

# BRF thrived under Jack Sharp

The late entrepreneur Steve Jobs once noted that, "innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." Given the number and variety of innovations the Biomedical Research Foundation has brought to Shreveport over the last two decades, it is clear that retiring President and CEO Jack Sharp has been a true leader.

Started in 1986 through the visionary efforts of Virginia Shehee and other community leaders, and ably led for the last 17 years with Jack's steady hand, the BRF has made significant and lasting contributions to our community. The BRF has not only advanced medical care and biomedical research, it has also helped transform Shreveport into a center of technology-led innovation, poised for growth in the 21st century.

Under Jack's leadership, the BRF has achieved the following:

- » Raised \$266 million with only 12 percent coming from Caddo Parish tax dollars — an 8:1 return on local public investments;
- » Invested \$90 million in

land and buildings to support university research and technology commercialization activities;



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» Invested \$46 million to advance the research mission of LSU Health Shreveport;

» Invested \$53 million in Positron Emission Tomography to introduce and support new clinical technology, radiopharmaceutical manufacturing and related research;

» Performed more than 35,000 P.E.T. scans with over \$18 million in free scans for indigent patients;

» Invested \$44 million in the Inter Tech Science Park to create a nationally-recognized regional technology center

» Housed 23 Inter Tech Science Park tenants, who employ 360 individuals with annual payroll of \$17.5 million;

» Initiated 11 educational programs to build a technology-trained workforce, including the Con-

sortium for Education, Research and Technology (CERT) and the Science and Medicine Academic Research Training Program (SMART).

Jack has been an initiator and frequent contributor, both publicly and behind the scenes, to numerous efforts to improve K-12 and higher education, including serving on the recently-formed board of the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education.

His push to enhance learning in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields has resulted in many bright, young high school students pursuing careers in these areas.

In the BRF's early years, maintaining the P.E.T. center was tough since P.E.T. scans were not covered by Medicare and private insurance. But Jack stayed the course, and with the help of Willis-Knighton and CHRISTUS Schumpert medical centers, the P.E.T. center has continued to serve the residents of northwest Louisiana. Jack and the BRF Board

of Directors are especially proud of the \$18 million in scans that have been provided to residents who were desperately in need of the scan, but unable to pay for it.

Through it all, Jack has lent his time and his talents to serving not just the community at large, but those around him as well. Another Jack, Jack Welch observed, "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."

Our Jack has not only built bridges in our community, created lasting institutions, and generated jobs, but he has also been a guide, confidant and friend to many aspiring leaders in this community, including me.

So for myself, the BRF Board of Directors, and the entire Shreveport-Bossier area, I would like to say thank you, Jack, for all you have done.

*Johnette McCreary Wagner is executive director of Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education.*

