck Linderman said, “I’m bowled over. I don’t think Josh ever looked at his paycheck. He probably didn’t look at his IRA statements. He didn’t care about money. Josh didn’t spend money on fancy anything. To my surprise, he must have only spent a modest amount on his treasured collections.”

Money didn’t mean a lot to Josh. Kids did. And collecting things he loved did. Yet Josh wanted everything he collected to be auctioned, so the proceeds could be added to his scholarship fund legacy.



### 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 Miner Street are in the Top 3. Every time we thought we’d 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 Great Valley attended and spoke fondly of “Josh” or “Hibb” as they called him. Additional



# Josiah Hibberd Scholarship

auctions took place during Spring 2013 as valuables continued to be uncovered.



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.**

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*A life that changed lives.  
Godspeed, Mr. Hibberd.*

~ BM, Phoenix, AZ

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