

Biography

Rev. Toby Smith

Toby Smith was born in Charleston, SC, but grew up in Philadelphia, PA. She's a graduate of the University of South Carolina and has done graduate work at American University and Colorado Christian University. Toby began her professional career at the Central Intelligence Agency, where she served domestically and abroad. After eight years with the Federal Government, she returned home to Charleston and began working at the Charleston County School District. Toby served as the Public Relations officer under the leadership of the late Superintendent, Sydney "Chip" Zullinger. Dr. Zullinger selected Toby to organize and coordinate the school district's first bond campaign to repair dilapidated schools. That campaign marked her first foray into politics and, although that first attempt ended in defeat, Toby's enthusiasm for the political process really took root. After the bond campaign she joined the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce as the first African American director of the Public Affairs Group, where she served before moving to Georgetown, SC.

Radio broadcasting has been a big part of Toby's life since the 90s. She has hosted radio programs on Charleston's legendary station, WPAL, and briefly managed another radio station, WLMC, in Georgetown. In 1999, Toby was recruited to manage volunteers for Joe Riley's mayoral campaign. A few months later, she discovered the wonderfully frustrating but always meaningful world of nonprofit organizations. Since that time, Toby has helped organizations find grant money, put together strategic plans, and trained boards. In 2003, she had a unique opportunity to review grants for the first round of the Compassion Capital Fund, which provided insight into the funding end of the grant making process.

Ministry was the very last arena Toby expected to be involved with, but an unexpected opportunity to fill in at Tuesday Night Bible study opened the door to the greatest love of her life. In December 2006, Toby was ordained and licensed at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, where Rev. Willis Glover, Sr., is the Pastor. Now, in her 13th year of service as an Associate Minister, Toby has taught the weekly Bible study, Sunday school classes, worked with the Youth and Women's Ministries, and assists the Food and Clothing Ministry.

In September 2007, Toby joined the staff of Origins as a credit and housing counselor. During the foreclosure crisis she taught financial literacy classes, first-time homebuyer, pre-and post-bankruptcy and mortgage default classes throughout the state. Two years later, she began writing for the Columbia-based *IMARA* Woman magazine, covering education and financial literacy. In 2011, Toby married and moved to Greenville, SC, where she worked briefly before returning to Charleston. From May 2013-2016, she served as the Executive Director of Midland Park Community Ministries. Toby managed the daily operations of the food pantry and clothes closet; expanded services to Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties and generated an additional \$40,000 in grant dollars to expand programming and services.

In May 2015, Toby, who is three generations from slavery on her Mother's side, became the first African American woman to run for mayor of Charleston. Her platform included racial reconciliation and engaging communities in need. After that campaign Toby joined the Advisory Board of Jenkins Institute (formerly Jenkins Orphanage) and continued her work as a Cultural and Educational Consultant for Project Okurase, which facilitates a yearly cultural immersion trip to Charleston, SC, for visiting ninth grade students.

In January 2018, Toby took another bold step: She announced her candidacy for a seat in the US House of Representatives, District # 1 and on June 12, 2018, Toby Smith won nearly 30% of the vote and

lots of new friends in Charleston and Beaufort Counties. Four months later, in October 2018, Toby began her biggest and boldest adventure ever: Commemoration 400, which is a Charleston-based, year-long reflection on the 15 million plus enslaved and their descendants. In 2019 Toby joined a talented group of actors in the Journey Performing Arts Ministry, which entertained audiences throughout South Carolina.

In 2020 Toby joined the Interpretive Staff at McLeod Plantation Historic Site. McLeod is one of two places in the country that examines the issue of slavery and the modern day implications from the viewpoint of the Enslaved; additionally, the site is an affiliate member of the International Sites of Conscience network. In her capacity as a Lead Interpretive Aide, Toby interacts with guests from all over the world, finds descendants of the enslaved, plans cultural programming, and tells the compelling stories of the 74-100 enslaved people who lived, loved, and died at McLeod during the period of 1850-1990 and beyond. In November 2021, Toby was promoted to Cultural History Interpretation Coordinator for Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Rev. Smith continues to serve at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church; 2021 marks her 15th year in service. Toby is the great-great granddaughter Idella, an eight-year old who was kidnapped from Africa and forcibly transported to South Carolina; the granddaughter of the late Richard and Mary McCullough and Elijah “Bubsey” and Dorothy Smith, respectively; and the daughter of Lawrence (Geneva) and Minnie (John) Morton. She is the sister of Larry E. Smith and the auntie of Brittany and Lauren, and the grand-aunt of Janelyn, Raven, Janelle, MJ, and JoJo.