

**John O. Bacon**, celebrated leader, benefactor, and community member, has a long history with Sandusky and Erie County. His love for the local area has been proven in his philanthropic actions and involvement in community affairs, and his successes in law, business, and nonprofit sectors have established him as a truly remarkable man.



Bacon was born and raised in Sandusky, Ohio. He attended Sandusky City Schools until seventh grade when his family moved to Huron, where he completed eighth through twelfth grade and graduated from Huron High School. He attended Duke University for undergraduate studies, majoring in Business and Economics, and then went on to law school at The Ohio State University, receiving his Juris Doctor. After completing the Bar Exam, Bacon returned to Sandusky where he worked for Flynn, Py, & Kruse for two summers before starting work for his family’s metal fabrication company, Mack Iron Works.

The history of Mack Iron Works begins in 1901 when John Mack, Bacon’s great-grandfather, established Mack Iron Works as an additional career— Mack was already one of the managers of the Sandusky Register. On June 28, 1924, a tornado ripped through downtown Sandusky and destroyed many properties, including the Mack Iron Works warehouse. After re-establishing the building, Mack decided he needed someone to run the company so that he could focus on his leadership position at the Register. He hired his son-in-law, Lucas Bacon, who ran the business for several years before his son, John O. Bacon’s father, John L. Bacon, took over in 1959. When he retired in 1979, a man by the name of Neil Bauman, an employee and close family friend, began running the company until John O. Bacon succeeded him in 1989. Bacon remains as President of the company today.

Along with his leadership at Mack Iron Works, Bacon has played a crucial role in the Erie County Community Foundation. A longtime officer and board member of LEC (Leadership Erie County), formerly LEADS (Leadership Enrichment And Development Sandusky), Bacon was present when a group from LEC put on a presentation at Sandusky High School promoting the idea of a community foundation in Erie County. This idea of establishing a community foundation was not new, and with other philanthropists such as Melvyn Stauffer in the audience, it wasn’t long after the presentation that the Randolph J. and Estelle M. Dorn Foundation, to which Bacon was a trustee of, issued the challenge grant that allowed the Community Foundation to be created. Since this time, the Community Foundation has continued to work with local foundations in order to coordinate giving and philanthropy, an aspect that Bacon is especially pleased with.

“I think one of the things I’m most proud of is how the Community Foundation has worked with the local foundations, private foundations, to coordinate their giving in a way to give maximum impact on community projects,” Bacon said. He served as one of the founding board members of the Community Foundation, representing the Dorn Foundation, and eventually served as Chairman. During his tenure as a member of the Board of Directors, he oversaw projects the Community Foundation helped facilitate such as the rebirth of the Sandusky State Theatre and the \$1.5 million Education Initiative.





In addition to his leadership at Mack Iron Works, LEC, and the Community Foundation, Bacon has also served as President of the Sandusky Area YMCA, President of the Sandusky Rotary Club, the first President of the Huron High School Alumni Association, a board member of Safe Harbour Domestic Violence Shelter, a board member of the Huron Playhouse— giving him the opportunity to act as a community cast member in roughly 25 musicals, his favorites being *Damn Yankees* and *South Pacific*, among others— and is currently chairman of the board at Firelands Regional Medical Center.

Throughout his lifetime, Bacon has served in many facets of Erie County, but one of his favorite parts about the area is the people. “I have greatly enjoyed the people in the area, not only just to know, but also to see their concern for what goes on in the area—for the good of the area,” he said. After all, the company tagline at Mack Iron Works reads, “quality people doing quality work,” and this is something Bacon feels has been persistent throughout the generations of employees the company has seen, employees whose experience totals 708 years. In addition, Bacon also enjoys the advantages of the small town environment mixed with the proximity of bigger cities such as Cleveland, as well as the abundance of natural resources in the area— specifically the water and its accessibility for recreational boating, an activity he’s been participating in since childhood.

When looking toward the future, Bacon hopes to see the continued development of multiple aspects of the area. Specifically, the redevelopment of the downtown area, as well as the expansion of the youth movement. The importance of encouraging young people to learn about their community and be inspired to return one day is a matter Bacon finds significant, as it can be difficult to find quality young people willing to work in their hometown areas. His advice for these young people? What he calls the E.C.H.O. of accomplishment, that which can be pinpointed to success in every generation. E for education and never thinking that learning ends after a certain point in life, C for communication and being able to communicate on different levels, including listening to others, H for heart, the aspect that separates each individual, and O for opportunity and the ability to identify and take advantage of opportunities when they arise. Bacon’s work and philanthropy clearly reflect these principles of achievement, and it is his inspiration in advice such as this that will continue to encourage the advancement of Erie County and the positivity of its people.