

Dads' Day – a tradition for 101 years

The idea of Father's Day was conceived slightly more than a century ago by Sonora Dodd of Spokane, Wash., while she listened to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. Dodd wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart, a widowed Civil War veteran who was left to raise his six children on a farm.

A day in June was chosen for the first Father's Day celebration – 101 years ago, June 19, 1910, proclaimed by Spokane's mayor because it was the month of Smart's birth.

The first presidential proclamation honoring fathers was issued in 1966 when President Lyndon Johnson designated the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Father's Day has been celebrated annually since 1972 when President Richard Nixon signed the public law that made it permanent.

There are an estimated 70.1 million fathers across the nation.

Census figures show there were 1.8 million single fathers in 2010; 15 percent of single parents were men.

The estimated number of state-at-home dads is 154,000 in 2010. These married fathers with children younger than 15 have remained out of the labor force for at least one year primarily so they can care for the family while their wives work outside the home. These fathers cared for 287,000 children, according to America's Families and Living Arrangements