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Donor Profile: The Gift that Lasts

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THE GIFT THAT LASTS

Craig Smith and Linda Fontana-Smith

DePaul alumnus **Craig Smith (JD '80, LLM '83)** and his wife, Linda Fontana-Smith, believe in the power of education.

Mrs. Fontana-Smith, a former educator and a product of Catholic schools, says, "Education is one gift you can give that will have a positive impact on future generations. Craig and I believe that our ability to give back wouldn't be possible if it weren't for Craig's DePaul education. When we discussed what would happen to our estate in the future, we chose to give to DePaul."

The couple has made a \$1 million planned gift to DePaul's College of Law. Their generosity will provide unrestricted support toward the strategic priorities of the law school, including student scholarships, faculty support, and new and enhanced programs.

"I had been in business for four years before I went to law school," Smith says. "DePaul's law school offered me a unique opportunity to improve my career path at a time when law was transitioning from a profession to a business."

Smith began his legal career as general counsel working on mergers and acquisitions for one of his business clients. Combining his legal training with his business experience, he acted as interim CEO for the merged businesses, putting

together integration teams during the first few months following the merger. He continued his highly successful career in law and business, which ended in 2014 when he retired from his position as president and CEO of Mizkan America.

Smith has been a member of the College of Law's Dean's Advisory Council since 2013 and served on the advisory board of DePaul's Institute for Business and Professional Ethics. Of the latter he says, "It was an important way for me to give back to DePaul. I believe in doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. In business, that usually points you in the right direction," Smith says.

Of his interest in serving DePaul, Smith says, "DePaul provides a unique opportunity for students who may be the first in their family to go to college, and the university has a wonderful reputation for providing work-ready graduates."

Mrs. Fontana-Smith says that both she and her husband overcame family issues to pursue their education: "Our hope is that future DePaul students and alumni will also realize the power and value of their education, and will continue to help the DePaul community."