

Charles Kevin Smith

Minneapolis Patrick Henry High School – Class of 1965

Charles Kevin Smith (aka “Chuck”, “Charlie” and “Kevin”) was born in Minneapolis on August 31, 1947, to parents Charles Terrance Smith and Marian Baustian (Smith) Kringle. He attended Jenny Lind Elementary School prior to Patrick Henry Junior/Senior High School, where he graduated with Honor in 1965. He was very fortunate to marry Susanne Kasner in 1969. Sue grew up in the Henry area, but attended St. Margaret’s Academy. Charlie and Sue have two children, Annie (husband Brian Jenstad) and Charles D., and two grandchildren, Wyatt and Paige Jenstad.

While at Henry, Charlie played sousaphone in the concert band, marching band, pep band and orchestra. He was elected band vice-president in his senior year, while soloing twice at spring band concerts. He also played a leading role in the senior class play – Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* – and was a member of the National Honor Society.

Charlie moved on in 1965 to the University of Minnesota School of Forestry, with the dream of becoming a national park ranger/naturalist. Interests changed to the wider topic of research and planning in the park and recreation field. He graduated with high distinction in 1969, the first University of Minnesota graduate in the Recreation Resource Management program. Following three years of military service, he returned to what had become the College of Forestry, and received a Master’s degree in 1978. Research emphases at the College included campsite restoration in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and vegetation inventory for the newly-created Voyageurs National Park. He was an instructor in Forest Ecology at the Itasca Forestry Session, and taught Conservation of Natural Resources (1974-75). He was elected to Xi Sigma Pi – the national honorary forestry fraternity – and Sigma Xi - the Scientific Research Society of North America.

Upon leaving the University in 1975, Charlie worked in park research and planning at the Hennepin County Park Reserve District (now the Three Rivers Park District) and the Parks and Open Space Division of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council (1976-1986). His main accomplishments included:

- Design and implementation of the use monitoring system for 50+ regional parks and trails. This system is still used today to distribute operating funds to the 10 agencies operating the Twin Cities regional park system.
- First ever surveys of regional park visitation patterns, attitudes and use forecasts.

The next phase of Charlie’s career took him to the Tennant Company in Golden Valley, MN, a \$750 million, global manufacturer of cleaning equipment, where he spent 25 years (1987-2012) as Market Research Manager. At Tennant, his main accomplishments were:

- Providing customer insights in support of all new products.

- Measuring customer satisfaction with all products and services.

While at Tennant, Charlie became a charter member of the Cleaning Industry Research Institute, a non-profit industry research association, where he later served as Vice-Chairman.

Over the years, Charlie's major volunteer service activities involved the University of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA). He is a life member of the UMAA, concentrating his activity in the College of Natural Resources Alumni Society (CNRAS) and the Band Alumni Society (UMBAS).

Charlie was on the Board of Directors of CNRAS (1992-1999), and was selected to serve as President (1995-1998). While serving on the CNRAS Board, he was part of several major accomplishments, including:

- Establishing a self-funding CNRAS Student Scholarship program.
- Successful membership and fundraising events at the Cloquet Forestry station and St. Paul Campus.
- Selection of the CNRAS as Alumni Program Extraordinaire in 1997 and Alumni Society of the Year in 1998

During his tenure as President, Charlie also served as a member of the Dean's Advisory Board and as CNRAS representative to U of M Alumni Association National Board of Directors. He received the inaugural CNR Alumni Leadership Award in 2004.

And, as it had been at Henry and at the U, the concert and marching bands remained a large part of Charlie's activity and service as an alumnus. As a life member of the UMBAS since 1973, he played in the Alumni Band until his embouchure "went south" in 2015. During these years, he served on the UMBAS Executive Council and was elected UMBAS President (2004-2005). He has been part of several major UMBAS offices and projects, including:

- Establishing UMBAS Alumni and President's Scholarships.
- Fundraising events in support of scholarships.
- Major revision to UMBAS Bylaws and Constitution.
- Countless performances in support of the U of M, the UMAA and Gopher Athletics.
- Finance Committee chair (2010-2015), with Society audit and budget responsibilities.

And finally, in recognition of their role in raising funds, helping establish scholarships and personal financial support, Charlie and Sue became members of the U of M

Foundation Presidents Club and Founders Society in 2006. They remain avid supporters of the University.