

## From Mock Courtroom to Creating Community Access

ROBERT CONNOR HEIST  
Lawyer,  
MHS Class of 1982

A senior class mock trial changed the legal terrain in Chicago forever as it was that moment that cemented Robert Connor Heist's passion for the law. As a lawyer with his own practice, he sees his job as "helping people to resolve their problems." Part of his work involves family law. Robert relies on his own experience to counsel clients. In divorce cases where children are involved, Robert is adamant about placing the interests of the children first. "It is my responsibility to remind parents of the impact of the separation on their children."



Looking back on his past, he traces his interest in law and justice to his experience at MHS. The values of honesty and integrity emphasized at the school became a foundation for his successful law practice. Teachers and houseparents taught respect for others in class and in home life. One of his houseparents gave him the gift of informed argument – critical to a lawyer's success. "He instilled in students the notion that there is always a way to present yourself if you do not agree with someone."

Robert is also passionate about helping others in need outside of the office. He is also part of the Appalachian Service Project that builds homes for low-income families in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Just as Milton Hershey asked himself how he could help children in need, Robert has sought ways to help children in his community access opportunities they would not otherwise have. With close friends he founded the charitable foundation, Askhere, Inc. which sponsors kids' participation in activities such as band camp, scouting camp, education courses - opportunities that Robert himself got when he attended MHS. Askhere was established in 2005, and over the past four years the foundation has sponsored more than 100 children.

"Going to MHS has had a tremendous impact on me; I know it opened so many doors in my life. My desire to help others stems from my being helped by MHS. I know I wouldn't be a lawyer, and may not even be alive today if it weren't for MHS."

Robert wants all MHS students to benefit as much as possible from their experience at the school. "I recognize the tremendous benefits of MHS and use my experience to be a positive role model. I often go back to MHS to meet with students and show them how their lives can be drastically different. And show them to take advantage of what MHS provides."