

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

Visit our website at FloridaBaptistHistory.org

Smith, Robert Leonard, Sr. (1924-2014) was a preacher, teacher, and artist. He graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Smith served as pastor of churches in Texas and Florida including First Baptist Church, Lake Alfred, 1959-1963 and First Baptist Church, Pompano Beach. He served as Dean of the School of Christian Studies at Howard Payne University. Smith and his wife, Ethelyn Hughes Smith had two children.



Pastor, family stage exhibit of 'reverential' art

By James D. Davis
Religion Writer

Reception for an art exhibit at a Pompano Beach church has surprised the pastor — even though paintings were done by himself, his son and his daughter.

The **Rev. Robert L. Smith** figured that the 3,650 members of First Baptist Church would be the main viewers for the month-long show, which started July 31.

Well, yes and no. The congregants look at the 47 paintings before and

Ethelyn H Smith
July 28, 1925 - May 28, 2022

LAST WORDS OF Ethelyn Hughes Smith

My name is Ethelyn Hughes Smith. I love to have the last word, so I have taken the privilege of writing my own obituary. I was born on July 28, 1925 in Tulsa, Oklahoma to wonderful Christian parents Hope H. and Ethel Bagwell Hughes. I exchanged my earthly life for my celestial life on May 28th, 2022. I was the first of four children. The other three, who preceded me in heaven were Hope Ann, John, and Mack Hughes. I was a grocer's daughter. My first bed was a cardboard Post Toasties; carton at: Hope Hughes Grocery and Market. My first job was to dust the cans a big feather duster. I have always loved going to the grocery store and felt almost as at home as I did in church. I was married to Dr. Robert Leonard Smith, a Baptist minister, for 70 years, lacking 3 months, when he went home to be with the Lord. We are survived by two priceless children, Robert Leonard Smith, Jr. and Judy Smith George, her husband, Dr. David George, two grandsons, John Graham, and Jeffery Thomas Bynum and three great grandsons, Finley, Nolan and Liam Bynum and a number of special nieces, nephews, and cousins.

I come from a musical family and when I was 10 years old, I began playing the piano for Sunday School. When I was 12, I became the organist for my church, the Presbyterian Church in Jefferson, Texas. Music has been a joy to me and one of God's special blessings. I fully expect to continue using it in heaven although I doubt, I will ever master the Harp! I need not mention all the churches where my husband and I have served since those of you that know me already know that, nor the opportunities I have had to teach and be a helpmate to my life partner.

Our plans were to retire at age 65 but somehow, we never retired and instead came to Brownwood, Texas where Bob became Distinguished Professor of Preaching and later Dean of the School of Christian Studies at Howard Payne University. We loved that wonderful school and the students. A number of them lived with us while getting their education. It was a joy. After my husband lost most of his sight God still was not through with us here on earth. He gave us a great Bible Class at First Baptist Church of Brownwood where he for another 5 years. I was his seeing-eye wife during those years, and it was a privilege to be of help to that wonderful man of God.

To all of you who have loved me, encouraged me, prayed for me, or helped me in any way in journey here on this earth (and you know who you are) I thank you with all my heart. I would like to gift you with this blessing. "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He make His face to SHINE upon you and be gracious to you. May He lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you, His peace." AND NOW FOR THE LAST WORDS taken from one of my 1000 favorite hymns:

"All the way my Saviour leads me. What have I to ask besides?
Can I doubt His tender mercies who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace! Divinest comfort here by faith in Him to dwell,
For I know what ere befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.
Yes, I know what ere befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAKE ALFRED

SENIOR PASTORS:

J.E. GRIFFITH.....	1917 - 07/01/17
J.N. FORD.....	1917 - 11/01/18
J.W. MANN.....	12/29/18 - 06/01/19
W.D. ENTZMINGER.....	1920 - 11/01/21
J.P. KELLEY.....	02/01/22 - 10/01/23
J.D. WILKES.....	11/11/23 - 12/31/23
A.L. BRIDGES.....	01/01/24 - 04/01/28
S.A. RENICKS.....	04/01/28 - 01/01/29
BRO. REED.....	01/01/29 - 09/01/29
J. ALVIN INMAN.....	03/01/30 - 1933
H.G. MEADOWS.....	01/07/34 - 05/01/35
BLANCHARD C. LAW.....	01/01/36 - 02/01/39
D.C. PATCHELL.....	1939 - 06/01/41
JOHN W. HUNT.....	09/01/41 - 09/01/42
DAVID LYNN.....	10/01/42 - 11/01/43
HUBERT BARNES.....	08/01/44 - 04/15/45
HOWARD STREET.....	06/01/45 - 09/01/47
C.S. SMITH.....	12/01/47 - 04/01/49
THOMAS E. CAPELL.....	05/01/49 - 01/01/52
REAVES DEAN*.....	06/01/52 - 05/01/54
ED ROBINSON.....	12/01/54 - 05/01/59
ROBERT L. SMITH.....	1959 - 1963
O. CHARLES HORTON.....	1964 - 1966
JAMES L.KNIGHT Jr.....	1966 - 02/01/72
LARRY GANDY.....	05/01/72 - 08/01/74
L.G. MEADOWS.....	1975 - 12/01/78
DAVID THROCKMORTON.....	07/01/79 - 05/01/84

continued....

All the way my Saviour led me. O the fullness of His love!
 Perfect rest to me is promised in my father's house above.
 When my spirit, clothed immortal, wings its flight to realms of day,
 This my song through endless ages...Jesus led me all the way.
 Yes, this my song through endless ages, Jesus led me all the way."
 Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

First Baptist Pastor Arrives

BY JAN MORGAN -
 Religious News Editor

The First Baptist Church's new pastor, the Rev. Robert Leonard Smith, arrived in town this week with his wife, two teen-age children, paintings and a speedboat.

The family is moving into a new home at 13315 Alchester. "In Pine Bluff (where he served 3½ years as pastor of the First Baptist Church) you could get anywhere in 10 minutes," said Mrs. Smith, "so we're going to have to get used to Houston's freeways." They live 17 miles from downtown.

Dr. Smith is "generally conservative" theologically. He said he believes in "strictly Biblical preaching with strong overtones of social responsibility."

The church must "be involved in the complex issues of the day" and "take seriously" Christ's commandments to help the helpless, give food and clothing to the homeless and the fatherless, he said.

But like most Baptists, he believes the church must care enough about such issues to operate its own agencies, rather than work in government-financed programs.

"I favor traditional separation of church and state," he said, and "tend to shy away from these twilight zones" (where federal programs are involved.)

Dr. Smith has a variety of interests. During World War II he was a B-29 pilot for three years. And before entering the ministry he was a commercial artist.

He and his wife, the former Ethelyn

Hughes of Jefferson, Texas, met at Trinity University. We went there because it was in his hometown of San Antonio. She had gone there because she was a Presbyterian. (She is now a Baptist.)

Then they transferred to Centenary College, a Methodist school in Shreveport, La., where they were graduated. He worked as a commercial artist in Shreveport and gave chalk talks in church conferences as a layman.

Feeling the call to the ministry, he entered Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and worked his way through as an artist.

He still uses art in his ministry, drawing on a 4-by-6-foot board with chalk, and he paints as a hobby. Drawing is particularly effective as an aide when preaching to young people, he said, when it is done with taste, not as a gimmick.

The red and white speedboat is a family joke, Mrs. Smith and their 15-year-old daughter, Judy, said. He reads an ad saying it could be made in one day for \$20 with tools in anyone's garage and that one man could carry it, when completed.

But he laughed and admitted it took all summer to build with the help of his two brothers. "He has \$20 worth of screws in it," said Mrs. Smith. "And one man can carry it," said Judy. "One man with a strong wife, said Mrs. Smith.

"The driver's position is really up to him,"

(See NEW BAPTIST, Page 5)



Photo by Jan Morgan, Chronicle Staff

DR. AND MRS. ROBERT LEONARD SMITH
 First Baptist Pastor and His Wife Show Speedboat He Made

New Baptist Pastor Arrives

(Continued From Page 1)

he said. "I recommend kneeling because it's so appropriate for prayer."

Despite their needling, the boat is a must on all family vacations. Dr. Smith also built his own high fidelity equipment.

One of his first tasks at the church will be to recruit a staff. The church is without an assistant pastor and a minister of education now.

One of his main interests is young people. He is considering opening a teen center in the church for "the downtown teenager" who is "different from the suburban teenager."

"Young people want a wholesome place to go," he said. "I've never been one to cry the younger generation is going to the dogs. My concern is with the irresponsibility of the parents."

Materialistic emphasis, rather than a spiritual one, has caused broken homes and other problems, he said.

Television is another of his interests. In Pine Bluff the church owned its own television equipment, and broadcast in cooperation with KATV.

Here he hopes to begin a television program to reach those who do not come to church and people who aren't easily accessible, such as those who live in high-rise apartments.

"The gospel message must be relevant.

The church must leave the confines of its premises to go where the people are," he said, and there is a need "for a ministry in the heart of the city," although churches have tended to "retreat to the suburbs," he continued.

First Baptist has been a church identified with racial problems. When Dr. K. Owen White was pastor of the church and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Negroes picketed it. Later the members voted against accepting Negroes as members.

But Dr. Smith said that as far as he was concerned "anybody is welcome." Several Negroes worshiped regularly in his church in Pine Bluff, he said, but none ever asked to join it.

Ministries to broken homes and the handicapped are two programs he plans to expand. He also believes in the importance of cooperating with doctors and psychiatrists in working with sick people.

In 1961 he was the speaker for a city-wide revival in Glasgow, Scotland. He is a former president of the Ministerial Alliance in Pine Bluff.

In Houston he intends to cooperate with other churches closely and to work with the Billy Graham crusade.

But he added he must do "a lot of learning before launching forth."

He is 40 and has an 18-year-old son, Robert L. Smith Jr.

Dr. Robert L. Smith, Preacher, Teacher & Artist

[poernostSdi0g0mtcSugh9uhb0e1rig2t3u04 et92 h331ph7h1chlt,e30](https://www.facebook.com/robertsmithpreacherteacherandartist/) ·

Don Newbury

Funeral services for Dr. Robert Smith, beloved preacher, teacher, artist who endeared himself to tens of thousands of people--including the many lives he touched and molded during his quarter-century of teaching at Howard Payne University, are scheduled for Friday at 2 p.m. at Brownwood First Baptist Church. Burial will follow at Eastlawn Memorial Park in Early. Officiant will be Dr. Rodney McGlothlin, the Smiths' minister, and I am honored to provide remembrances during the service. Dr. Smith would have been 90 on December 23...

<https://www.facebook.com/robertsmithpreacherteacherandartist/>

<https://www.facebook.com/robertsmithpreacherteacherandartist/photos>