

USD professor is married to 'the' Mister Smith

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Dr. Elizabeth Theiss Smith has always been interested in making things happen. "From the time I was a kid I was interested in, how do you make change? How do you make a community a better place to live?" she said. As an associate professor of political science at the University of South Dakota and associate director of the Farber Center for Civic Leadership, Smith has devoted her time to doing both those things – an encouraging her students to do the same. Smith arrived at USD in 1999 and teaches courses with two main areas of focus: American politics and public administration. "I also teach a very challenging course on the death penalty every year," she said. "It's a way to introduce new freshmen to thinking like a social scientist. ... It's a lot of fun. Students do a lot of writing, debating and thinking." Adjunct to this, Smith also performs "a certain amount of service" both to her department at the university

and to the community. "I've worked Vermillion in many different projects, (including) developing a downtown historic district," she said. "We actually had some of our students – I led a class, and the class did building surveys of downtown buildings in the process of downtown Vermillion becoming a historic district." Projects such as these are a way of linking the community with the university, she said. Another is a class where each of her students work for local political candidates for one day each week. "I really try to get students ... more familiar with community service. That's one of my missions," she said. One of the things that attracted Smith to USD was the Farber Center for Civic Leadership, one of the roles of which is to engage students in doing just that. Smith has served as associate director of the center since "about 2004." "A lot of it is just working out ways of linking students to civic life," she said. "For example, we sponsor the Mount Rushmore Institute periodically, which invites

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young people from all over South Dakota to spend a week together learning the skills of leadership." This "link" is very important to the students' development, she said. "I think that students come to the university to learn how to be better people, how to develop into their highest and best selves," she said. "I have to agree with the ancient Greeks that our highest and best selves are embedded in community. "Creating communities worth caring about is a very important part of our lives together, our collective lives. One of the bases of thinking in civic terms is getting outside of

self-interest and beginning to think collectively about things that really matter," she said. Smith also encourages this on a larger level outside the university when she serves as the national chair of the Committee on Civic Education, a committee of the American Political Science Association. As chair, Smith works trying to support civic education and engagement across the nation. When she's not working, one of Smith's main hobbies is cycling. "Last summer my husband Larry Smith and I cycled 320 miles from Aberdeen to



DR. ELIZABETH THEISS SMITH

Vermillion, and that was really fun," she said. "We enjoy cycling, and in the winter we spin." She also is an avid hiker. "I love a long-distance hike," she said. "My idea of the perfect vacation is to have 100 miles to walk." Smith and her husband – the "Mister Smith" of Mister

Smith's Bakery & Café – have been together for more than 38 years. "It's so funny, because at some point in the semester, the students in my classes figure out, 'Oh, wait a minute. You're married to the Mister Smith?'" she said. "That's always kind of funny. People are always kind of surprised."

FOR THE RECORD

- Cases Disposed 2/3-9/2012**
- Brian James Twenter, 4 E. Main St. #203, Vermillion; Speeding on state highway, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Shawna Flemming, 301 Dace St., Volin; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Shawna Flemming, 301 Dace St., Volin; Seat belt violation, \$25.00
 - Rachel Lyn Poss, 824 W. Dartmouth #3, Vermillion; Under twenty-one driver, dismissed
 - Abdullahi Abdi Hassan, 3145 W. 12th St. #23, Sioux Falls; Renewal registration during assigned month, \$54.00 plus costs
 - Abdullahi Abdi Hassan, 3145 W. 12th St., #23, Sioux Falls; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - William P. Danner, 265 W. Shore Dr., N. Sioux City, SD; Speeding other roadways, \$99.00 plus costs
 - Justin M. Nelsen, 501 Garfield St., Centerville; Seat belt violation, \$26.00
 - Rachel Leslie Pusey, 707 E. Cedar St., Vermillion; Renewal registration during assigned month, \$54.00 plus costs
 - Mark Scott Fodness, 2604 S. Villanova Ave., Sioux Falls; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Michael Chilarski, 31183 466th Avenue, Vermillion; County speeding, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Ronnie Earl Sexton, Sioux Falls; No peddlers license, dismissed
 - Nicole Altamore, 1008 Blaine St., Norfolk, NE; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Dustin Nieman, 2022 Cedar St., Yankton; Seat belt violation, \$25.00
 - Talon J. Nieman, 2022 Cedar St., Yankton; Seat belt violation, \$25.00
 - Mallory Elizabeth Ridgway, 901 Rose St., #113A, Vermillion; Careless driving, \$54.00 plus costs
 - Craig J. Limoges, 47540 323rd St., Elk Point; County speeding, \$70.00 plus costs
 - Jeremy Bialke, 510 8th St. SE, Buffalo, MN; Speeding on state highway, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Michelle Parmer, 3407 W. 24th, Greenley, CO; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Dennis Ivan Hunter, 45678 Wicker St., Meckling; Driving while license is cancelled, \$104.00 plus costs
 - Riley Terrill Paulsen, 800 E. Cherry St. #106 Beede, Vermillion; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Molly Radigan, 1530 Brandon Drive, Vermillion; Speeding other roadways, \$19.00 plus costs
 - Aaric Alan Willard, 548 Rollinghills Dr., Yankton; Renewal registration during assigned month, \$54.00 plus costs
 - Andrea D. Johnson, 2321 S. St. Aubin, Sioux City, IA; Speeding other roadways, \$19.00 plus costs
 - Sherri Schroeder, 113 S. Cliff Ave. Apt. 59, Harrisburg; Seat belt violation, \$25.00
 - Sherri Schroeder, 113 S. Cliff Ave. Apt. 59, Harrisburg; Speeding on state highway, \$39.00 plus costs
 - Ann Paulina Dyce, 303 W. 29th St., Sioux Falls; Speeding on state highway, \$19.00 plus costs
 - Sally Trace Felix, 2100 W. 31st St., Sioux Falls; Speeding on state highway, \$19.00 plus costs
 - Paul M. Buckneberg, 45886 294th St., Centerville; Speeding on state highway, \$19.00 plus costs

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Gregg Hanson, Clerk

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