

Meet the July 21, 2018 WaterFire Orb Lighter:

Michael P. Walton

“Magical Moments”, tonight’s theme for WaterFire, can be interpreted in many ways. We all have an idea of what’s magical to us. Where there’s something magical going on that affects all of us, WaterFire wants to share that story and celebrate someone who is directly involved. Meet tonight’s orb lighter, Michael P. Walton.

Michael Walton is an accomplished young professional who grew up in the area. He attended John Carroll University where he earned his degree in Management and furthered his studies at University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his MBA. His experience and education resulted in his becoming CEO of Jamestown Coating Technologies (Jamestown, PA) and Jamestown Powder Coating (Girard, PA). Michael serves on the board of American Coatings Association, as a professional in the Paint and Coatings Industry. He is well recognized in the business community as well as in the industry he specializes in.

Michael has taught as an adjunct professor in Thiel College’s business department, and has guest lectured at John Carroll University and Penn State University. He currently serves on the advisory board of PNC Bank, and on Team Pennsylvania Foundation, a private-public partnership to strengthen Pennsylvania’s business, education, and economic prosperity. He is the former President of the United Way of Mercer County Board and is a former board member at UPMC Horizon.

Though already very active, Michael was still willing to take on something that was only a concept at the time, by joining the Board of Directors of the Hope Center for Arts and Technology, located at the top of West Hill in downtown Sharon. As a replication of the Manchester Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh, Michael knew this school was right for the area, and that the area was ready for this opportunity. Dedicated and driven, Michael was immediately made the Chairman of the Board. As with any start up, The Hope Center for Arts and Technology (the HOPE Center) required much time and attention to get it off of the ground. The facility, the construction, the curriculum, the regulations, the state agencies, the trips to Harrisburg to meet with legislators about funding, the grant process, the private meetings to secure funds, finding the right staff – Michael really oversaw a new business startup – one of education that is now operational and serving the youth and adult population!

What’s Magical about the HOPE Center? Everything. The HOPE Center offers pottery classes to high school seniors, to teach them a creative way of learning and expression. Students that had no idea of what to do after high school, credit the HOPE Center with giving them direction. Some of these students are now enrolled in Post-Secondary Education, something they had not even considered before coming to the HOPE Center. The Adult Programs offered at the HOPE Center will only offer training for jobs in demand, as determined by employers’ input. The intention being once completing the coursework, the graduate will be ready to enter a job market where their recently acquired skills are sought after. Want more Magic? There is no charge for these students to attend. The purpose of the HOPE Center is to identify students who are ready to make a change in their lives, to commit to a rigorous 10-month training program and be ready upon receiving their diploma to sit for National Certification. That’s a physical, emotional, and mental cost to the student, but the financial cost is borne by private, corporate, and foundation donations with support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As everyone in the equation truly believes that “all people are assets” (Bill Strickland), these donors are also believing that giving people the opportunity to change their lives is what will change the area.

Michael and his wife Lisa make their home in Hermitage PA. They are the proud parents of Kevin, Kelly and Kyle.

WaterFire is honored to have Michael Walton light the Orb tonight. We all thank you, Michael, for your dedication to the area and your service to the community. Thank you for your leadership in seeing the HOPE Center come to fruition, for the drive it took to get us there, and for your unwavering belief that this is, truly, how we’ll change are area – by bettering the lives of its citizens. That’s Magical! ***WaterFire Sharon is honored to have Michael Walton light the Orb Tonight!***

