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JOLIET AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM RECEIVES ENDOWMENT FROM WADSWORTH FAMILY, TO BE NAMED FOR FORMER MUSEUM DIRECTOR TONY CONTOS

The Joliet Area Historical Museum has taken a big step forward in its goal to strengthen its financial stability and long-term viability. Brent Wadsworth, founder of Wadsworth Golf Construction Company in Plainfield, and his family, citing a continued interest in promoting the cultural and historical aspects of the community for the benefit of Joliet citizens, have contributed a generous amount to the Museum in order to establish an endowment fund. One of the only stipulations was that the fund is to be named in honor of the Museum’s past Director, Tony Contos.

Upon hearing the news, Contos commented that support from the Wadsworth family reflected a positive move forward not just for the Museum, but the entire Joliet community: “The Wadsworth family’s choice to establish this endowment for the Joliet Area Historical Museum is another example of their long-term belief in the Joliet area and the people and institutions who quietly support the fiber of the community. I am honored and humbled by their request to name the endowment in this manner. It is most meaningful that it is established by a family of their character.”

Greg Peerbolte, the Museum’s current Director, noted that the establishment of this endowment fund, which allows the Museum to utilize earnings generated by the principle, was the result of a long-term goal and puts the Joliet Area Historical Museum in elite company: “The establishment of the Anthony B. Contos Endowment Fund is a huge game-changer for our organization. It demonstrates a great show of support in our goal to expand long-term services to the community as we seek additional financial support from grant-making organizations and individual donors. Endowments are hallmarks of large, well-established organizations, so we are no doubt in great company.”

The Museum will now seek to leverage Wadsworth’s gift to attain additional community support to grow the fund, Peerbolte continued, “The Wadsworth family puts much thought into their investments, so we are charged not only with managing these funds wisely, but actively growing them by enlisting the support of the Joliet community.” Peerbolte stated that the Museum would soon be issuing a community challenge with the goal of doubling the fund within one calendar year of the campaign announcement.

The fund will also solidify a relationship between the Museum and the Joliet American Legion Band, in accordance with the Wadsworths’ request. After the Band was put out of their rehearsal space over the summer, officers of the Band approached Museum staff, and a new home for the Band was created in the Museum’s Caterpillar Auditorium. Peerbolte continued, “Following a successful rooftop concert over the summer, our organizations became fast friends. I quickly learned that that Joliet American Legion Band is among the most treasured and respected entities in the Joliet community. The Band’s rich history speaks for itself, so the Museum acting as its home base is a natural fit.” He continued that the Museum and Legion Band were currently in talks to develop an annual concert at the Museum, the proceeds of which would benefit the endowment.

Peerbolte encourages anyone interested in learning more about the Anthony B. Contos Endowment Fund at the Joliet Area Historical Museum, to contact him at the Museum (815) 723-5201.
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