

# Father's Day is Here!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: DJ... enjoying his new daughter!

**I**n June, our nation celebrates Father's Day. How did it all begin? Well, it is an interesting fact that around 1909, the driving force behind it was a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd. After hearing a sermon about Mother's Day in 1909, Sonora, one of six children raised by her father William Jackson Smart, a widower, felt it was important to finally recognize fathers.

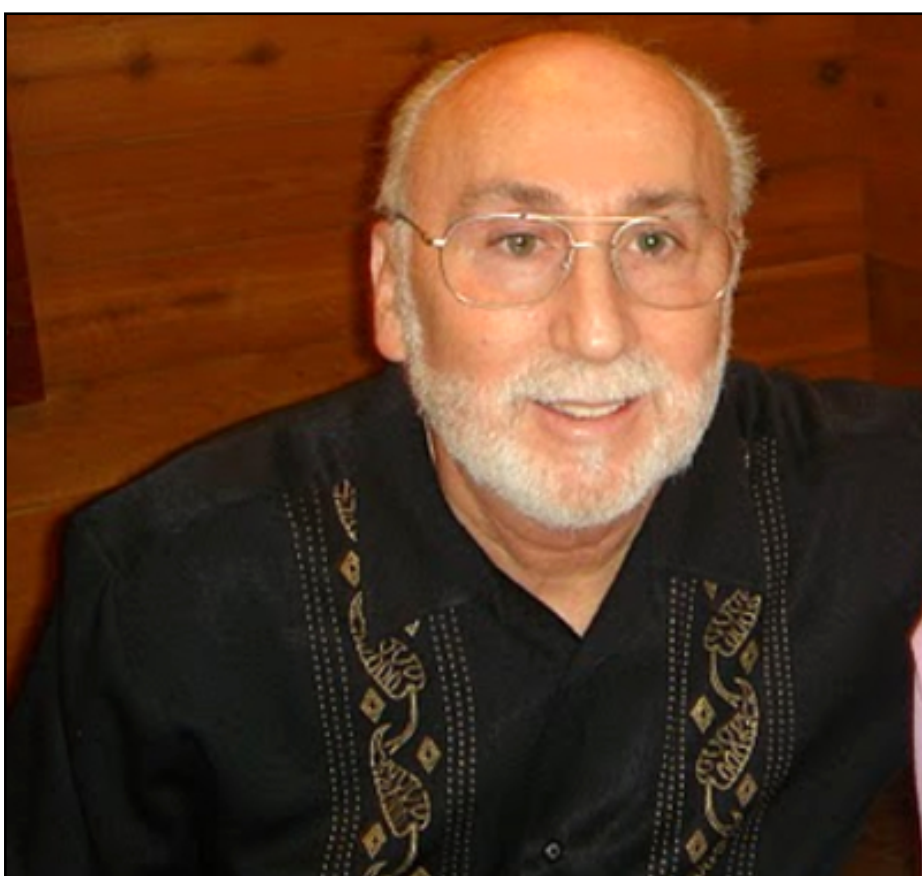
Sonora began organizing what would become the first Father's Day with the help of local churches, ministers, and community organizations. Originally, she had hoped to hold it on June 5th, her father's birthday. But planning took longer than expected, and local clergy needed more time to prepare sermons. So the date was pushed to the third Sunday in June – June 19, 1910.



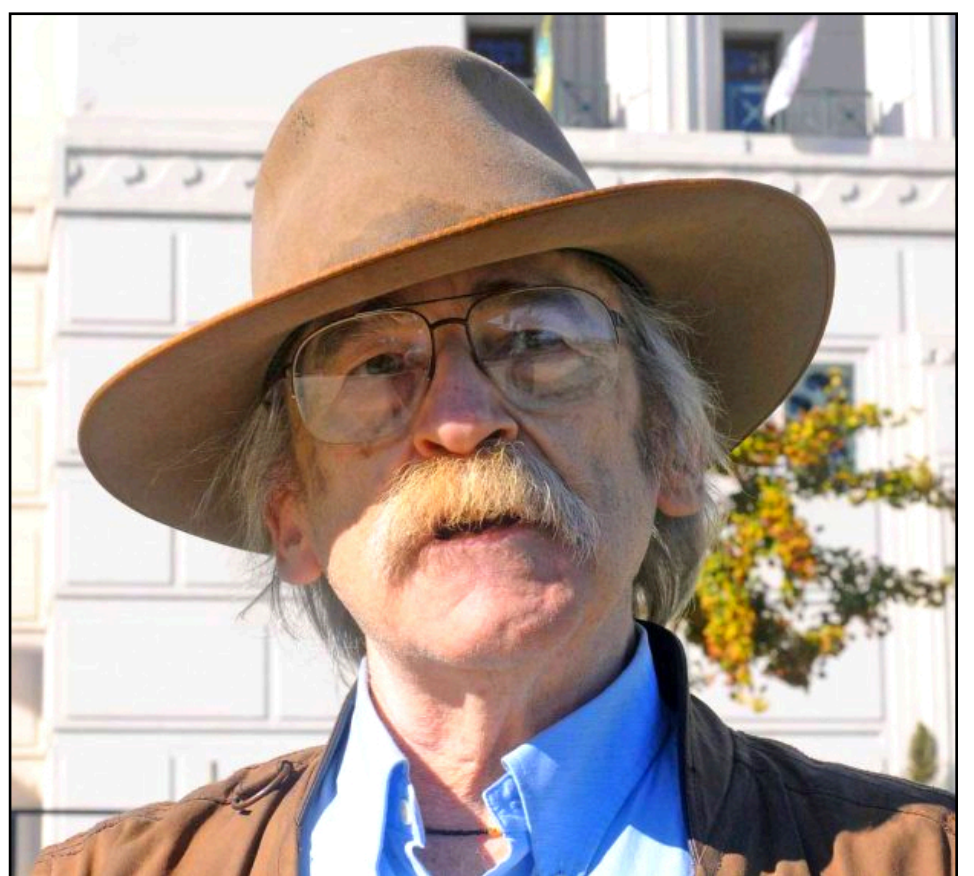
Patrick... a new dad!

That morning, churches across Spokane took part. Pastors delivered sermons focused on fatherhood – its responsibilities, and its moral importance in the home. It wasn't a commercial event. There were no advertisements or coordinated national campaigns. Instead, it was deeply personal and reflective. Many congregations handed out red roses to honor living fathers and white roses to remember those who had passed away.

Beyond the churches, some families made their own small observances. Children visited their fathers, spent time with them, or wrote to Dad simple notes of appreciation. There were no standardized traditions yet – no barbecues and no universal "Father's Day gifts," like we have today. What existed instead was a shared intention, to acknowledge fathers in a way that had rarely been done before.



Dean... a joyous father!



Richard... a dad and grandfather!

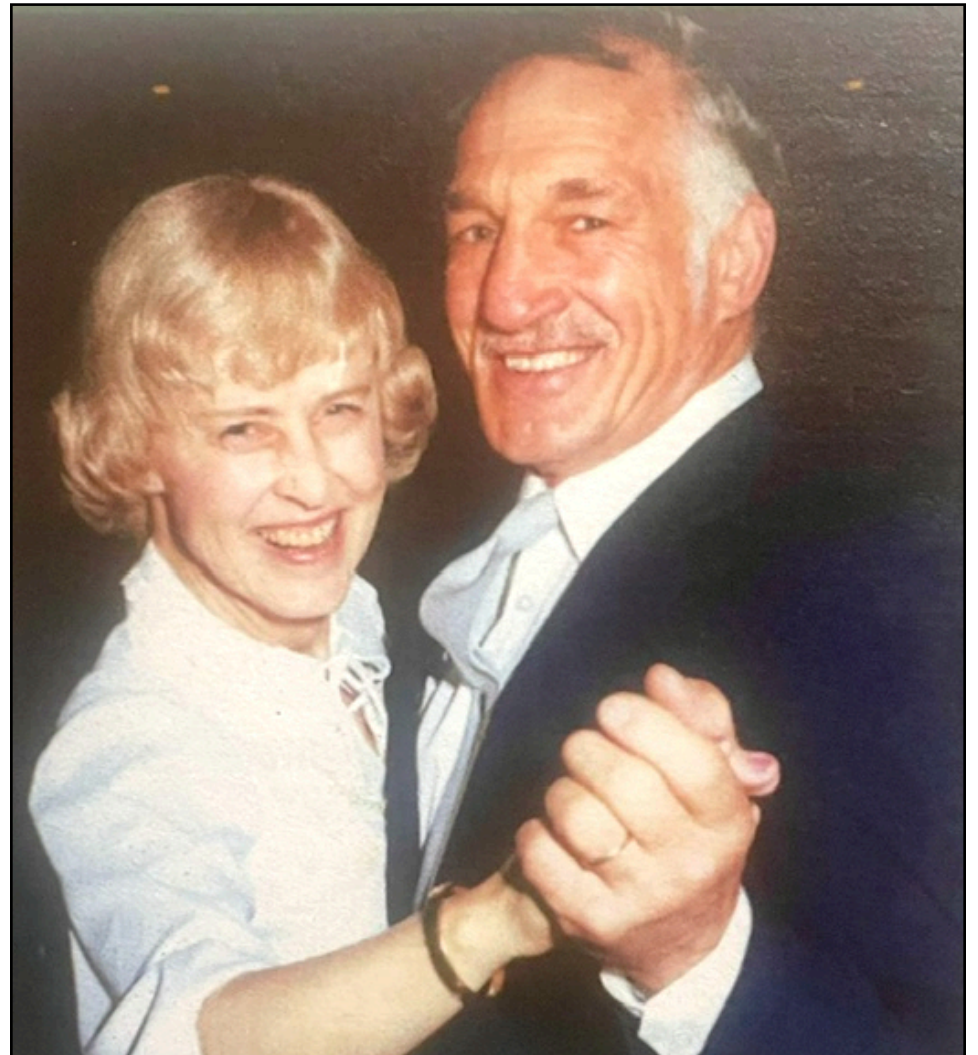
Despite the sincerity of the event, it didn't immediately catch on nationwide. In fact, the idea of celebrating fathers faced some resistance. At the time, many people saw it as unnecessary or even overly sentimental. Others worried it would become too commercial, much like critics of Mother's Day had already begun to argue. For years after 1910, Father's Day remained a scattered, uneven observance, celebrated in some places and ignored in others.

Still, the seed had been planted. Over the following decades, the idea slowly gained support, helped along by civic groups, retailers, and eventually political figures who saw value in formally acknowledging the role of fathers in American life.

Looking back, June 1910 feels modest compared to what Father's Day has become. But that modesty is part of its significance. It started with one person's effort to honor a specific kind of love – quiet, consistent, and often overlooked – and grew from there, one community at a time.

More than a century later, Father's Day looks different depending on how it is celebrated. For some, it begins early in the morning with set family rituals as children gather to honor Dad. Families gather for meals through backyard barbecues, breakfasts, or dinners out at dad's favorite restaurant. Children, young and grown give cards and phone calls and video chats bridge distance when loved ones can't be together physically.

Today, the celebration has also broadened. It honors stepfathers, grandfathers, mentors, and anyone who has taken on a fatherly role. Social media is filled with tributes, photos, and memories of our father figure. At its core, Father's Day remains a special day to honor Dad in whatever way possible and to remember that he matters. Let's all remember Father's Day.



Arlin... a father of three girls!

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