

Mentone Student Earns First Prize In Grace College Business Competition



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Press Release

May 2, 2018



Pictured, from left, are Dean of Grace College School of Business Dr. Jeff Fawcett, 2018 Business Plan Competition winner Micah Bradley and Director of the William P. Gordon Institute for Enterprise Development Al Grossnickle.

WINONA LAKE — Micah Bradley earned first prize at the sixth-annual Grace College Business Plan Competition on April 25. A junior from Mentone, Bradley took home \$13,000 for his business Barnwood Masters which salvages wood from antique barns and other structures and turns it into quality home and business furniture. The business was created by Bradley with the help of his father after his father suffered a mild traumatic brain injury. While the injury impaired his father's ability to work, Barnwood Masters allows him to apply his business knowledge and woodworking skills at his own pace.

"My father used to own his own businesses and he always loved working with wood," said Bradley, recalling memories of his father woodworking for fun throughout his childhood. "Now his hobby is his vocation, and I get to come alongside and use my education to build a new business with him."

As Bradley talks about Barnwood Masters, it's easy to make parallels from his business to his family's story. It's obvious that he enjoys the work and finds it rewarding.

"We may not be able to fix the wood's history," said Bradley, "but we can shape its future."

Barnwood Masters currently operates out of an old milk barn in Bradley's hometown of Mentone. Over the summer, Bradley plans to work full-time to grow his business and continue it as a career after graduation. Next May he will earn his bachelor's degree in entrepreneurial management and his MBA

though the Grace College blended degree program. The \$13,000 prize money and input he received from the Business Plan Competition will go a long way to helping him realize his business goals.

“I really appreciate the opportunity to work with and get feedback from business professionals in the area,” Bradley said. “I plan to add to the marketing budget, finish a new kiln to treat the reclaimed lumber and make tool upgrades with the prize money.”

The Business Plan Competition is coordinated by the Grace College School of Business. Business students develop their plans either individually or with a team throughout the school year and the competition culminates with a presentation to area business professionals each spring. This year’s eight-person panel of judges included: Lindy Breeden, Horizon Bank; Marty Wynkoop, Koop Co.; Chuck Cristner, RSM; Andrew Grossnickle, Beers Mellers Backs & Salin, LLP; Jeff Cahill, Data, Inc.; Jerry Abbitt, Primerica; Bill Avila, Armanino; and Paul Finley, 1st Source Bank. The event was moderated by Rob Parker, president and CEO of the Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce.

“All of the student participants have been preparing for the competition since October,” said Al Grossnickle, associate professor of business and director of the William P. Gordon Institute for Enterprise Development at Grace College. “The skills and input students have gained through the competition and from the judges will be invaluable for their future in business. We are grateful for the support of local businesses that make this competition possible and so rewarding for our students.”

The 2018 Grace College Business Plan Competition sponsors were Data, Inc., RSM, Horizon Bank, Hall & Marose Silveus, Beers Mellers Backs & Salin, LLP, Louis Dreyfus Company and Wildman Business Group.

For more information about Grace College Business Plan Competition winner Barnwood Masters, including photos and information about their products and services, visit www.barnwoodmasters.com.