

# Retired businessman adds LMC into his trust

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**BENTON TOWNSHIP** — A retired businessman and Lake Michigan College alumnus is giving back in a big way to the institution that affected his life.

Edward Todd, who attended LMC from 1954 to 1956, is adding the college to a charitable trust he'd created for several other entities that made a mark in his life.

"I don't think, right now, especially in the state of Michigan, there's anything more important than education," Todd said. "So I do what I can, mostly for the high school."

In LMC's case, the trust contributions will be targeted for the Edward J. Todd Business Education and Resource Center, said LMC President Bob Harrison.

"Mr. Todd has put us in his estate plan, so he's a very nice man. I'm not sure what the valuation will be, but it's something for the future," Harrison said.

Harrison's comments followed last month's meeting, where the board recognized him for his contribution.

The center is part of a major overhaul envisioned for the Napier Avenue campus —

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for which LMC is raising \$7.5 million as part of its "Campaign for Tomorrow" initiative. Furthermore, LMC has applied for a \$17.8 million state capital outlay grant.

The BERC, as the center will be called, is envisioned as a multi-purpose space for students, faculty and aspiring entrepreneurs "to study, interact, and work to enhance their learning experience," a summary on the college's website states.

The trust gained momentum after Todd's stepfather died in 2010, according to Todd and Ron Weimer, vice president at Hilliard Lyons, who helped to create it.

"My accountant very seriously asked me one day, 'Have you thought about it (a trust)?' It never entered my mind," Todd said. "I said, 'The only idea I had was to set up a scholarship fund at St. Joe High School, do it after I die, put it in my will.' He said, 'No, do it now, while you're alive.' That's when I found out about a charitable trust, what it is, how

it works."

Todd's primary charitable focuses are education and business, Weimer said.

"We also give back to St. Joe Today, where we're very instrumental," he said.

Todd spent his early childhood in Muskegon Heights before moving to St. Joseph in 1947.

He graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1954, and spent his next two years at LMC – or Benton Harbor Community College, as the institution was known, according to a biography

posted by the St. Joseph Public Schools Foundation.

Todd finished his education at Western Michigan University, from which he graduated with a degree in business administration.

His stepfather, Paul Suchovsky, made his mark in St. Joseph with a distribution business, West Michigan Wholesale, "which was on Niles Avenue, where Wendy's is, and his warehouse was," Todd recalled. "He sold wholesale – candy, cigarettes, toys."

Suchovsky then sold

West Michigan Wholesale to develop the Hilltop Garden Center, where Todd worked with him until 2000.

"I worked for him until he wasn't able to carry on anymore, and then, I retired with him," Todd said.

After his stepfather's death, Todd became trustee of the Paul and Rose Suchovsky Charitable Trust.

He then named the St. Joseph Public Schools Foundation as a beneficiary of the trust, and used it to endow six \$5,000 scholarships in perpetuity

for St. Joseph High School graduates planning to pursue business careers.

In time, Todd added other entities to the trust.

"I wanted to pick all those (organizations) that had meaning for me," he said.

Todd supports causes outside the trust, including Habitat for Humanity, along with the Noah Project, an animal rescue organization, and Every

Woman's Place, a women's shelter, he said. The latter two organizations are based in Muskegon.

"All things are, to me, worthwhile," he said.