

CORPORATE BIG HIGHLIGHT: MOBILE BAR ASSOCIATION - BEN FORD



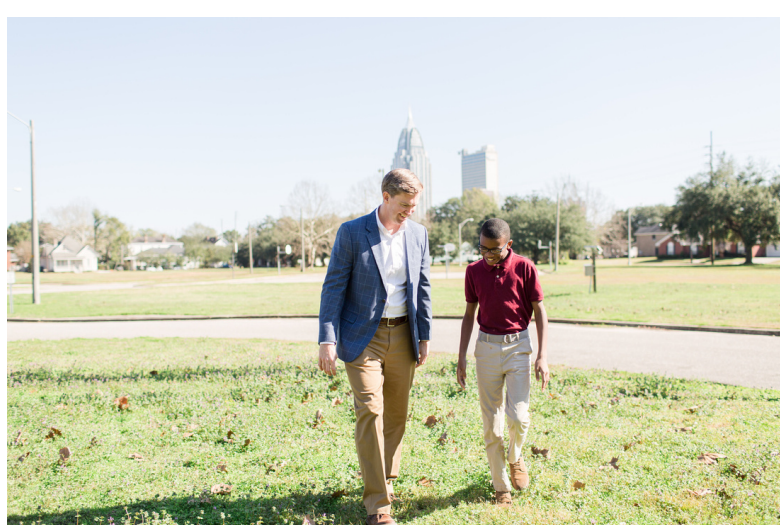
Ben Ford began mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters in the fall of 2011. Ben joined the ranks of over 30 Mobile Bar Association volunteers to mentor children in South Alabama. Ben was a young lawyer working for Armbrecht Jackson LLP, happily married with three children at home. It would have seemed Ben did not have time for giving back but when asked what attracted him to become involved with BBBS, Ben stated "I want to give positive and helpful attention to someone who is otherwise deprived of it."



During his years of service as a Big, Ben has had two Little Brothers. His first Little, Omarion, was a robust and outgoing young man attending Florence Howard Elementary. Omarion could be a little ambunctious and was prone to distraction. Although a class favorite, his grades were below average. Through only a little effort, Ben and

Omarion were able to develop a business-like approach to schoolwork. They had a mantra – "put on your blinders when you walk into class" – that Ben repeated so many times that by the end of Omarion's 5th grade year, he would say it before Ben could. As a result, Omarion won the most-improved student award at his 5th grade graduation ceremony. Although the match relationship was great, we had to close the 3-year-old match due to life changes for Omarion.

Ben was eager to continue the work he started with his previous Little and we rematched him with his current Little Brother, Timarcus, who was a more reserved and thoughtful student at Florence Howard Elementary. And according to Ben both Little Brothers have had "the same deep genuine happiness and sweet soul.



While deep down good kids, both presented challenges." Timarcus was incredibly intelligent and would become bored with the dullness of schoolwork. Ben decided to help Timarcus focus on the big picture by emphasizing his bright future and what it takes to get there. Sometimes Ben felt he could not relate to the interest or hobbies that Timarcus shared with him, but he listened and learned. In the summer of 2021, the match left the structure of school-based mentoring behind and ventured in the community-based setting. Ben wanted to be able to spend more time with Timarcus and help provide more exposure during his high school years. Ben recently shared his excitement for Timarcus reaching a goal he set for himself back in middle school. Timarcus stated that he was going to apply to Alabama School of Math and Science and this school year he was accepted and enrolled.

When nominated as the 2019 Mobile Bar Association's Big of the Year, Ben wrote the following, "None of this is to say that the positive impact on my Littles came as the result of any hard work or unique talent on my part. To the contrary, I have done nothing more than show up and spend time with these kids. That is the beauty of this program. So little is required. I tell prospective Bigs that Big Brothers Big Sisters has to be the most striking example of a 'small investment, big return' scenario there is. I cannot emphasize that enough. Show up + spend time = kids improve. It's probably not a stretch for me to say that the personal development success rate for a consistent Big/Little relationship is at or near 100%. All of the individual positive impacts achieved via Big Brothers Big Sisters in-turn reap exponential benefits for the community. Could something so simple as spending an hour or two a week mentoring kids increase graduation rates, reduce crime, improve mental health, and improve the standard of living and economy for our community in the long-term? Yes! That is why I am proud to be a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters and hope that many more will decide to make a small investment in return for a big benefit."

To learn more about our elite Corporate Big Program that the Mobile Bar Association is a proud member of, please visit www.bbbssa.org.

DO YOU THINK YOUR COMPANY WOULD BE A GOOD FIT? The Corporate Big Program is a flexible School-based mentoring opportunity that measurably impacts the lives of the children we serve but also your company culture and the lives of our mentors, your employees. We pair each company with their own school in close proximity and the company allows those who want to participate and who qualify to leave work one hour a week for the duration of the school year to meet with their mentee at school, during school hours. Research shows employees-even those that don't volunteer-feel greater pride and loyalty toward an employer that supports a respected cause like Big Brothers Big Sisters and encourages employees to get involved. If you think this flexible volunteer opportunity that has a measurable impact would be a great fit for your company, visit our website to see a list of our current outstanding Corporate Big partners and call or email Aimee at 251-454-2233 or aimee@bbbssa.org for more information.