

Features



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J. Dennis Smelser, executive vice president of Midwest Bancorporation Inc. in Poplar Bluff, was inducted into the Missouri Bankers Association's 50 Year Club on Thursday, June 13, during MBA's 129th Annual Convention at the Hilton Branson Convention Center.

This recognition from MBA honors bankers who have dedicated 50 years of service to the banking community. Smelser is one of eight bankers who were inducted into the 50 Year Club this year.

Smelser began his banking career in 1969 in the bookkeeping department of Security Bank in

Paragould, Arkansas, while attending Arkansas State University. After graduation, Smelser served as manager of the customer service department and later as the bank's internal auditor.

In 1975, Smelser joined the audit department at Citizens Bank in Jonesboro, Arkansas, which led to an opportunity with his current employer. In 1976, Smelser moved to Dexter where he was employed as vice president and cashier of Dexter National Bank (later First Midwest Bank of Dexter). He transferred to the bank's parent company, Midwest Bancshares Inc. (later Midwest Bancorporation Inc.) in 1981. Dennis has served in several capacities throughout the last 38 years and

currently serves as executive vice president and trustee of the company's employee stock ownership plan (ESOP).

A native of the Lafe community in Arkansas, Smelser is a graduate of Paragould High School, Arkansas State University (BS 1973), Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at SMU (1976) in Dallas, Texas, and Professional Master of Banking in Austin, Texas in 1997.

Mr. Smelser is a past member of the Paragould Exchange Club, Center Hill Jaycees, Paragould Parks and Recreation Board, Dexter Kiwanis Club, Dexter Zoning Commission, and the Dexter Airport Board. Dennis was also active in the First Baptist Church of Dexter for over 30 years.

Smelser married Janie Morrow of the Stanford community in Arkansas and they have two sons, Brian (deceased) and Shaun, and three grandchildren; Lillianne, Emmett, and Laurel. After living in Dexter, Missouri, for 40 years they recently moved to Jackson, Missouri, to be near their grandchildren. Smelser is the son of the late Faye Smelser Partlow of Paragould, Arkansas.

The Missouri Bankers Association is a statewide trade and professional organization in Jefferson City that represents the interests of more than 250 banks and savings and loans in Missouri. MBA serves as the principal advocate for the Missouri banking community and provides educational opportunities, products and services that assist bankers with enhancing their banking operations.

This article: [Dennis Smelser Inducted Into The Missouri Bankers Association's 50 Year Club](https://showmetimes.com) was first published on <https://showmetimes.com>.

Written by Dee Loflin
Date: July 30th 2019



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