K.J. Hughes graduated from the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in Management with a Technology Entrepreneurship minor.

During his time at the Smith School, K.J. was a Hillman Entrepreneur Scholar and a member of the University Student Judiciary Council.

K.J. is currently a managing partner at Relentless Management Group. In his spare time, he volunteers at a non-profit organization that he co-founded called, Sons of Life, Inc., which focuses on providing leadership, resources, and development to children of incarcerated parents.

K.J. Hughes graduated from the Smith School in 2014 but by the time he graduated, he had already started multiple successful ventures, including Relentless Management Group, which is a business management firm for high net worth individuals, specifically athletes in the NBA, NHL, MLB, and NFL.

The story of how he got there is not a typical story for a Smith School student however K.J. was determined to get his degree, even after reaching a level of success most people don’t achieve in a lifetime.

An average student at Springbrook High School in Montgomery County, K.J. was focused on developing his leadership skills and entrepreneurial pursuits. In 10th grade, he started planning dances at Montgomery County recreation centers for high school students and charging them admission. What began as a once-a-month occurrence was happening every week by the time he graduated. It was at this point K.J. focused his attention toward nightclubs and entertainment in the DC area.

After graduation K.J. headed to Rutgers University with the sole vision of expanding his marketing and promotions business into New York City. Within a year of his arrival, he had contracts with Duracell, Heineken and other notable brands. Due to increasing commitments, K.J. chose to exit Rutgers with the intent to focus full-time on entrepreneurship.

K.J. eventually ended up back in DC where he opened two nightclubs. He met an athlete asking for his advice through the draft. With proficiency in finance, stellar communication skills, and sheer hustle, K.J. helped navigate the troubled waters of uncertainty. The player was drafted in the first round, which is what helped launch K.J. into the sports management industry. From there, K.J. worked on referrals, slowly growing his current business.

During the NBA lockout in 2011, with more time on his hands, K.J. desired a network of people who could help him grow the business. He decided the best way to develop that network would be to
complete his degree. The University of Maryland’s Smith School of Business was a “no-brainer” for him, but he knew he would need to put in the work to be admitted.

With the help of Michael Robison, Associate Director of Admissions and Diversity Initiatives, K.J. learned of his chances of admittance, Smith’s culture, and how he could leverage his degree. After earning his associates degree, with the highest of honors, at Prince George’s County Community College, he was accepted as a transfer into Smith on a provisional level.

K.J. soaked in everything while at Smith. He developed lifelong relationships with staff and professors such as Nicole Coomber and Daniel Olson. He also experienced the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp enabling him to witness the science behind being successful.

One Smith experience that had the greatest influence on K.J. was his participation in a global business trip to Thailand. By fully immersing himself in another culture, he was better able to get a sense of the global perspective of business. This allowed him a deeper appreciation for the importance of relationships within an organization.

College wasn’t a tradition for the Hughes family but K. J. never let that stop him. Despite already running a profitable company, he wanted more, so he took a non-traditional approach to expand his network and further develop his skills by earning his degree. When he looks back on what the Smith School has given him, K.J. is excited to contribute, both in time volunteering with students and financially helping students to study abroad. With the ability to give back now a reality for K.J., he has graciously established the Relentless Global Learning Experience Fund to financially support students participating in the Global Programs offered at the Robert H. Smith School of Business.

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