

Mike Hughes:

Dad Taught Me About Parental Support

BY LARRY AYLWARD

In his early 30s, Mike Hughes announced he was chucking his career as a litigation lawyer and going back to school to earn a master's degree in sports management. Hughes sold his house and car, packed up with his pregnant wife and young daughter and moved to Athens, Ohio, to attend Ohio University.

"I went from having a substantial income to having zero income," Hughes says.

Needless to say, his decision floored some of Hughes' friends and family members. And then there was his dad, Arthur.

"My dad was extremely supportive of me," the 48-year-old Hughes says. "In fact, he was the most supportive person of all the people around me. It meant a lot."

His father's reaction taught Hughes the importance of

parental support. Arthur knew Mike was tired of the law business after 10 years and wanted to pursue his dream, which was to work in the golf business.

"He was really encouraged by the fact that I wasn't going to accept less than something that I really wanted to do," Mike says.

Mike wasn't surprised of his father's reaction. His dad was always in his and his twin brother's corners growing up in Charleston, S.C.

"He would always tell us, 'Whatever you want to do, you can do,'" Hughes remembers. "He'd say it was just a matter of applying ourselves. He was always supportive and proud of us when we achieved anything."

That includes when Hughes was named executive director of the fledgling National Golf Course Owners

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Mike Hughes (standing, right) with father Arthur and twin brother Arthur

Association (NGCOA) in 1990. Hughes was the first full-time employee the association hired.

The NGCOA, located in Charleston, unveiled its new headquarters a few years ago, and Arthur was there to celebrate the day with his son.

"Parental support makes a difference," Hughes says. "I don't think people ever outgrow it."

Hughes has three children — two girls ages 17 and 14, and a 13-year-old boy. Like his father, Hughes strives to encourage to his children. "I support them and let them know that they have the capabilities to follow their dreams," he says.

It's vital that parents instill confidence in their children by supporting their endeavors, Hughes says. "It makes them want to try things that they might not otherwise want to do," he adds.

Arthur is a World War II veteran. A member of the 82nd Airborne, he was wounded in Holland and sent to England to recover. A few weeks later, he participated in the famous Battle of the Bulge.

"He's a tough guy, but he's a nice guy, too," Hughes says. "He's very gentle on the outside."

After retiring from the military, Arthur worked for the civil service at the naval supply center in Charleston. He lives alone in the same house where he raised his family, about 15 minutes from Mike. Father and son see each other often and speak regularly. ■

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