
“Jim’s personal impact on Waterbury is nothing less than profound. His leadership has been felt across an incredible range of initiatives that span economic development, housing, community development, arts and culture. It is not often that one can observe that any one individual or institution is irreplaceable, but that is in fact the case with Jim Smith and Webster Bank.”

- The Honorable Neil M. O’Leary, Mayor, City of Waterbury, CT

When the national media compares you to the fictional banker George Bailey from the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*, you are doing something right. Such was the case for James C. Smith, chairman and chief executive officer of Webster Bank, in the midst of the national foreclosure crisis late in 2011. *The Wall Street Journal*, ABC News, Fox News, and other outlets credited Smith and Webster’s loan modification program for keeping more than 1,200 families in their homes—a program that proved not only good for the homeowners, but good for Webster as well. While other banks were being criticized for forcing their customers out of their houses, Webster was working to keep them home. That story was only one of many positive narratives involving Jim and Webster Bank. Indeed, his tenure as head of the bank has been a positive force in the city of Waterbury.

Smith’s own story began in 1949, when he was born in Waterbury, one of five children of Harold Webster Smith and Elizabeth Copenhaver Smith. The elder Smith had founded the bank as First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Waterbury in 1935 at the age of 24. By the time he retired in 1995, the bank had grown to 83 banking offices with \$7 billion in assets.

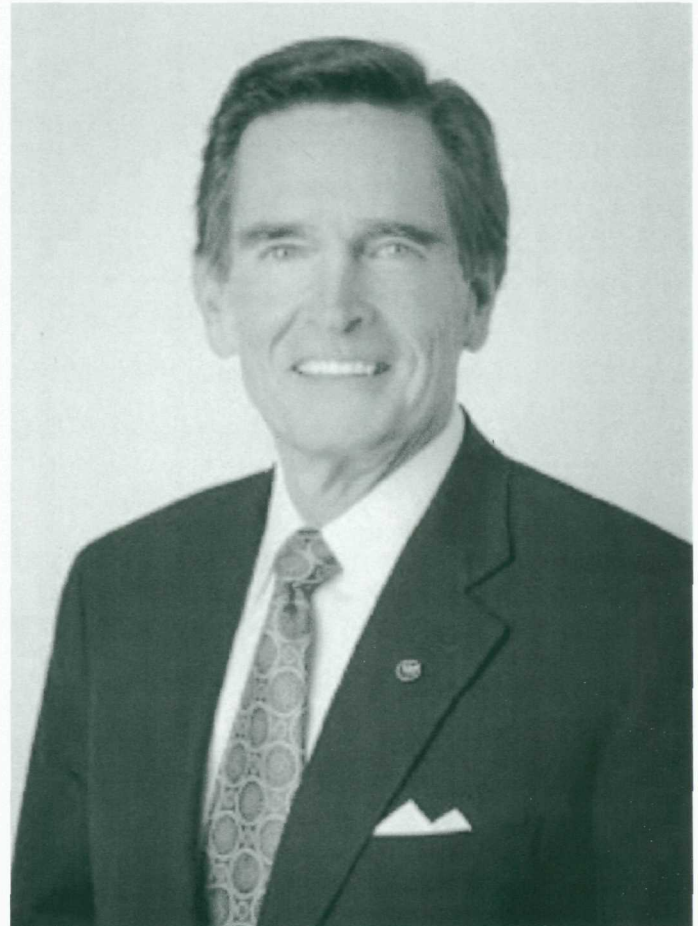
Smith attended Driggs and McTernan schools in Waterbury before graduating from Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Dartmouth College in 1971, he worked in a New York brokerage firm for a few years. He returned to Waterbury and a position at the bank in 1975.

He was elected president in 1982 and succeeded his father as chief executive officer in 1987 and chairman in 1995, the year in which he and the board changed the bank’s name to Webster in honor of his father.

Under Smith’s stewardship, Webster Bank expanded dramatically through internal growth and acquisitions and has become a full-service commercial bank while keeping its corporate headquarters anchored firmly in downtown Waterbury. Webster is the 35th largest bank in the U.S. with \$22 billion in assets, 166 banking centers in four states, lending operations throughout the northeast, and a health savings account administration business operating in all 50 states.

Smith has held a number of positions within the state, regional, and national banking organizations - including serving on the boards of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Federal Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Board, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, the American Bankers Association, and the Connecticut Bankers Association.

He has served on the boards of the Palace Theater, St. Mary’s Health System, and the United Way of Greater Waterbury, and has been a major supporter of the Greater Waterbury YMCA and the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra.



Webster Bank invests approximately \$4 million annually in charities and non-profit organizations in the communities it serves and its nearly 3,000 employees volunteer more than 110,000 hours a year to charitable organizations, a testament to Smith’s belief in the importance of community involvement.

Another clear signal of Smith’s commitment to Waterbury was the establishment of The Harold Webster Smith Foundation, created in 1998 to support philanthropic interests consistent with the values demonstrated by Harold Webster Smith. The foundation supports programs and activities that contribute to the economic well-being of the communities served by Webster, with a particular focus on housing initiatives in Waterbury where there is an extensive neighborhood revitalization underway.

Smith is married to M. Catherine Voghel Smith, who shares his commitment to community service. In 2013 the Mattatuck Museum awarded the couple the Brass Button Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions and dedication to the cultural and social enrichment of Greater Waterbury. They are both recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige Community Award.

They have two children.