Skyline Summit Park: Honoring Our Legacy, Celebrating Our Future

Today, we gather not only to celebrate the opening of a park, but also to honor a dream, recognize a remarkable legacy, and begin a new chapter for our entire community.

That dream began with Benjamin F. Gibbs, Sr., born on January 31, 1925, in Sharon, PA, to Mortimer and Eunice Gibbs. After graduating from Sharon High School in 1943, Benjamin served three years in the U.S. Army, earning numerous medals before receiving an honorable discharge as a Technical Sergeant in May 1946.

Returning home, Benjamin chose to build his own future. Inspired by his father and brothers in the trucking business, he purchased a dump truck and began hauling topsoil and fill dirt. In 1948, his search for property led him to two farms in Hickory Township, owned by Mr. McClendon and Mr. Spangler. Together, these properties totaled 31 acres. Despite an attempt by another businessman to interfere with the sale, a local banker stood by Benjamin, affirming that his money was just as good as anyone else's. With the loan approved, Benjamin secured the land and began building his future.

But Benjamin's vision extended far beyond business. He had three purposes: to establish a home for his trucking operation, to help underserved individuals struggling to purchase land and build homes, and to create a welcoming outdoor haven where children and families could enjoy nature and recreation in safety.

In March 1948, Benjamin attended a church function in Franklin, PA, where he met Josephine Lawson. They fell in love and married on April 17, 1949, beginning a life together on the farm in Hickory Township. Their family grew to include nine children, lovingly called their “Bundles of Joy” by their mother.

As Benjamin's business expanded into excavating and paving, he also developed Skyline Summit Recreational Park. He built a pavilion, basketball and tennis courts, a swimming pool, a miniature golf course, and a corral for two ponies and a horse. He even rented a bus or used his dump truck to bring children and youth from Sharon and Farrell into the countryside for recreation.
His mission was clear: everyone deserved a safe place to play, breathe fresh air, and connect with nature.

Although the park eventually became dormant as his business grew, the dream never lost its meaning. In October 2020, Skyline Summit Park and Recreation was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation committed to serving ALL youth and families, of our community. Eleven acres of the original 31 acres were donated to SSPR in honor of Benjamin F. Gibbs, Sr., and Josephine L. Gibbs.

Today, the SSPR Board of Directors is grateful for the opportunity to continue their vision. This park is about so much more than fields, walking paths, and places to play. It's about bringing people together, creating opportunities, and building a welcoming place where everyone can be a part of something special.

As we celebrate this grand opening, may Skyline Summit Park and Recreation become a place where children make memories, families grow closer, neighbors become friends, and future generations discover the beauty of the outdoors.

Benjamin and Josephine planted the seeds of a dream that continues to reach far beyond their own time. Today, we carry that dream forward, creating a place where people can come together, enjoy the outdoors, and create lasting memories. Welcome to Skyline Summit Park and Recreation.