

John Smith was born in 1941 in a small town north of New York City. He grew up there, and in the years that followed received an excellent education. Not the least important part of that education was the time he spent – and the lessons in life he learned – in 1966-67 as the operations officer of a small river boat division of the United States Navy that was stationed on the Bassac River in Vietnam. His work with the Vietnamese people and his experiences visiting small hamlets along the river had a profound effect on him. He survived the war, won a Navy Commendation Medal, took the law school aptitude test in a concertina wire-protected building in Saigon, and came home.

Happily, Susan Jane Brown was waiting for him. They married and John, apparently having passed the LSAT, went to law school at Yale. During his law school years, they lived in New Haven, Connecticut, and he worked summers in legal positions in New York City. They were excellent experiences. There was little question that he would become a New York lawyer when he graduated. It was a done deal.

Done, that is, until Richardson Dilworth, a Yale Law graduate and by then a distinguished lawyer and former mayor of the City of Philadelphia, inspired him to change direction and come to Philadelphia. By this time, Susan was pregnant with their first son. John and she left New Haven in 1970 and began new lives in a small apartment in Philadelphia's colonial section. It was the beginning of a love affair with the city that continues some 50-plus years later.

And the beginning of Susan's and John's family of three sons, a family that John regards, in the truest sense, as their greatest joint lifetime achievement.

John began his professional legal career at the Dilworth firm as a litigator. For the next 46 years he practiced in fields as diverse as labor and employment law, insurance fraud, fiduciary responsibility, and constitutional matters. Big organizations like Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc., SEPTA, Philadelphia Electric Company, and Prudential Insurance Company were his clients, but so, too, were individuals who had been discriminated against and shareholders who were trying to right corporate wrongs. He prized the diversity of his work. He moved to Reed Smith in 1995 and continued his practice there. Along the way, he established a prize-winning corporate-style education program, Reed Smith University. When he retired from active practice in 2016, he was rated by his peers at the Bar as among the top lawyers in Philadelphia.

John loved being an advocate, but his real interest was in bringing people together around important goals in the larger civic space. There are numerous examples of this. While living in the colonial Philadelphia neighborhood, he was elected president of the Society Hill Civic Association and served that community during the year of the Bicentennial. Together with friends at the Philadelphia Orchestra, he

established the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble and became its first president. He also became a member of the Pennsylvania Economy League, an organization engaged in promoting sound municipal finance throughout the Commonwealth. As a board member and later chair of the organization, he helped to broaden the Economy League's focus, involving the business community in a wide range of public policy issues.

The Smiths outgrew their house a few years later and moved to Villanova. It was a time of kids' sports, neighborhood activities, and fixing up an old Victorian house. John was elected as the moderator of their church.

Along the way, John wrote an op-ed piece for the *Philadelphia Daily News* entitled "It's Time for a Bill of Responsibilities". Taking up the challenge in 1995, he and other civically minded friends created the Foundation for individual Responsibility and Social Trust (FIRST). FIRST was devoted to encouraging members of Generation X on a national level to become engaged in their respective communities. In 2000, the final year of the project, "Gen-Xers" from around the country came to Philadelphia, collaborated with one another, and issued a "Generational Action Plan" that was then distributed to a wide range of public officials.

In this period, John and Susan often traveled overseas. John began collecting antique maps, many of them dating to the 1500s and 1600s. The Smiths' home gradually became a virtual gallery of rare maps. He conducted numerous tours of the collection, but it soon became apparent that the maps were taking over. What to do? The answer was found in the university next door. A donation was arranged. Today, the 250-plus specimens in the John and Susan Smith Antique Map Collection are ensconced at Villanova's Falvey Memorial Library where they will serve succeeding generations of students and scholars.

Over time, international relations became a passion. After a stint with the World Affairs Council, John joined the board of International House Philadelphia. He later became its chair, serving in that role for eight years. He is still a board member. The early part of the 21st century was a time of fundamental change. Recently, IHP has responded by ending its housing program and selling its building at 37th and Chestnut Streets. Utilizing funds realized from the sale of its house, IHP is currently developing new ways to promote international education and scholarship in Philadelphia.

Perhaps the most ambitious international project that John has been involved in was the founding of the Global Philadelphia Association in 2010. Nine of the leading international organizations in the region and a number of prominent citizens had become concerned that the city had lost sight of the importance of being global in its outlook. They met together and, with John's active leadership, agreed to form a new nonprofit organization devoted to promoting international perspectives and developing support for organizations and individuals engaged in international activity. A new

executive director, Zabeth Teelucksingh, was hired, and multiple new initiatives followed. GPA's growth since that time is a matter of history.

Starting in 2012 and partnering with the city, GPA undertook to seek the recognition of Philadelphia as a World Heritage City. John, as board chair, and Zabeth, as executive director, worked with Mayor Michael Nutter, Deputy Mayor Alan Greenberger, Penn Professor David Brownlee, and a host of others on the project. They spent the next three years presenting Philadelphia's credentials to the Organization of World Heritage Cities and traveling the world to make Philadelphia's case to the organization's membership of world-leading cities. These efforts were rewarded in 2015, when Philadelphia's membership in the OWHC was accepted. With that designation, Philadelphia became the first World Heritage City in the United States, an achievement that John is particularly proud of.

John retired as GPA's board chair in 2018, paving the way for a new generation of leadership to carry on its multi-faceted programs, including its current program celebrating the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals.

John and Susan lived for 43 years in the old Victorian house in Villanova. They have since moved to Waverly Heights, a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) in Gladwyne. They are active in its affairs. John continues as a board member of GPA and International House Philadelphia and is now also a trustee of America's oldest natural sciences institution, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. He has written and published two memoirs, The Day I Shot a Squirrel and Confronting Adversity and Finding Grace.