

Father's Day – an annual celebration for 30 years

The idea of Father's Day was conceived slightly more than a century ago by Sonora Dodd of Spokane 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. June 17, 1910, was 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.

The estimated number of fathers across the nation is 70.1 million, according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation

Number of single fathers in 2011 was 1.7 million, which represents 15 percent of single parents, according to Census Bureau.

The estimated number of stay-at-home dads in 2011 is 176,000. 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 about 332,000 children, according to America's Families and Living Arrangements.

