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MONDAY'S MAN

## Jury serves health care workers through business

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise

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Louisville resident and Elizabethtown native Tyler Jury, pictured with his wife, Katie, is the co-owner of leather business Clayton & Crume. The business recently shifted operations to produce protective face shields for health care workers throughout the state.

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Tyler Jury, right, makes |  
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Louisville resident and Elizabethtown native Tyler Jury has watched his business transform from a dorm room venture into a production facility for medical equipment during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Jury is co-owner of the Louisville-based business Clayton & Crume, which specializes in hand-crafted leather goods. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the business now is producing thousands of face shields for medical workers across the state.

Jury said the endeavor began last month after the business was forced to send its employees home because of the virus threat. Looking for a way to give back as their storefront lay dormant, Jury and his business partner, Clay Simpson, set out to create 1,000 masks in their first week of production and donate them to Louisville-area health care facilities.

When Gov. Andy Beshear's office learned of these efforts, Clayton & Crume was asked to make more than half a million masks. To accommodate this tall order, Jury and Simpson have hired around 180 new employees in the past two weeks and moved operations to a larger facility to accommodate staff size and promote social distancing between employees. The Governor's Office is assisting in covering material costs for the endeavor, Jury said.

"If we don't make as many as we can today, somebody may not have the PPE they need tomorrow," Jury said. "I think we're all driven to produce those as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Jury knows first-hand the importance of protective equipment for health care workers. This is because he balances his role at Clayton & Crume with his job as a dentist.

"When I go in and see an emergency patient right now, I'm wearing a face shield over top of my mask," he said. "I might have used a face shield five times in my career when doing oral surgery, but now I anticipate wearing one for probably three to six months at least."

Jury co-founded Clayton & Crume with Simpson in 2012 while they were students at Western Kentucky University. Dissatisfied with the wallets and belts they've purchased from department stores over the years, the business partners decided there was a market for artisan leather goods in the region.

The business opened its brick and mortar location last year. Jury said the building formerly has served as a pre-Civil War chapel and as a boxing gym where Muhammad Ali used to train.

Jury said he and Simpson began hiring new employees in 2016 and the business now has a team of about 27 core employees.

A 2008 graduate of Elizabethtown High School, Jury said his passion for entrepreneurship started while living in Hardin County. He said he used to operate a vegetable stand on his grandparent's street corner on Pear Orchard Road and Debra Lane in Elizabethtown from the time he was in fifth grade to the time he was a sophomore in high school.

Jury spent his last year of high school at Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science on WKU's main campus in Bowling Green. He said he was among the academy's first graduating class.

Following high school, Jury went on to earn his undergraduate degree from Western Kentucky University in 2012. While at WKU, Jury founded Bike4Alz, a cross-country bike ride designed to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's disease research. Jury founded the program through his involvement in WKU's Phi Gamma Delta, or Fiji, fraternity.

Jury said the ride was inspired by the memory of his grandfather, Barret Cummings, who died of Alzheimer's. He said the idea for the ride came to him during the summer before his first year of college, which he spent abroad in Japan.

During this time, he said he made a bucket list of 50 things he'd like to do in his lifetime. Among those items was to take on a cross-country bike ride.

Jury said though his grandfather still was alive during this summer, his condition with Alzheimer's was worsening.

"I was spending a lot of the summer thinking about him," Jury said. "Fortunately, he ended up living another year and a half, which is awesome, but in the meantime, I decided I wanted to spend a lot of my efforts to help a cause that was related to what my grandfather and what my family was suffering through."

The first ride took place in 2010 and encompassed roughly 3,200 miles, spanning from California to Virginia. Jury said more than \$50,000 was raised for Alzheimer's research through the first ride.

Throughout this voyage, Jury said he was consistently humbled by groups and individuals who would offer donations, food and lodging in towns throughout the country.

"It gave me a lot of optimism about what America is and what we stand for and how people are so inclined to help," he said. "And we're seeing that now with COVID."

Now a decade later, the program has continued with rides taking place almost every summer. Around \$350,000 has been raised overall for the American Alzheimer's Association through the program, according to the Bike4Alz website.

Jury still advocates for Alzheimer's research to this day, serving on the Alzheimer's Association state board.

Following his tenure at WKU, Jury earned his doctorate degree from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry in 2016. Jury said he always was an outlier among his peers when he was a child in that he consistently enjoyed dentist appointments.

"Taking what was normally a bad experience for people and turning that into a good one seemed interesting," he said of his career choice.

Jury began practicing dentistry in Louisville after graduating from U of L and opened his own practice in Oldham County in 2018. Like other dentist offices throughout the state, Jury's office has been open only for emergency visits during the pandemic.

"Once we're through this whole thing we're going to be back to normal and we're probably going to be busier than ever because people have gone without dental care for months," he said.

For now, Jury said he is happy to spend every day giving back during this time of uncertainty.

“For a lot of people, their contribution is social distancing and staying away from everyone but I’m really thankful that ours is getting out and creating something,” he said.

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Andrew Critchelow can be reached at 270-505-1746 or [acritchelow@thenewsenterprise.com](mailto:acritchelow@thenewsenterprise.com).