

We honor our fathers

Written by Timothy Houston
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Happy Father's Day! The time for us to honor our fathers has come once again. The United States is one of the few countries in the world that has an official day on which fathers are honored by their children. On the third Sunday in June, fathers all across the United States are given presents, treated to dinner or recognized in other ways to be made to feel special. Modern version of Father's Day celebration originated in the United States of America and thereafter the tradition spread in countries around the world.

The quest to publicly honor fathers began in the mind of one. Sonora Louise Smart Dodd a loving daughter from Spokane, Washington is credited with getting Father's Day started in the United States. In 1909, while listening to a Mother's Day sermon, the idea of a Father's Day celebration originated in her mind. At age 27, Dodd pondered if there is a day to honor mother then why not for father? Dodd felt strongly for fathers because of the affection she received from her own father William Jackson Smart, a Civil War veteran.

Great things happen when one refuses to be denied. Inspired by Anna Jarvis's struggle to promote Mother's Day, Dodd began a thorough campaign to commemorate Father's Day in the US. The Spokane Ministerial Association and the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) supported Dodd's cause. As a result Spokane celebrated its first Father's Day on June 19, 1910. Although there was some initial hesitation, the idea gained gradual popularity all over the US and Father's Day came to be celebrated in cities across the country.

Although the campaign began with one, it later took on a life of its own. President Woodrow Wilson approved of this idea in 1916. President Calvin Coolidge also supported the idea of a national Father's Day in 1924. After a long-drawn-out struggle of over four decades, President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day in 1966. Then in 1972, President Richard Nixon established a permanent national observance of Father's Day to be held on the third Sunday of June. Sonora Smart Dodd was honored for her contribution at the World's Fair in Spokane in 1974. Dodd died in 1978 at age 96.

In 2013, we continue to honor our fathers. Although my dad passed away in 1999, I still look forward to the celebration. I now get to celebrate with my son and grandson and all the men in my life who are worthy of recognition. If your father is living, call or visit him, if not, recognize one of the fathers in your sphere. You will be glad you did. Happy Father's day!

Timothy Houston is an author, minister, and motivational speaker who is committed to guiding positive life changes in families and communities. To get copies of his books, for questions, comments or more information, go to www.tlhouston.com.