

Richard M. Smith, Jr.

2 July 1945 – 16 October 2011, 66



Richard M. Smith (left) and Sam Young, by Sam Young

Richard Milton Smith, Jr. was born in Nashville, Tennessee to Margaret and Richard Smith on July 2, 1945. He passed from this life on October 16, 2011 at the age of 66. Richard spent most of his adult life in the Central Texas area. He lived in Wimberley. Richard's formal education was at the University of Texas in Austin. He graduated with a BS in Geology and a Masters degree in Geology. Early on, during his time at UT, he discovered a love for caving. He made many trips to Mexico and around Texas to explore caves. He formed a strong friendship with a large group of like-minded individuals that he still saw frequently until his death.

He also developed a love for bicycling. He was an avid bicyclist and participated in the MS150 several times. He had recently taken up kayaking and was pleased with his improving skill. During the past fifteen years, Richard developed another passion, traveling. He went to Europe 30 times, sometimes as often as twice per year. He spent Christmases in Paris and also visited his brother in Scotland several

times while they were residing there. He loved Europe and would take biking trips in the countryside of France, Scotland and Ireland.

Richard was also a giver. He donated almost 4000 hours of time to record books for the blind and was honored by the Mayor for his volunteering commitment. His distinctive voice could be heard across a room. He told me once that the voice was a mixed blessing because people would react to him thinking he was angry when he was just talking. Admittedly, he was on occasion, a very passionate person about those things he believed in and would work feverishly to persuade you to change your opinion. Richard would refurbish bikes for charity. He was a faithful and loyal friend and brother.

Richard was preceded in death by his mother, Margaret Smith and his father, Richard Smith. He is survived by his older sister Marietta and her husband, Frank Pulkrabek of Friendswood, TX, his middle sister, Katherine and her husband, Roger Cratin, of Georgetown, Texas, his younger brother, Kenneth and his wife, Katy Smith of Decatur, Alabama and his youngest sister, Karen and her husband, Randy Godeau of Friendswood, Texas. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

A visitation will be held from six o'clock in the evening until eight o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at Cook-Walden Funeral Home. Guests are cordially invited to a reception with the family starting at five o'clock, Thursday, October 20, 2011 at Cook-Walden Funeral Home. Funeral Services will be held following the reception at seven o'clock in the evening. Tributes may be made at www.cookwaldenfuneralhome.com

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/austin-tx/richard-smith-4851716>

Services were held at Cook-Walden Funeral Home, Austin, Texas.

Visitation Wednesday, October 19, 2011. **Funeral Service** Thursday, October 20, 2011

Obituary from <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/statesman/obituary.aspx?n=richard-milton-smith&pid=154199460>

Master's Thesis: Smith, Richard M., 1978, Geology of the Buda-Kyle Area, Hays County, Texas. (Young, K. P.). Degree: MA Call Number: Thesis 1978 Sm64

Richard M. Smith was on the staff of the **AMCS Newsletter**, March 1965, 1(2):21; September 1965, 1(9): 94.

Trip report headings

William R. Elliott searched through digital files of the AMCS and the Texas Caver, and found many references to Richard, whom we often called "THE Richard Smith," to distinguish him from A. Richard Smith, another well-known Austin caver:

Trip report from AMCS Newsletter, November 1965, (1(11):104-106.

Persons: Ed Alexander, Don Erickson, David McKenzie, **Richard M. Smith**, Merydith Turner

Date: November 24–29, 1965

Destination: Sótano de la Tinaja, El Abra Range, Valles, S.L.P.

Reported by: Ed Alexander and David McKenzie

Trip report from AMCS Newsletter, Jan.-Feb. 1966, 2(1):3-4.

Persons: Dennis Barret, Robert Burnett, John Fish, Charles Jennings, **Richard [M.] Smith**
Date: 29 January-1 February 1966
Destination: Sótano de Tlamaya
Reported by: Robert Burnett

Trip report from AMCS Newsletter, July-August 1966, 2(4):82-88.

Persons: John Fish, David McKenzie, James and Janie Reddell, **Richard M. Smith**
Date: 2-19 August 1966
Destination: Xilitla, S.L.P. and Guerrero
Reported by: John Fish and James Reddell Austin, Texas

Trip report from AMCS Newsletter, November-December 1966, 2(6):139-140.

Persons: Reva Byers, Jim and Gina Duke, Joe and Janet Repa, **Richard [M.] Smith**
Date: 23-27 November 1966
Destination: Sierra de El Abra and Xilitla, S.L.P.
Reported by: Jim Duke Austin, Texas

Excerpt from *Texas Caver*, November 1966, p. 144.

University of Texas Grotto, NSS. We gotz lotz of caver types this semester! A short list of the cave-type goings-on the last several months follows. Several Mexico trips were made. 2-19 August saw David McKenzie, **Richard M. Smith**, James and Janie Reddell, and John Fish in the area of Jalpan, Estado de Guerrero. Following some gypsum caves at Matehuala, the Valle de los Fantasma was visited and then Sótano de San Francisco. This one has running water emptying into it and a 275-foot rope was not long enough to see bottom! Other caves seen were Puente de Dios (area), Cueva de los Riscos, Sótano de Tejamín (elevation 10,000 ft.), Cacahuamilpa, and Grutas de la Estrella...

Excerpts from *Texas Caver*, September 1968, 13(9).

“**The Claustrophiliacs Corner**” by Bill Russell, pp. 97, 109.

Just past Maguire’s Misery is a small breakdown floored room where one can actually stand Up for about ten feet. The cave soon makes Up for its generous use of space. The first explorers to reach this room thought they had reached the end, but careful examination showed that by lying in a pool at the lower end of the room one could slide into a low narrow crawlway almost filled with water. This crawlway is now named Coffin Crawl. Appropriately enough it was in this crawl that **Richard M. Smith**, who currently holds the distinction of the most trips to the Los Pollitos Room, had a true Claustrophilic Experience. He was sliding through the crawlway, being careful not to go too fast, so as to not make waves, when he brushed against the ceiling, unloosening a section of ceiling about two feet long. Fortunately it wasn’t a thick piece and he was able to work his way out from under it.

A&I report, p. 105:

Labor Day weekend [1968] saw a profuse scattering of A&I cavers. Kreidler and some RGVG types were four-wheel driving through the mud on the road to Carrizal in Mexico. Ediger was on a trip to Tinaja with T.R. Evans, **Richard M. Smith**, and 4 others in T.R.’s pickup. A great “railroad tunnel passage” was found at the far reaches of the “Lost passage” which had been refound last Thanksgiving by Ediger and other A&I people. The Bittings were busy discovering virgin passage in Bustamante (that’s right,

Bustamante). A beautiful formation room several hundred feet long and loaded with many white and unusual belictites and other varied speleothems...

UTG report, p. 107-108:

Early in June [1968] before the start of summer school, Terry Raines, Bill Calvert, Bill Russell and T.R. Evans went with James Jasek of Waco and Peter G. Kokalis of Arizona to the area around Aquismón, Mexico and the Sótano de las Golondrinas to study the area geology for the AMCS Bulletin 2. The group hiked about 40 miles in 5 days' time, over foot trails travelled by the local inhabitants. To avoid heat prostration in the high humidity and temperatures, they consumed large amounts of salt tablets and wore the local red printed bandanas around their heads to keep the sweat from running into their eyes. They took Brunton readings of the strike and dip of beds and Peter collected rock samples. They discovered five new caves, in spite of the fact that most of their effort was expended on observing geology, with cave hunting generally neglected. One was sketch mapped, Sótano de Cualmena, a pit about 200 feet in diameter and 150 feet deep with a climable drop and no passage at the bottom. Another, Sótano de Muout, was horizontal chiefly, with a small climbable entrance drop, and about 300 feet of walking passage. The most promising cave was near the town of San Rafael. It had a small arroyo running into it at an elevation slightly higher than Golondrinas. Unfortunately, there was no time to explore it. Bill Russell says that if it goes 300 feet it will go a mile. They also found 2 more pits of about 150 feet requiring rope.

At Tamapatz the geology group met with more UT cavers who told an exciting story. John Fish, Ron Ralph, Jonathan Davis and **Richard M. Smith** had been mapping the Hoya de Guagas, a pit rivalling Golondrinas, with a 470-foot (143 m) entrance drop and a total depth greater than that of Golondrinas. While John and Ron were on the bottom, **Richard and Jonathan** were approached by a local official, an ejido chief, who asked for their letter of permission to explore the cave (a must in the area) and refused to accept their word that they had verbal permission. He ordered them to pull up the rope and marched them off to the local village surrounded by a large group of men armed with machetes. He seemed to be deliberating about what to do with them when a friendly official whom they had met previously appeared and saved them, exactly from what, they weren't sure. They returned to the pit, relowered the rope, and John and Ron, who had thought it all a prank, ascended. The group then went into town to file charges against the ejido chief, who was reputed to be a regular troublemaker in the area...

On 30 August [1968] former UT members Sam and Diane Young from Salt Lake City, Janie Reddell, **Richard M. Smith** and T.R. Evans met T.R.'s roommate and Gil Ediger of Texas A&I in Laredo and left for Tinaja and La Ceiba. They were unable to reach La Ceiba but explored the Lost (now found) passage in Tinaja to a drop, although they were hampered by bad air due to a recent flood.

Trip report from AMCS Newsletter, February 1972, 3(4):62-63.

Date: 15-20 May 1971

Destination: Ahuacatlan, Qto.

Location: Sierra Madre Oriental, Jalpan, Ahuacatlan.

Persons: Arthur Cleaves, Terry Raines, Craig Sainsott, Joe Simo, **Richard M. Smith**

Reported by: Terry Raines

Compiled by William R. Elliott, 29 February 2020.