

Climbing legend's services Saturday

Monty Dean Smith | Portland Mountain Rescue and Forest Park were passions

By **TERRY RICHARD**
THE OREGONIAN

Services for Monty Dean Smith of Clackamas, a pillar in Oregon's mountaineering and environmental communities, will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at First Unitarian Church, 1011 S.W. 13th Ave.

Smith, 48, was vice president of Portland Mountain Rescue and former board chairman of the Friends of Forest Park, now Forest Park Conservancy.

His climbing adventures around the world, from the Swiss Alps to an attempt on Mount Everest, made him a legend among local climbers. He also climbed the highest mountains in North and South America and the world's 14th tallest mountain in China.

A climb leader with the Mazamas, Portland's mountaineering club, Smith led dozens of less experienced climbers to summit 66 times during club outings.

He also logged more than 2,000 volunteer hours with the club.

In his role with Portland Mountain Rescue, Smith was intimately involved in last December's search for three missing climbers on Mount Hood and was widely quoted by the media. He helped save a number of climbers during his two decades in the mountains.



Smith
"100 percent pedal to the metal"

"Monty was genuinely excited about every opportunity to help with mountain rescue," said Scott Norton, president of Portland Mountain Rescue. "He was extremely capable. His excitement and passion for volunteer work was a real spark for us."

Despite his outgoing nature, Smith hid the emotional turmoil and angst that he struggled to control, according to his sister, Stacy Ozer of Portland. When he took his own life June 5, his death stunned his family and friends.

"It was such a huge shock for us at PMR," Norton said. "The face we saw was always enthusiastic."

Smith was born in Portland. He graduated from Benson High School in 1979 and Oregon State University in 1984. He earned two advanced degrees from OSU while working as a mechanical engineer for Tektronics and Intel. Successful investments allowed him to retire a decade ago, thus freeing his time to pursue his passions.

"Monty understood that Forest Park was unique, if not a sacred place," said Michelle Busard, executive director of Forest Park Conservancy. "He knew the park was at risk, so he made the park's friends group grow, with a more robust membership, bigger board of directors, professional staff and crews in the field."

With his goal accomplished for Forest Park, Smith turned his attention to the mountain rescue organization, where he was being groomed to become president.

Smith's interest in mountaineering began in 1989 when he climbed Mount Hood with Joe Whittington, a fellow Tektronics employee at the time and long-time Portland mountain guide.

"Everything Monty did was always 100 percent pedal to the metal," Whittington said. "I hardly ever saw him on a climb without a smile on his face."

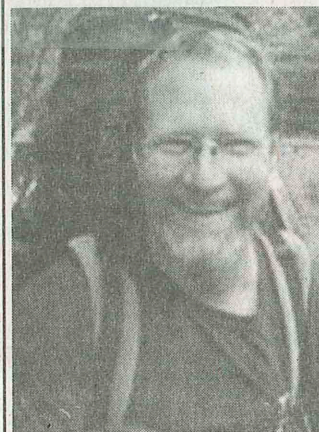
Smith's closest brush with death in the mountains came in 2005 after a successful ascent of Shishapangma, a 26,286-foot peak in China, when he had to spend a night in a snow cave during his descent.

"You need a very strong will to survive in that situation," Whittington said, "because it's so easy to just roll over and die."

Smith lost the tips of several fingers to frostbite, but continued his climbing career. His attempt on Mount Everest in 2008 ended at 21,000 feet, when he began bleeding from the nose. Two 6-inch-long wads of cotton inserted in his nostrils prevented him from bleeding to death.

Smith is survived by his wife, Margaret; daughters Allie and Amy Smith of Forest Grove; sisters Stacy Ozer and Dwyn Miller of Portland; and brother Travis Smith of Redmond.

The family requests contributions in be directed to Portland Mountain Rescue.



Monty D. Smith

June 13, 1961 - June 05, 2010

Monty Dean Smith, a beloved guide, leader, and mentor to many, left us Saturday, June 5, 2010. He was a native Portlander. Monty held a Master of Science in electrical engineering and an Oregon Executive MBA.

Monty always strived for 100% and never less. He was an accomplished mountain climber and was active with the Mazamas, Portland Mountain Rescue (PMR), and Forest Park Conservancy.

Monty was adored by his wife, Margaret Smith. He leaves two lovely daughters, Allie Smith and Amy Smith, from a previous marriage. He is also survived by his sisters, Stacy Ozer and Dwyn Miller; brother, Travis Smith; niece, Shelby Smith; and nephews, TJ Smith and Caleb Ozer.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 12, 2010, in the First Unitarian Church sanctuary, 1211 S.W. Main St., Portland.

The family would appreciate donations to Portland Mountain Rescue in lieu of flowers, www.pmr.org/contact/donation.html.

Please sign the online guest book at www.oregonlive.com/obits