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Contact: Pam Scott  
Spokane Regional Convention & Visitor Bureau  
509.742.9373 direct / 509.993.9824 cell  
pscott@VisitSpokane.com  
www.VisitSpokane.com

## **Father's Day Turns 100 Years Old**

(Spokane, WA, January 27, 2010) Father's Day will be 100 years old June 20, 2010, and a Spokane, Washington, woman is credited with being the founder of the annual celebration. Sonora Smart Dodd, often referred to as the "Mother of Father's Day," was 16 years old when her mother died in 1898, leaving her father William Jackson Smart to raise Sonora and her five younger brothers on a remote farm in Eastern Washington.

In 1909 when Sonora heard a Mother's Day sermon at Central United Methodist Church in Spokane, she was inspired to propose that Father's receive equal recognition.

The following year with the assistance Reverend Dr. Conrad Bluhm, the pastor at Sonora's present church Old Centenary Presbyterian Church (now Knox Presbyterian Church), she took the idea to the Spokane Ministerial Alliance. Sonora suggested June 5 (her father's birthday) be established as a day honoring all Father's, but the pastors felt they needed more time to prepare sermons. June 19, 1910, was designated as the first Father's Day and sermons honoring Father's were presented throughout the city.

It was years, however, before Father's Day gained national prominence. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge recognized Father's Day and urged the states to do likewise. In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a proclamation calling for the third Sunday in June to be recognized as Father's Day and requested that flags to be flown that day on all government buildings. President Richard M. Nixon signed a proclamation in 1972, permanently observing Father's Day on the third Sunday in June.

Sonora's pivotal role in the creation of a national Father's Day celebration was recognized in 1943 at a luncheon in her honor in New York City at the Billion Dollar Bond Drive; at a celebration by the National Council for the Promotion of Father's Day at the 1940 New York World's Fair; and at the 1974 World's Fair Expo in Spokane. Two plaques commemorating her role are affixed to a two-ton granite boulder at the Spokane YMCA.

Today Father's Day is celebrated from Antigua to Zimbabwe in over 50 countries around the world. Commemorative activities in the Spokane region are currently being scheduled. Go to [www.VisitSpokane.com](http://www.VisitSpokane.com) for more information.

### **About the Spokane Regional CVB**

The Spokane Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau generates economic growth for Spokane County by successfully marketing the Spokane Region as the destination for conventions and leisure travelers from around the world. The proof is in: Visitors to Spokane County spent an estimated \$832.5 million in 2008, providing jobs for nearly 10,110 residents and generating \$61.9 million in non-resident tax dollars collected in Spokane County.

**SPOKANE. NEAR NATURE. NEAR PERFECT.**

801 West Riverside, Suite 301, Spokane WA 99201  
[www.VisitSpokane.com](http://www.VisitSpokane.com) | 509.742.9373