Sen. Smith Celebrates Women’s History Month

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As we celebrate Women’s History Month, let’s make a better effort to celebrate the women in our lives says Senator.

MADISON - Last week we welcomed the beginning of Women’s History Month – a time for us to celebrate women's achievements, honor women's history and reflect on the work that still needs to be done. At an early age, I was most inspired and influenced by the women in my life. I’m fortunate to have these relationships throughout my life. Women have motivated me in so many different ways and have shaped me to be the person I am today.

I met my first best friend, Linda, when my family moved into my childhood home near Eau Claire. As kids, social norms taught us boys were supposed to play with boys and girls with girls. Despite these norms, and the taunts from the other kids in school, Linda and I played together.

Linda’s friendship taught me the importance of questioning social norms. If we had listened to the others in our classroom, I would’ve missed out on many memories, a great friendship, and an even greater lesson. Our friendship taught me to have more trust and faith in women.

Time and time again girls were at the top of our class. I learned to respect the efforts and work of the girls around me, especially the times when I fell short.

As I grew older, I continued to develop new friendships with the young women in my high school, which I still treasure to this day. In my adult life, that never changed. It was always clear to me that women in my life were motivated and knowledgeable in so many different aspects.

This includes the most important women in my life - my wife, Sue, along with our daughters, Emily and Sarah. They've pushed me to be well-rounded and inspired me to be who I am today. Whether it be at home, at the office, or even in the campaign to get elected as Senator, I've seen how the women around me stay committed and get things done.

From early on, I learned the importance of working with women and trusting women. Without these relationships I wouldn't be as aware of the diverse life perspectives in my community or the importance of listening to others while I'm serving as State Senator.

In the first week of Women's History Month, I had the opportunity to participate in the "Status of Girls" presentation organized by the bipartisan Alverno College Research Center for Women and Girls. This was an eye-opening presentation highlighting disparities between girls and boys in Wisconsin, from increased rates of poverty and abuse to disproportionate cases of cyberbullying and mental health diagnoses. It was concerning to learn how these issues don't just stop when a girls becomes an adult, but they are issues that continue to impact a woman as she grows older.



I looked around the room at the presentation and realized that I was only one of two men

present in a group with more than twenty attendees. I found this rather odd. Shouldn't more of us be concerned about the issues affecting more than fifty percent of our population? Why was there such little representation from men at this presentation on the status of Wisconsin girls – a key demographic that makes up 11% of our state's population?

I understand that we all have busy schedules and a lot of things going on in our lives; however, we must remember to value the concerns and experiences of others, including the girls and women of our state. I've learned so much growing up with strong women all around me. These relationships are a reminder for me to stand up, support others, and advocate for issues that may not personally affect me. As we continue to celebrate Women's History Month, let's make a better effort to celebrate the women in our lives by developing new friendships, connecting with others and strengthening the voices around us.

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