



Wealth Recon

SOURCED DOSSIER

John R. Smith

John R. Smith is the founder of Cuyahoga Industrial Services, Inc., a privately held industrial services company headquartered in Westlake, Ohio, a western suburb of Cleveland. He is 58 years old. He sold a controlling 60 percent stake in his business on September 22 2025 in a \$42 million majority recapitalization to Heritage Midwest Capital, a Midwest middle-market private equity firm, and stayed on as non-executive Chairman.

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Estimated band

\$28M to \$34M

1. At a Glance

John R. Smith is the founder of Cuyahoga Industrial Services, Inc., a privately held industrial services company headquartered in Westlake, Ohio, a western suburb of Cleveland. He is 58 years old. He sold a controlling 60 percent stake in his business on September 22 2025 in a \$42 million majority recapitalization to Heritage Midwest Capital, a Midwest middle-market private equity firm, and stayed on as non-executive Chairman.[2](#)

The wealth event this dossier was built to support is not the closing. It is the eight-months-out post-close moment. The proceeds have settled, the holdback has cleared, and the subject has no private banking relationship to take the next step with. He has held a checking account at a regional Cleveland bank since 1992 and nothing else.[7](#)

The advisor preparing for this conversation should treat the dossier as situational awareness, not as a script. The subject built one company across thirty years, sold a controlling stake, and chose to remain in Cleveland as Chairman rather than relocate or fully exit. He will read prepared pitches in the first thirty seconds. The opportunity here is to demonstrate that the firm has done the work to understand his situation before asking him to consider products, structures, or commitments.[1](#)

- Founder of Cuyahoga Industrial Services, Inc., Westlake, Ohio. [1](#)
- Majority recapitalization closed Sep 22 2025 at \$42 million. [2](#)
- Holding of record pre-close: 60 percent of common units. [3](#)
- Founder distribution at close, before tax: approximately \$25.2 million. [4](#)
- Retained role: non-executive Chairman with a continuing 16 percent rollover stake. [5](#)
- Resolved cleanly from 84 other John Smith candidates by metro plus current employer. [6](#)
- No private banking relationship of record at the time of build. [7](#)

2. Why Now (Recent Triggers)

The wealth event is now eight months in the rearview. Heritage Midwest Capital closed at a \$42 million transaction value on September 22 2025. Indemnity holdback released in March 2026 on the standard 180-day schedule. The proceeds to the subject before tax cleared at approximately \$25.2 million on the 60 percent stake. [1235](#)

The conversation window is not bounded by a tender clearing or a vesting date. It is bounded by behavior. Cash held in a regional Cleveland checking account since 1992 will not earn for the family at this scale. The opening conversation is whether to consolidate into a discretionary mandate or to start with a managed investment account and grow from there. The Ohio capital gain on the recap is settled on the Northbrook desk memo. [4](#)

The horizon also extends past this event. Heritage Midwest Capital typically runs a three-to-five year hold before a second-stage liquidity event. The remaining 16 percent rollover stake will therefore liquidate again, likely in 2028 or 2029, and any planning architecture built today should account for a second tranche of proceeds inside that window. The conversation about the cash today is also a conversation about the playbook for the next event. [35](#)

- Recap closing date of record: Sep 22 2025. [1](#)
- Founder distribution at close, before tax: approximately \$25.2 million. [2](#)
- Indemnity holdback released Mar 22 2026, on schedule. [3](#)
- Indicative federal and Ohio capital gain on the distribution, long-term assumed: \$8.06 million combined. [4](#)
- Expected next liquidity event: sponsor exit by Heritage Midwest Capital, indicative 2028 to 2029. [5](#)

3. Connection Pathways

Two pathways into the subject are available without a cold approach. The first is through Heritage Midwest Capital. A managing partner at the firm has introduced clients to the prepared-for practice in the past.[1](#)

The second is through the Weatherhead Dean's Advisory Council at Case Western Reserve University. The subject sits on the council. The senior advisor at Northbrook is also Weatherhead alumni and could write a warm note through the alumni office.[1](#)

A third path is informal. The Westshore Cars and Coffee Saturday gathering is open to participants and to spectators, and the subject is a regular attendee from May through October. An introduction inside that setting would carry no commercial framing and would let a first conversation happen on the subject's calendar, not the advisor's.[3](#)

- Buyer at recapitalization: Heritage Midwest Capital. [1](#)
- Shared affiliation: Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. [2](#)
- Informal recurring opportunity: Westshore Cars and Coffee, Saturday mornings, May through October. [3](#)

4. Contact Intelligence

Direct outreach is reasonable through the company channel. The Cuyahoga Industrial Services leadership page maintains a contact form that routes to the office of the Chairman. The subject's personal LinkedIn is verified and accepts inbound messages from second-degree connections.[12](#)

The subject is also publicly identifiable at Westshore Cars and Coffee, a Saturday morning Cleveland-west-side weekly gathering of vintage and collector car owners. He is a regular and an organic in-person introduction is feasible.[3](#)

The residential address on record is public through the county auditor but should never be the channel of first contact. The Bay Village home is the subject's private space and writing to it directly would read as an overstep regardless of intent.[5](#)

- Company contact channel: Cuyahoga Industrial Services leadership page. [1](#)
- Personal LinkedIn: verified, second-degree visible. [2](#)
- Public regular attendance: Westshore Cars and Coffee, Saturday mornings, May through October. [3](#)
- Public business address: Cuyahoga Industrial Services, 4400 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, OH. [4](#)
- Residential address of record: 28 Lake Road, Bay Village, OH. [5](#)

5. Household

The subject is married to Mary E. Smith. Mary works as a part-time pediatric nurse at an academic medical center in Cleveland's University Circle. The household consists of the two adults; the three Smith children are adult and live independently.[2](#)

The eldest, Mark Smith, runs Tap Room and Tonic, a small craft brewery in Columbus, Ohio, opened in 2021 and currently expanding into a second taproom. The other two adult children live in Cleveland and Chicago. Family business succession is therefore an estate question, not an operating one.[3](#)

The household lifestyle footprint stays close to the Cleveland west side. Mary's clinical work and the subject's foundation board both anchor the family to northeast Ohio, and no out-of-state residence appears in the public record. Any conversation that frames the family as a portfolio of geographies should be reframed as a single, durable Ohio household.[245](#)

- Spouse: Mary E. Smith, part-time pediatric nurse, Cleveland. [1](#)
- Three adult children, all living independently. [2](#)
- Eldest, Mark Smith, owner of Tap Room and Tonic, Columbus, OH. [3](#)
- Primary residence: 28 Lake Road, Bay Village, OH. [4](#)
- No out-of-state residence appears in public records reviewed. [5](#)

6. Professional History

The subject completed an MBA at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, in 1991. He spent the early career at a regional industrial firm in northeast Ohio before founding Cuyahoga Industrial Services in 1996.[1](#)

Cuyahoga Industrial Services provides on-site industrial coatings, equipment maintenance, and shutdown services to manufacturers in Ohio, Indiana, and western Pennsylvania. The September 2025 majority recapitalization with Heritage Midwest Capital was the first outside transaction since founding. The subject is now non-executive Chairman with a board seat and a continuing 16 percent rollover stake in Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings LLC.[34](#)

The arc reads as a single-company career. Twenty-nine years from founding to first liquidity event, no prior outside capital, no board seats at other operating businesses on record. That depth of tenure shapes how the subject will assess fiduciary commitments. The advisor speaking with him should expect a long evaluation window and a strong preference for relationships that are built rather than priced.[3](#)

- MBA: Case Western Reserve University, Weatherhead School of Management, 1991. [1](#)
- Founded Cuyahoga Industrial Services in 1996. [2](#)
- Current role: non-executive Chairman, Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings LLC. [3](#)
- Rollover stake retained at close: 16 percent. [4](#)
- Tenure as founder, founding to recap: 29 years. [5](#)

7. Trusted Circle, Existing Advisors, and Gatekeepers

Counsel of record for the subject is Walter Haverford LLP, a Cleveland firm. Two partners are listed as the subject's primary contact. The same firm filed the Smith Family Trust in 2010 and the John R. Smith Holdings LLC in 2025.[14](#)

A private banker of record is not visible. The subject has held a checking account at a regional Cleveland bank since 1992 and no other financial relationship surfaces in the public record. An accountant of personal record is not visible in the public filings. The FY 2025 (partial) Form 990 for the Westshore Community Foundation lists a separate auditor, which is a soft signal that the personal and foundation finances are advised separately.[23](#)

The asymmetry is the actionable item. Counsel is well-established, long-tenured, and gravitational; the wealth side is structurally absent. The advisor walking into this conversation is filling a real gap rather than displacing an incumbent, which is a meaningfully different posture from the typical wealth-management win.[12](#)

- Counsel of record: Walter Haverford LLP, Cleveland. [1](#)
- No private banker on record. Single regional checking relationship since 1992. [2](#)
- Foundation auditor of record, separate from personal counsel: see FY 2025 (partial) Form 990. [3](#)
- Same counsel filed both the 2010 family trust and the 2025 investment LLC. [4](#)

8. Wealth and Asset Signals

Visible markers of investable assets cluster in three categories. The largest is the recap distribution itself, approximately \$25.2 million in cash plus a 16 percent rollover interest in Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings. The second is the primary residence in Bay Village, last assessed at \$1.42 million. The third is the foundation funded around the recap event with an estimated \$1.5 million in initial corpus. [1235](#)

No yacht, no plane, and no out-of-state residence appears in the public record. The lifestyle footprint is modest for the wealth bracket, which is itself a planning signal: the assets are sitting in a checking account because the subject has not yet been given a place to put them. [1](#)

An indicative cash-drag estimate makes the urgency tangible without making it dramatic. At a conservative 4 percent short-term yield, an idle \$25 million is roughly \$1 million per year of foregone earnings before tax. Three years of inaction is a \$3 million household-level cost relative to a money-market floor, and a meaningfully larger number relative to a diversified balanced mandate. The arithmetic is the conversation. [6](#)

- Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings, retained rollover stake: 16 percent. [1](#)
- Recap distribution to subject, before tax: approximately \$25.2 million. [2](#)
- Primary residence assessed value: \$1.42 million, 28 Lake Road, Bay Village, OH. [3](#)
- John R. Smith Holdings LLC, Ohio, formed Nov 14 2025. [4](#)
- Westshore Community Foundation, initial corpus approx \$1.5 million (FY 2025 (partial) 990). [5](#)
- Indicative idle-cash earnings foregone, 4 percent short-term floor: approximately \$1.0 million per year. [6](#)

9. Risk Exposures and Headwinds

The primary risk is concentration. Eight months after close, public records suggest the recap proceeds remain in cash at a single regional bank. At this scale, the inflation drag alone is meaningful, and the FDIC coverage gap is substantial.[1](#)

A secondary risk is the rollover stake. The 16 percent interest in Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings is illiquid until a secondary event by Heritage Midwest Capital. Industry softness in industrial coatings has been noted in trade press in early 2026. Ohio source-income rules apply to the recap gain; the indicative withholding is settled on the Northbrook desk memo.[45](#)

A tertiary risk is reputational. The subject is a publicly profiled Cleveland founder with a named foundation; any planning structure that would not read well on the front page of the Plain Dealer is the wrong recommendation. Tax-efficient is the bar; tax-exotic is the trap.[45](#)

- Estimated cash held at a single regional bank: approximately \$25 million. [1](#)
- FDIC coverage gap on the cash position: substantial. [2](#)
- Rollover stake illiquidity until next sponsor exit, typical 3 to 5 year hold. [3](#)
- Indicative federal withholding on the recap distribution, long-term capital gain assumed: \$5.04 million. [4](#)
- Reputational exposure: publicly profiled Cleveland founder with a named local foundation. [5](#)

10. Planning Signals

Planning structures in place are conservative. The Smith Family Trust was formed in 2010 as a revocable living trust. The John R. Smith Holdings LLC was formed in Ohio in November 2025, two months after the recap close, and appears intended to hold the proceeds. To date no transfers into the LLC are visible. [12](#)

No irrevocable estate structures, no GRATs, no charitable lead trusts, no insurance trusts are visible in the public record. The recap proceeds plus the foundation corpus suggest a window for a step-up to bracket-appropriate planning. The subject has three adult children, which makes intergenerational planning the natural opener. [5](#)

The federal estate exemption sunset and the live foundation are the two structural levers most readily available. A spousal lifetime access trust, a gifting strategy paired with the existing foundation, or a charitable remainder structure layered with the rollover stake are each defensible openings. None is the right answer until counsel weighs in, but the menu is short, well-mapped, and worth knowing cold. [1](#)

- Trust composition: living, revocable. Filed Cuyahoga probate 2010. [1](#)
- Investment LLC: John R. Smith Holdings LLC, Ohio, formed Nov 14 2025. [2](#)
- No irrevocable estate structures visible in the public record at the time of build. [3](#)
- Recap proceeds plus foundation funding are a defensible trigger for an estate planning review. [4](#)
- Three adult children, one in active operating business, frame intergenerational planning naturally. [5](#)

11. Philanthropy and Civic Engagement

The subject is the sole founder of the Westshore Community Foundation, an Ohio community foundation incorporated in August 2025, one month before the recap close. The foundation is structured as a private operating foundation rather than a donor-advised fund. The first-year Form 990, covering the partial fiscal year from incorporation through December 2025, reports an initial corpus of approximately \$1.5 million, with grants of \$48,000 disbursed across nine grantees during the first partial fiscal year. Trustees of record are the subject, the spouse Mary E. Smith, and one independent Cleveland-area director who also serves on the Cleveland Foundation's investment committee. [123457](#)

Stated causes on the foundation's public filings are local vocational programs in northeast Ohio and youth music education in Cleveland-area public schools. First-year grantees include a Westlake-based machinist apprenticeship program, the Cleveland Music School Settlement, and a youth orchestra at Bay Village High School. The grantee mix indicates a hands-on, named-relationship philanthropic style rather than open-call grant-making. The subject sits on the foundation board and on the Weatherhead Dean's Advisory Council at Case Western Reserve University, an unpaid three-year appointment. [1234567](#)

The foundation is small in corpus but unusually clear in stated mission for a first-year vehicle. Both stated causes have established northeast Ohio grantee networks, which suggests the giving strategy is being built on existing relationships rather than from scratch. Industry benchmarks for community foundations at this corpus level indicate a five-to-seven year ramp to a \$10 million annual giving cadence is achievable. A scaled granting plan paired with the recap proceeds, either by direct contribution to the foundation or through a parallel donor-advised vehicle, is a defensible second-year planning conversation. [123457](#)

- Westshore Community Foundation, first-year initial corpus: approx \$1.5 million. [1](#)
- First-year giving: \$48,000 disbursed across nine grantees. [2](#)
- Foundation type: private operating foundation, not a donor-advised fund. [3](#)
- Stated causes: vocational programs and youth music education in northeast Ohio. [4](#)
- Trustees of record: subject, spouse Mary E. Smith, one independent Cleveland-area director. [5](#)
- Board membership: Weatherhead Dean's Advisory Council, Case Western Reserve University, unpaid 3-year term. [6](#)
- Foundation incorporated August 2025, one month before recap close. [7](#)

12. Political Activity

Federal Election Commission records show a modest, predominantly local contribution pattern. Personal contributions totaling \$18,200 across the 2020, 2022, and 2024 cycles are distributed across Ohio congressional and senatorial races, with no super PAC activity disclosed and no contributions to presidential committees in any cycle reviewed. The largest single contribution on record is \$3,300 to a 2024 Ohio senate primary candidate; the median is \$500. Contributions are made personally, not through any business entity. [123456](#)

No state-level filings beyond Ohio races appear in the records reviewed. The pattern includes contributions to both Republican and Democratic candidates in different cycles, weighted slightly toward Republican Ohio congressional incumbents and Democratic senatorial challengers, a distribution more consistent with local-incumbent support than with national alignment. No 501(c)(4) activity is disclosed; no political consulting expenditures appear in the foundation's Form 990. [1234567](#)

The pattern is consistent with the operating-business profile elsewhere in the dossier. Modest, local, predominantly aimed at Ohio races with practical regulatory consequences for industrial businesses, workforce training, manufacturing trade, environmental permitting. This is civic participation as part of running a company, not as an ideological identity. The advisor should treat the section as preparation, not as conversational material; the subject does not post about politics, does not appear in any public photography at fundraisers, and is not quoted on national political issues in the press record. [123456](#)

- Aggregate federal personal contributions, 2020 to 2024: \$18,200. [1](#)
- Distribution: concentrated on Ohio congressional and senatorial races. [2](#)
- No super PAC contributions or independent expenditure activity on record. [3](#)
- Cadence: small donations distributed across cycle, not bunched at deadlines. [4](#)
- Partisan distribution: split across cycles, weighted to local incumbents. [5](#)
- Largest single contribution: \$3,300 to a 2024 Ohio senate primary candidate. [6](#)
- No 501(c)(4) or political consulting expenditures on the foundation Form 990. [7](#)

13. Public Recognition and Lifestyle Signals

Press coverage is local and event-driven. The Cleveland Plain Dealer published a long-form profile of the subject in the week of the recap close in September 2025, in which he is quoted at length on the decision to sell, stay on as Chairman, and remain in northeast Ohio. The piece runs roughly 2,400 words and is the single most useful document in this dossier for capturing his stated voice. Cuyahoga Industrial Services was named Northeast Ohio Family Business of the Year by Smart Business Cleveland in 2022; the subject delivered a brief acceptance speech that publicly credited "the second-generation supervisors who know where every weld is".[12](#)

The lifestyle signal worth flagging is automotive. The subject drives a 2008 Porsche 911 Carrera, the 997.2 generation, and is a regular at Westshore Cars and Coffee, a Saturday morning gathering of vintage and collector car owners on Cleveland's west side that runs May through October. He has been photographed at three of the last five season-opening events. He sits on the Weatherhead Dean's Advisory Council at Case Western Reserve University, attends most monthly council meetings in person, and was the keynote at the 2024 Weatherhead alumni reunion dinner.[3456](#)

The signals cohere into a consistent public posture: locally rooted, modest, recognized inside northeast Ohio but not seeking national visibility. No Forbes profile, no LinkedIn influencer activity, no podcast appearances, no industry-trade keynotes beyond the local university appear in the records reviewed. The advisor reading this should expect an unflashy first meeting in unflashy attire, hosted in Westlake rather than downtown, and should plan accordingly. The Porsche, the Plain Dealer profile, and the Cars and Coffee attendance together form a coherent personal narrative, the subject is a Cleveland founder, not a wealth holder relocating identity.[1347](#)

- Cleveland Plain Dealer long-form profile, September 2025, approximately 2,400 words. [1](#)
- Northeast Ohio Family Business of the Year, Smart Business Cleveland, 2022. [2](#)
- Vehicle on record: 2008 Porsche 911 Carrera, 997.2 generation. [3](#)
- Weekend regular at Westshore Cars and Coffee, May through October. [4](#)
- Weatherhead Dean's Advisory Council, current; in-person attendance pattern. [5](#)
- 2024 Weatherhead alumni reunion dinner keynote speaker. [6](#)
- No national press, podcast, or industry-keynote appearances on record. [7](#)

14. Social Media Presence

Public posts are infrequent, professional, and consistent in tone. The subject's X account, @jrsmith_cuyahoga, posts roughly once a month, primarily about northeast Ohio manufacturing policy and vintage Porsche events. The account has approximately 1,800 followers and follows 220 accounts, a follower-to-following ratio more characteristic of a deliberate broadcaster than an engaged participant. LinkedIn activity is limited to company news, the September 2025 recap announcement, and one quarterly thought piece on Ohio manufacturing labor markets. Connection count on LinkedIn is approximately 2,400, weighted heavily toward northeast Ohio manufacturing and Weatherhead alumni networks. [1234567](#)

Stated personal interests visible in posts include vintage cars, sailing on Lake Erie, and Cleveland Browns football. Family is not discussed publicly. No content about personal wealth, investing, philanthropic giving, or political views appears on either platform. The subject does not run an Instagram or TikTok account under his name; a Substack or personal newsletter is not on file. The September 2025 recap announcement remains the most-engaged post in the LinkedIn record at approximately 320 reactions and 41 substantive comments. [1234567](#)

The posting cadence is itself a signal. Roughly twelve posts a year across both platforms, all professional in tone, no political content, no personal celebrations, no replies to follower questions. The subject treats public platforms as part of the company's surface rather than as a personal one, the LinkedIn account effectively functions as the Chairman's public statement channel for company news. Engagement with his posts is reasonable for an advisor, particularly on company-news posts where a brief substantive comment is welcome; engagement that reads as cultivation, social-graph mapping, or visible following-and-favoriting is not. [1234567](#)

- X handle on record: @jrsmith_cuyahoga, approx 1,800 followers, follows 220 accounts. [1](#)
- Average posting cadence: 1 post per month on X, 1 quarterly thought piece on LinkedIn. [2](#)
- Most-discussed topic last 180 days: northeast Ohio manufacturing policy. [3](#)
- LinkedIn connection count: approximately 2,400, weighted to northeast Ohio and Weatherhead alumni. [4](#)
- No family content posted publicly on either platform. [5](#)
- Stated personal interests: vintage cars, Lake Erie sailing, Cleveland Browns football. [6](#)
- Most-engaged LinkedIn post: Sep 2025 recap announcement, approx 320 reactions, 41 substantive comments. [7](#)

15. Source Manifest

Every URL cited in this dossier, in the order it first appears. Each entry verified at render time.

1. [1]Company page
Cuyahoga Industrial Services leadership page. cuyahoga-industrial.example.com.
<https://cuyahoga-industrial.example.com/team>
Cited in: at-a-glance, contact-intelligence, professional-historyVerified May 9, 2026✓
2. [2]Press release
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Form D, Cuyahoga Industrial Services Holdings LLC. sec-filings.example.org.
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9. [9]Tax memo
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<https://research.wealth-recon.example.com/tax/2026-0514-smith>
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