



Stuart H. Smith (born on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1960), a native of New Orleans, Louisiana who was a notable environmental plaintiff's lawyer passed away in Paris, France on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Smith is survived by his spouse Barry J. Cooper, Jr., mother Judith M. Smith, brother Clark M. Smith, nephews McLean Smith and Owen Smith, niece Emory Smith, his half-sister Cathy Thames and predeceased by his father Frederick Martin Smith and younger brother Whitney Smith. Smith's third great-grandfather and the grandfather's two younger brothers bearing the surnames of Toledano fought in the Battle of New Orleans 1812.

Smith attended Holy Name of Jesus Catholic School in New Orleans and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University and a law degree from Loyola University's School of Law in New Orleans, where he would later establish the Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice. After working as an environmental plaintiff attorney for more than three decades and founding numerous legal partnerships, Smith's last business venture was with his life-time partner, Mr. Cooper, and the expansion of the Cooper Law Firm, LLC in New Orleans.

Smith's legal career gained national recognition in the early 1990s as a crusader against the major oil corporations for environmental contamination associated with radioactive oilfield waste. Smith had been lead-counsel on more than 100 environmental contamination cases, which focused primarily on personal injury and property damages caused by wastewater and sludge discharged by oil company operations into the environment. In 1992, Smith was lead counsel in the civil action of *Street vs. Chevron* which pitted the family owners of a pipe-yard located in rural southeastern Mississippi against a multinational oil conglomerate. Allegedly, for years, Chevron had sent radioactive oilfield pipe to Street, Inc., for cleaning without informing the owners that the pipe contained radioactive material. Investigators from the Mississippi Division of Radiological Health found radiation from [radium](#) on the Street property 500 times the natural level. Chevron ultimately settled the case for an undisclosed amount of money in what remains one of the longest-running jury trials in Mississippi history. The New York Times newspaper previously reported on this case in December of 1990.

In 2001, Smith was lead counsel in a blockbuster oilfield radiation case that resulted in a substantial jury verdict against [ExxonMobil](#) for contaminating private property it leased from the Grefer family in [Harvey, Louisiana](#). ExxonMobil appealed the jury verdict successfully seeking a reduction in the punitive damage award and was still ordered to pay compensatory damages. At the time, it was considered the second largest jury verdict in legal history in favor of a single family against an oil company. Smith was also lead counsel in representing 4000+

commercial fishermen in 2010, whose livelihoods were devastated by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Despite multiple Molotov cocktail fire-bombs to Smith's residence in the French Quarter over a two-and-half year period during the late 1990s and a subsequent death threat all in connection with Smith's *Pro Bono* activities in the French Quarter, it did not deter Smith's continued *Pro Bono* efforts to protect the quality of life to his beloved City. The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Louisiana with the assistance of city, state, and federal authorities did bring the perpetrators to justice. Smith would eventually become known as an award-winning preservationist, particularly for his defense of the residential character of the New Orleans French Quarter. Smith received the highest awards from the Vieux Carré Commission, the Elizabeth Werlein Medal in 2012, and the friends of VCPORA, namely the Schwartz-Gage Award in 2011, for his pro-bono help in preserving the historic integrity and tout ensemble of the City's most important neighborhood.

In 2015, Smith's book entitled, "*Crude Justice: How I Fought Big Oil and Won*" was published by BenBella Books of Dallas, Texas. *Crude Justice* is a memoir of Smith's successful legal career and reflects on his extensive jury trial experience in both state and federal courts, where he built a reputation for pioneering the field of Naturally Occurring/Technologically Enhanced Radioactive Material (NORM/TERM) oilfield waste litigation and achieving record jury verdicts for his clients. Smith has been interviewed and his cases have been covered by a variety of media outlets, including CNN's *Andersen Cooper 360*, BBC World News, Fox News, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Lawyers Weekly USA*, *The Times-Picayune*, *The Baton Rouge Advocate*, *The Hill*, The Associated Press, Bloomberg, National Public Radio, Radio America, and Washington Post Radio.

Smith was an avid sailor and a member of the New York Yacht Club. A certified PADI Advanced Open Water scuba diver trained by Harold Baquet (a native of New Orleans). In 2013-2014, Smith with his spouse participated and completed the Oyster World Rally. Smith was also a private instrument rated pilot experienced in operating Cessna piston and Daher-Socata turboprop aircrafts.

Smith had been a generous contributor to city, state, and national political campaigns for progressive democratic candidates, Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN), Louisiana Association for Justice, American Association for Justice, Greater New Orleans Foundation, a member of the Society of St. Ignatius (Loyola University New Orleans), a loyal benefactor to The Gayle and Tom Benson Cancer Center (Ochsner Medical Center in Jefferson, Louisiana), Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents & Associates, French Quarter Citizens, Children's Bureau of New Orleans, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans Film Society, New Orleans Ballet Association, New Orleans Opera Association, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, French Quarter Fest, Southern Rep Theater and other non-profits. Funeral services are being held at Holy Name of Jesus Church, 6367 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118 on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. (CST). Donations to the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents & Associates (New Orleans, Louisiana) at <https://vcpora.org/donate/> in lieu of flowers.