



CHARTING OUR ROAD TO THE FUTURE

**PUGH FAMILY'S STRATEGIC GIFT
TRANSFORMS PLAN FOR CAMPUS EXPANSION**

THERE'S A SIGN AT RAVENSCROFT'S WINSTON ENTRANCE

that says "Future Road."

The sign is hardly the campus's best feature — Phil Higginson, assistant head of school for institutional advancement, jokingly characterizes it as "very unattractive" — but its presence signifies much more than the school's intention to create a new passage around the campus.

The future road, as projected in the 2008 strategic plan, makes possible an expanded campus blueprint that will transform Ravenscroft in the years to come.

That the land for that "future road" came from Watson and Fran Pugh, whose Tara Farm adjoins the school along its western border, is poetic in its significance. The Pughs have been steadfast supporters of Ravenscroft since the late 1960s, when they helped secure its North Raleigh acreage — and they have been helping chart the school's road to the future ever since.

DECADES OF GIVING

Watson Pugh, a pediatrician and Tucker Street-era alumnus, and his wife Fran are near-legendary figures in Ravenscroft circles. For decades Dr. Pugh served as the school's doctor, doling out immunizations, maintaining student health records, and giving physicals to athletes on Ravenscroft's sports teams. Mrs. Pugh has served on the school's board of trustees for 47 years, providing leadership in numerous critical roles as the school has flourished.

"Fran and Watson work as a team," says Mary Moss, a Ravenscroft alumni parent who serves as co-chair of the school's advancement committee. "Over the years, they have given their time and talents in myriad ways. Whatever the need, the Pughs have been there for the school." They have also opened up the grounds of their beloved horse farm for school activities and events, including an annual barbecue for new families. In their typical hands-on manner, Mrs. Pugh directs the parking and Dr. Pugh cooks the corn.

Dr. Pugh emphasizes that their relationship with Ravenscroft is a personal one.

"Ravenscroft has been our Tara Farm neighbor for over 40 years," he notes. "Our four children all went to school there. Six of our grandchildren have gone to or are currently attending Ravenscroft. They have all received the highest-quality education."

Mrs. Pugh puts it this way: "My passion is my family, my horses, and Ravenscroft. It's that simple."

A PIVOTAL MOMENT

That passion has manifested itself most notably in their farsighted thinking about Ravenscroft's future growth. As Mrs. Pugh recalls, they considered the likelihood of ceding property to the school as early as the 1970s.

"I have always been one to have a vision for this school, and every year I just keep updating it, as everybody knows," Mrs. Pugh says, chuckling. "Dr. Pugh and I felt, once the school moved out here and adjoined our property, well, this land was something that needed to go to the school."





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The impetus for their eventual offer was the development of the 2008 strategic plan, which included an expansion of the Lower School.

Bill Moss ’74, who was chair of the buildings and grounds committee during this process, remembers the challenges they faced in locating a suitable campus green in the Lower School’s interior.

“A number of different proposals were discussed,” he says. “The potential for the Lower School to reach a new level, in terms of the physical plant and its surroundings, was extremely limited, especially given the location of the internal roadway.”

The Pughs’ decision to offer a 10-acre parcel along the back edge of campus transformed the plan.

“I believe Fran reached the conclusion that there were no good long-term options available to the school except through her and Doc’s generosity,” he says. “It was a visionary projection.”

Mrs. Pugh is matter-of-fact about proposing the transfer at that particular juncture.

“If you’re going to do something, you want to do it right the first time, not down the road and piecemeal it together,” she says. “We needed to push the campus out and, fortunately, there was a way to do that. Dr. Pugh and I felt like it was necessary.”

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The Pughs’ gift — valued today at \$2.5 million — was structured to allow the school to complete Phase I of the strategic plan in 2011, using one acre of the tract for the Winston entrance. The remaining 8.1 acres, which were ceded to the school this year, provide for the “future road” that will expand campus boundaries and facilitate planned growth at its core.

Bill Moss notes that it’s “both a literal expansion of boundaries but also a figurative — and very, very real — expansion of the vision for the school, both of which reflect the heart and soul of the vision Fran and Doc have for Ravenscroft.”

Higginson also emphasizes the spirit at the heart of the Pughs’ decision.

“It’s a very personal gift,” he says. “That land is where some of the Tara Farm trails are, whose terrain Mrs. Pugh believes contributes to the physical conditioning that makes her horses champions.”

“This gift of land is an extension of their recognition that Ravenscroft is part of their family, and they are part of our family,” Mary Moss adds.

For Dr. and Mrs. Pugh, it’s all about the students who will benefit from the Ravenscroft experience.

“Whatever we can do to better educate our children will pay dividends long after we’re gone,” Dr. Pugh says. “That’s why this gift is so important.”

Mrs. Pugh agrees, noting that Ravenscroft empowers students to make the same kind of impact on their world that she and her husband have made on the school.

“Our kids can and will make a difference,” she says. “They have this wonderful opportunity, and our faculty and staff are there to nurture them into being leaders. So, have at it, kids! Get up and go!” *R*

