

Features



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The Top Ten: Sawyer Smith On Politics

JANUARY 23RD 2012 BY UNKNOWN

The Top Ten: Sawyer Smith On Politics

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

Sawyer Smith is a unique fellow these days.

He is interested in politics and has met three of the major GOP candidates seeking that party's nomination for President, plus one who's name has been volleyed around during this election season.

What a deal for a kid from Dexter to meet Mitt Romney, Herman Cain, Rick Santorum and "the Donald" himself - Donald Trump.

Sawyer is the son of Kip and Pam Smith of Dexter, and a 2010 graduate of Dexter High School.

Sawyer plays baseball for the Palm Beach Atlantic Sailfish and is pursuing a degree in marketing & finance.

SMT TOP TEN QUESTIONS for Sawyer Smith:

- **Name:** Jon Sawyer Smith
- **Age:** 19
- **Attends:** Palm Beach Atlantic University

Why does politics excite you so? There is never a dull moment to me in politics. I could go on and on about who and what in politics interest me and why but, the most important reason I become excited is because I love this country and care

</images/AB 2012/NEW TopTen graphic.jpg>

deeply about the paths it chooses to take day in and day out. These paths are determined ultimately through politics.

How have you had the opportunity to meeting three of the 2012 presidential candidates? Well, God has certainly blessed me with some wonderful opportunities and opened doors that most do not get to walk through so first off I am very thankful for that. Through my college republicans organization, student government association, and other personal connections. I have been fortunate enough to cross paths with people like this from time to time.

/images/AB 2012/sawyer and santorum.jpg

Who have you met and where? As far as presidential candidates go in 2012, I have shook hands with some Rick Santorum, Herman Cain, and Mitt Romney. Also, if Donald

Trump announces his candidacy for president, he will make a fourth candidate I've had the pleasure of meeting. I was very upset I missed my chance to meet Newt Gingrich and Rick Perry over Christmas break when I was home from school.

Use three words to describe each candidate. Professional. Intelligent. Enthusiastic.

Why is the election of 2012 important? While all elections have been and remain important, this particular election of 2012 may be the most vital yet in deciding our nations ever changing course in history. We will ether decide to continue this downward spiral we have been experiencing for so long or we will elect a different individual that will lead us with hopes of turning things around in Washington and returning America to the place it once was before it is too late.

/images/AB 2012/sawyer and herman.jpg

Traditionally, young voters are one of the smallest voting groups in national elections. What would you say to encourage your peers to become involved in the process and

to vote? Before I would tell them to go vote, I would first tell them to learn and understand on their own behalf the issues and things taking place in our country if they do not know already. Find out what you stand for and support it by voting. Far too often I witness others show no interest in politics, I think they fail to realize that whether they are interested or not it affects their lives too; not only theirs, but their families and friends also. Take initiative to care about what's happening in our great country and hit the polls wholeheartedly, your vote does count and can make a difference.

Who is your political hero and why? I do not have just one political hero. There are too many that I look up to only to say one name.

/images/AB 2012/sawyer and donald.jpg

What are Sawyer Smith's career goals? I certainly know that my interest and heart is in government/politics and/or business but I do not yet know what the Lord has planned for my life. I am taking it

one day at a time open to whatever comes my way; always ready to seize an opportunity.

What is your favorite sound? Music in general. I love all kinds.

What is your favorite word? Love.

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Dexter's Kruse Honored For Service To Ag

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Dexter's Kruse Honored For Service To Ag

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

HONOLULU – He grew up in Stoddard County, walking cornrows side-by-side with his dad, with his hands in the rich Bootheel soil. He and his wife came back to their hometown to raise a family, to walk those cornrows with his sons – and now his granddaughters – and to make a positive impact in the community.

Along the way, Charles Kruse has been a vital part in the largest farmer organization in the ShowMe State, has served the state, as Director of Agriculture, served his state and nation in the Army National Guard, has been a trusted agricultural advisor to government leaders.

The American Farm Bureau Federation honored former Missouri Farm Bureau President Charles Kruse recently with its highest honor – the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award. The recognition was announced at the national organization's recent annual meeting in Honolulu.

AFBF established the Distinguished Service Award to honor individuals who have devoted their careers to serving farming and ranching.

A fourth-generation farmer, Charlie Kruse has dedicated more than 40 years to agriculture, including service on numerous local, state and national committees, among them the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, the Governor's Advisory Council on Agriculture and President George H.W. Bush's Council on Rural America.

For 18 years, until his retirement at the end of 2010, Kruse served as president of the Missouri Farm Bureau. Prior to that, Kruse was the director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, from 1985-1991.

The list of accolades Kruse has received for his work for Missouri agriculture is long, and his support for farming and ranching across the country is equally, if not more, impressive, according to AFBF President Bob Stallman.

"Charlie Kruse embodies Farm Bureau as well as any one person could," Stallman said. "We are proud to call him our own and honored to have worked alongside him to ensure a strong future for American agriculture."

Kruse's national appointments include work on the FARMER-MAC board of directors, President George W. Bush's Advisory Committee for Trade and Policy Negotiations and the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture.

Kruse has represented U.S. agriculture in numerous efforts to grow international markets for American food and fiber. In addition, in 2010, as a retired brigadier general in the Army National Guard, he assisted in creating agri-business development teams in Afghanistan.

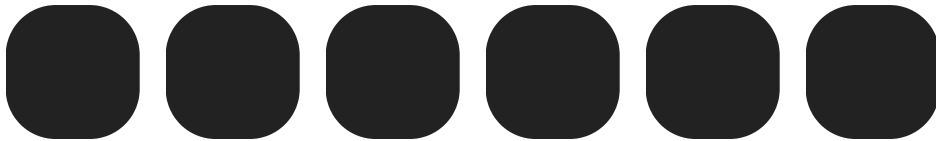
Along with serving as Missouri Farm Bureau president from 1992-2010, Kruse's involvement with Farm Bureau includes service on the AFBF board of directors from 1995-2010 and the organization's executive committee from 1996-2010.

He was chairman of AFBF's Task Force on the U.S. Livestock Industry in 2003 and the group's Trade Advisory Committee in 2004 and 2005.

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Libla Speaks To GOP Group

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[Libla Speaks To GOP Group](#)

The Stoddard County Republican Club met Monday evening and had as guest speaker Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff. Libla announced last year he would be running for the GOP nomination in the Missouri State Senate in the 25th Senatorial District to succeed State Sen. Rob Mayer of Dexter. However, due to redistricting, Poplar Bluff and Butler County is in the 33rd District with West Plains. Libla is a candidate for the Republican nomination in the new 33rd District. Libla was introduced to the local GOP club members by Marjean Mayer. (Photo submitted by Grojean Weeks.)

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'There Are Angels': Young Man Fights Rare Condition

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['There Are Angels': Young Man Fights Rare Condition](#)

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

Kyle Smith is like most any teenager in Dexter. He hangs out with his friends, played the drums in the high school band, got dressed up and went to prom, acted goofy with his friends on an adventure, and has been an important part of his youth group at church.

But Kyle would sometimes have sinus troubles – and the doctors would just say it was a pretty common malady in this region. He would have severe headaches, something you might not expect with a healthy young teenage guy.

During a visit to his sister in Memphis, though, something happened. After his shower one morning Kyle was unable to raise his arms over his head.

Kyle's sister – who is an R.N. in Memphis – called their mother, Debbie; she knew something wasn't right. After an MRI, the doctors concluded Kyle had Chiari Malformation, a serious neurological disorder.

“The condition is not generally caught until someone is a young adult,” Debbie said. Chiari malformations (CMs) are structural defects in the cerebellum, the part of the brain that controls balance. When the indented bony space at the lower rear of the skull is smaller than normal, the cerebellum and brainstem can be pushed downward.

“The doctors found that his skull did not completely grow around his cerebellum,” she said. “When that happens it starts pulling on the spinal cord. If it gets worse they can be paralyzed.”

The next step was specialists at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis and a risky surgery right after the new year. It was not an simple procedure; no, the surgery was complicated, it was it great risks for Kyle, including paralysis or blindness. Kyle also having pneumonia made the surgery even more risky.

Strength From Prayer

Prayers were offered - for Kyle, the family, for the medical staff. The faith community at the First Methodist Church paused for prayer for Kyle prior to services the day before surgery. The prayer ministry lifted Kyle in prayer. His friends in youth group gathered together to join hands and pray for their friend. Friends, family, community - all prayed.

“We know there are angels; we know,” Debbie said. They family all felt the strength from the prayers. And the nurses and medical staff were remarkable – even fellow patients and their families were pulling for Kyle.

“The man next to Kyle was from Nigeria. He and his wife were amazing,” Debbie said. The gentleman's wife was an international flight attendant, and prior to Kyle's surgery she asked for a moment of prayer.

“She prayed the most beautiful prayer. She said over and over, ‘I lift him up, I lift him up’,” Debbie said. Their new Nigerian friend's prayer was eloquent and spoke to the heart. “She must have said ‘lift him up’ at least 15 times.” The woman later told Debbie that she “began to feel an outpouring” of God's spirit for Kyle. “God's peace was on us.”

The surgery was a success, but the young Dexter man still had obstacles to overcome. Kyle still had to battle the pneumonia and following the surgery he was in extreme pain. Debbie said doctors explained that his pain was similar to the pain when a rubber band is tightly on a finger: after the band is gone, the pain rushes in.

“He has been such a pro,” Debbie said, the pride and hope in her voice. “He's done very well.”

Kyle came home to Dexter on Wednesday. Daily antibiotics are fed through a PICC line administered by Debbie. He has a rash from the high doses of antibiotics, which is treated by antihistamine, which of course makes Kyle sleepy. But he has visited with friends, and worked with therapists. Debbie says the therapists are pleased with Kyle's progress.

Debbie says God's angels had a hand on Kyle – and on his family circling around him. And she can't say enough about the family, friends, folks from the First United Methodist Church where they attend, and people in the community.

“I hope people never doubt that there are angels. We have met them.”

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Swinger Speaks To Statewide AARP Meeting

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[Swinger Speaks To Statewide AARP Meeting](#)

*By Annabeth Miller,
SMT Editor*

JEFFERSON CITY - Snow in cold weather may have arrived to mid-Missouri, but it did not keep the members of the AARP from the State Capitol.

The AARP annual volunteer legislative briefing was held Jan. 11 and 12 and State Rep. Terry Swinger was one of the legislators to speak to the group.

Swinger was introduced to the AARP members by a lady who is no stranger to Stoddard County and to Southeast Missouri. Bloomfield native and former area Girl Scout staff member Ilena Aslin introduced Swinger to the state group. Aslin is a member

of the AARP Missouri Executive Council and is Swinger's cousin.

"Ilena personifies the perfect example of an AARP member," Swinger said. "She has lived a life dedicated to service, including being the Executive Director of the former Cotton Boll Area Girl Scout Council."

Aslin served as the executive director of the Southeast Missouri Girl Scout council for 30 years, working with thousands of girls and adults throughout the region. She now lives in Cape Girardeau and is an active volunteer in the community and state.

"As people are living longer, it is great that an organization such as AARP is looking out for us as we age," Swinger said. "The 2010 census showed more people 65 and older in 2010 than any other census. This age group increased at a faster rate of 15.1% than the total U.S. population. The census also found there were 53,364 centenarians, those 100 years and older, which is a 5.8% increase from the 2000 census. AARP is no longer for just retirees, but for those 50 years old and older."

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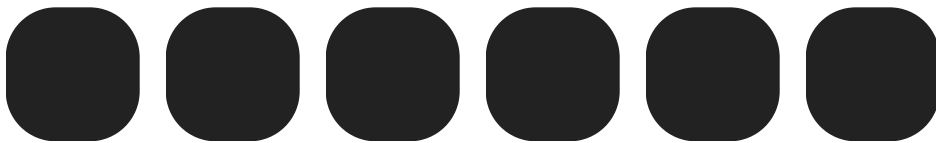
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Photo Above: Ilena Aslin and State Rep. Terry Swinger pause for a photo in the State Capitol in Jefferson City. (photo provided by Rep. Swinger)

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