

## CITY NEWS

DONOR OF THE DAY | By Melanie Grayce West

## Aid for Children of Disaster Victims

Jon Henes and Fred Lynch didn't meet under the best of circumstances.

Mr. Henes, an attorney with Kirkland & Ellis LLP in New York, met Mr. Lynch, CEO of door maker Masonite International Inc., in 2009 as Mr. Henes was serving as part of the bankruptcy counsel for Masonite.

Messrs. Henes and Lynch spent long hours together in negotiations and, during a casual moment, conversation turned to family and philanthropy. Mr. Lynch told the story of his brother Michael, a New York City firefighter who died on Sept. 11, 2001, in the south tower of the World Trade Center.

In the months following his death, the Lynch family started a memorial foundation to celebrate Michael Lynch's life and to provide college scholarships to children of firefighters and victims of the Sept. 11, 2001,

terrorist attack and other fires and disasters. To date, the Michael Lynch Memorial Foundation has awarded 75 scholarships totaling \$1.6 million. The average award is \$6,000 a year for four years and most recipients are from the New York metropolitan area. The recipients have included children of New York City firefighters and of employees of Marsh & McLennan and Cantor Fitzgerald, two companies that had offices at the World Trade Center.

The back story of the foundation, the mission and its hands-on, no-overhead, all-in-the-family approach inspired Mr. Henes to take up the cause as his primary philanthropic commitment. He's now supporting the foundation with a \$100,000 contribution.

"In some ways I feel like I have become part of the Lynch family," says Mr. Henes. "It's something that you can touch



Jon Henes

and you can feel because every dollar that's donated goes to the scholarships. There are no administrative costs because it's all family-and-friends operated."

His commitment to the foundation began by raising money from his colleagues and signing

up his law firm to buy a table at the organization's annual dinner. Last year, he was chairman for the annual dinner, which raised more than \$500,000.

"We basically more than doubled our funding last year," says Fred Lynch. "He's just been great at getting businesses involved. Jon will call them and say, 'You gotta do this. How can you not do this? It's such a great thing.'"

For this year's annual dinner, to be held March 28 with KKR & Co. partner Paul E. Raether as chairman, Mr. Henes hopes to break last year's donation record and has a goal to raise \$700,000.

"I actually have a higher goal. I have big ambitions," says Mr. Henes. "I told Fred last year we were going to break \$500,000 and he laughed at me, and we did. I think it's good to set big goals for yourself because you've got to go meet them."