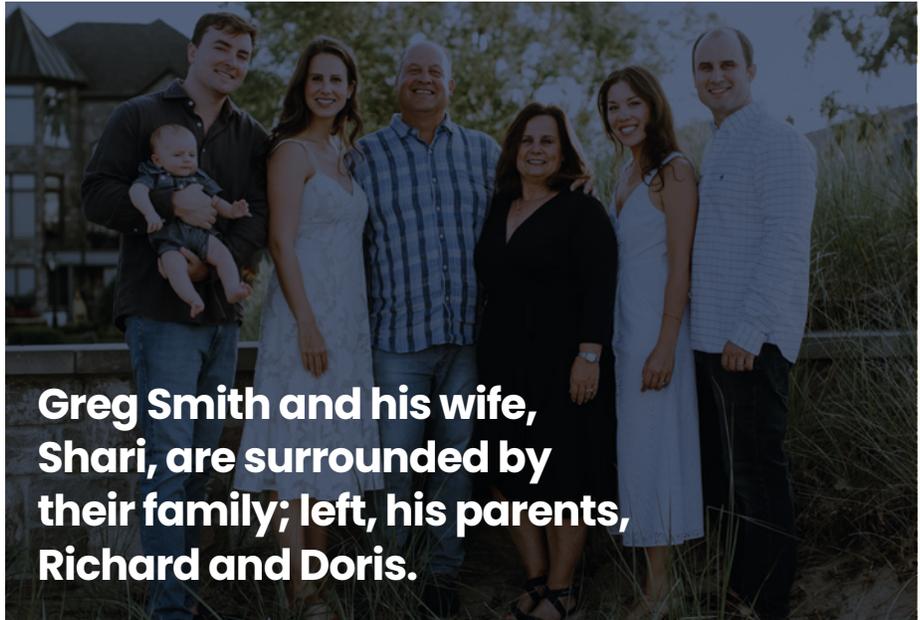


A passion for life



Greg Smith and his wife, Shari, are surrounded by their family; left, his parents, Richard and Doris.



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Out of a sack of lemons

It should have been a happy occasion. Richard and Doris Smith were driving home from Arizona after delivering wedding gifts to their daughter, Ann.

Then their son, Greg, now senior statewide sales director at Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan, got a call from his wife, Shari, while he was on his way to meet a client to talk about, of all things, life insurance. “A truck dumped a load of bridge timbers in my parents’ path, coming head-on toward them,” says Smith, “and they were killed That was on May 12, 2003.”

Just weeks later, Smith was sitting in a room with the owner of the trucking company, experiencing a surreal moment as the man begged him not to bankrupt him, “because their insurance agent did not do a very good job of handling their liabilities.”

No one expects tragedy — “even myself,” says Smith. But when it happens, people and businesses need to be protected.

May 12 will always be the day that Smith lost his parents. But it’s also the day he became resolved to train, develop, and teach people to be trusted financial security professionals. “Out of that sack of lemons, I made lemonade,” he says.

Smith says he has now dedicated his life to helping other professionals slow down and become true practitioners, helping clients build financial resilience.

His company’s asset protection class still watches the 17-minute documentary created by his family’s legal team about the tragedy that happened to his parents, because their story isn’t that unusual. “Out of their tragedy, I’ve been able to influence tens of thousands of people in the state of Michigan and across the country because of having the opportunity to get practitioners to pause for just a second and think about what they’re doing and how important their role is in people’s lives,” he says.

“Tragedy happens — it happens all the time — so be on your game.”

Photos courtesy of Greg Smith