

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Bill Waddell

FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE BY HONORING OUR TRADITIONS

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In Fort Thomas, we try to have an ever-constant eye on how to improve, while always listening to the wise words of those who came before. We are a town where the new and old cross paths, ever evolving with new bustling businesses, outdoor escapes, new residences—yet still keeping the older traditions that serve as a foundation from which to build.

William 'Bill' Waddell, Highlands Class of 1958, has always wanted to give back to his hometown and alma mater, even after eventually moving away and seeking out dreams that spanned farther than his neighborhood. He is beckoned back even still, he says, because of the vast experiences and memories that will always be kept close to his heart. "Highlands is a very special place and I think only those of us who have fully experienced and gone through high school here can feel that."

Waddell grew up in Fort Thomas with a passion for this town sparking deep within him at an early age. "My history in Fort Thomas really starts with my father, **Ewell E. "Judge" Waddell**. He was a head football coach at HHS, later the superintendent, and always a role model for me, playing such a big role in our town...I wanted to be like that."

One of Waddell's favorite memories from his senior year was on the front steps of the old Highlands High School building. "We would gather on the front steps...we'd all sit there together, just casually trading war stories, it almost didn't feel like we were at school," said Waddell.

Waddell and his family started a well-known, honorable legacy. This family has been ingrained in Highlands for generations sharing their history, knowledge and traditions with faculty and students, continuing to teach lessons. In 2016, he was inducted into the Highlands High School Athletic Hall of Fame. The plaque he was awarded hangs in the halls of HHS.

"We [the Waddell family] are so proud of how Highlands has grown with this community and the whole dedication behind this school from people who give themselves completely to the cause."

Waddell works to make Fort Thomas a continuous part of his life, dedicating his time to Fort Thomas values and ideals. To remember his incredible experiences and to honor his father, in 2004 he established the Judge Waddell Scholarship,



encouraging others to pursue a career in education. "We have awarded 12 scholarships of almost \$100,000 to those pursuing a teaching career." Two of these scholars returned to teach at Moyer Elementary.

Mr. Waddell still makes visits to Fort Thomas a priority, and is in the process of creating what he calls a "micro museum" that encompasses small items and stores from the old Highlands High School. Almost like a time capsule, as he calls it, keeping as many old memories preserved as possible, for this, he says, is how we thrive as a community.

"The micro museum would have a ton of artifacts from the class of 1958 or just Highlands in general. Like a piece of the old building wall or floor tile, showing the importance of how things used to be and the memories shared that some often forget as time passes us by."

"Highlands Stories is seeking artifacts and mementos from every era of Highlands history, this is a place where all age groups can share," said Waddell. To participate in "Highlands Stories," please visit FTEF.org/highlands-stories.

With minds continually set on the future; however, always being able to take time to acknowledge and learn from past experiences—this is what our town of Fort Thomas seeks to accomplish—with the most generous help from people who can understand what both the past and future can offer, people who bring the most genuine love and passion for all generations. This is how Fort Thomas continues to grow and flourish, and this is because of alumni like Bill Waddell.

