

Princella D. Smith



I was born and raised in Wynne, AR the 1st of 3 children and the only girl. The granddaughter of a sharecropper and daughter of a minister and an educator, I could not help but have strong blood run through my veins. Love for God 1st and Family 2nd served as themes for my childhood and have helped to shape my young adult life. Rural America introduced me to community service and the value of human life at an early age. My maternal grandmother saw in me the gift of words which she detected quite early. My parents quickly discovered my desire to be like “grown folks” in my adamant curiosity of the national news, and pesky habit of what they called “getting into grown folks business”. Of course, they would have none of the latter, and they quickly found a way to help channel the energy: they bought me books. I read encyclopedias. I read the Bible. I read volume sets that they bought. My mother read me history stories. My grandmother’s pre-school “Tender Love Learning Center” introduced me to the County library. Soon she discovered that my gift for words was not just written, but verbal. I was in TLLC’s second graduating class and delivered a 5 page Valedictorian speech entitled “What is Education” written by my mother.

I excelled academically in grade school quickly becoming bored with the public school curriculum. I developed personal relationships with my elementary school teachers who would let me read during naptime, read to the class, go to the school library at will upon finishing my work, and each would eventually find that I needed to be in my own scholastic reading group when I would finish the workbook pages before they had even finished reading the story to the other students.

In high school, my love for government classes, politics, social issues, and leadership became most evident when I was elected AR Girls State Governor among 900 + girls with 2 days to campaign. It was through this opportunity, that I met Governor Mike Huckabee, a former governor of Boys State and was offered an internship under Lt. Governor Win Rockefeller. Win Rockefeller and I had a father/daughter type relationship that lasted through his death in the July of 2006. I finished Wynne High School with an honor graduate label and over \$80,000 in scholarships that included a full-paid athletic scholarship to Ouachita Baptist University where I would study Political Science, History, and Speech Communications. This came as a blessing to a family with one income: a minister’s salary as my mother had decided to quit teaching to attain her Masters’ Degree.

College presented a different challenge to me as I knew that I would pursue a career in politics/public service. I became involved with the AR State Federation of College Republicans and served on the National Black Republican Coalition through the Republican National Committee. Each summer, excluding my freshmen year, I had an internship in D.C. The internships included Capitol Hill under Rep. John Boozman (R-AR) and the Dept. of Labor (Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs). The summer of most interest was 2004

when I received a call in Congressman Boozman's office that I had been selected as 1 of 10 finalists for the "Stand Up and Holla" Essay Contest. After garnering votes and conducting interviews, I was chosen the winner and presented my essay in speech form at the Republican National Convention. This led to a mentor/student friendship with former RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie and his wife Cathy who graciously opened their home to me the following summer as I completed an internship at the Dept. of Labor.

The next summer followed my senior year, and I was ready to work, so I took a job working for Lt. Governor Michael Steele's campaign in his communications department. I directed his E-Campaign developing his website, e-mail outreach, student outreach efforts, and following him on the trail for footage and photos. After a valiant effort to run as an African-American Republican in a state full of white liberals, Lt. Gov. Steele unfortunately did not emerge victorious. Out of a job, I then moved on to work at Van Scoyoc Associates, the largest independent Government Affairs group in Washington D.C. where I served as a consultant for educational issues.

Most people learn after spending some time in D.C. that most people have more than one thing going. I became a guest lecturer on the topics of "New Media" and "Grassroots Activism" at The Leadership Institute, an organization founded by Morton Blackwell committed to identifying, recruiting, training and placing conservatives in the public policy process and got involved as a Visiting Fellow for the Independent Women's Forum. Both unpaid but both allowing me to exercise the passion I have inside for standing up for what I believed in. I love to write, so producing essays for the Independent Women's Forum outside of work was a lot of fun.

After about a year, it dawned on me that I was too young and too energetic for the private sector just yet, so I expressed to Lt. Governor Steele that I wanted to leave Van Scoyoc Associates, and he pointed me to the former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. I started at Gingrich Communications, but the Speaker quickly moved me to American Solutions giving me the title of Chief Advocate where I push our platform of policy issues. The situation suits me quite nicely opening me up to a world of policy, new people, and a broader world view. I'm still able to hold the titles at the Independent Women's Forum and The Leadership Institute, so in all, I'm very busy.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of my young career has been the rise in media/press/blog outlets. At 25, I've been featured as the story line of or as a regular political contributor for several national media outlets including *FOX News*, *FOX Business News*, *CNN*, *CBS*, *MSNBC*, *Bloomberg News*, *France 24*, *EuroAmerican News*, *Danish Broadcasting*, *NPR*, *the New York Times*, *USA Today*, *XM Satellite Radio*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Essence Magazine*, *YouTube News*, *XM Radio*, *Armstrong Williams Show*, *NPR*, *AOL Radio/TV*, *Black America Web*, *RocktheVote.com*, *Daily Kos*, *Futuremajority.com*, *Huffington Post*, *Townhall.com* and several local press/media outlets among others.

I accredit it all to God Who is the Author and Finisher of my faith. He blesses those who honor Him, and He honors hard work. Wherever He leads me, I want to be sure to follow and stay close to His will.

