

**ASHLEE ELLIS SMITH, J.D.**  
**Policy Specialist, Attorney, Conservationist**  
**and Political Consultant**

Raised in Memphis, Tennessee, Ms. Smith now resides between the capitol city of Jackson, Mississippi, and a farm in Church Hill (Jefferson County), MS. She has two beautiful little boys and a special bonus son and daughter who, along with her husband Brad, are the center of her personal life. Ms. Smith spends her free time taking care of her brood of animals (3 dogs, 3 cats, 2 pigs, 2 horses and 2 fish), hunting, hiking, cooking, traveling with her family, reading political articles and news, attending her church and writing editorial pieces.



Educated at the University of Tennessee (B.A. in College Scholars 1999), the University of Memphis (Juris Doctorate 2003), and the Fund for American Studies' Engalitcheff Institute for Comparative Economic and Political Systems (Georgetown University 1998), Ms. Smith spent time working in state politics and campaigns before beginning law school and her legal career. While in law school, she served in student body government and received two Am Jur awards. She clerked with high profile firms from the summer after her first year through graduation both during the summers and during her second and third school years, as well as serving in the indigent legal clinic.

Once she began practicing law in 2003, Ms. Smith worked at large private firms in Memphis, Tennessee (Glankler Brown, PLLC), and Nashville, Tennessee (King & Ballow) before she married and moved to Mississippi, where she practiced with Wells, Moore, Simmons, Edwards and Hubbard (n/k/a Phelps Dunbar, LLP). She concentrated her practice in civil litigation, concentrating in municipal law, appellate practice, commercial contract litigation, bankruptcy adversary proceedings (trustee and creditor), and family law. Throughout her active legal career, she continued to be involved as a volunteer in local politics.

In 2012, she began to transition from full time legal work to policy work, when she became the Director of Policy for Ducks Unlimited's Southern Region. She remained in that role until 2017, helping craft the new position. During that time, she directed federal and state government affairs to advance Ducks Unlimited, Inc.'s public policy priorities for DU's Southern Region, which includes thirteen states: AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NM, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX and VA. She also coordinated DU volunteer grassroots policy efforts and campaigns, engaged in federal legislative advocacy with agriculture and conservation NGO partners, as well as state and national wildlife agency partners. She directed state legislative policy efforts in the above-mentioned states, helped organize state sportsman caucus events and monitored and engaged in issues affecting wetlands, waterfowl and sportsmen in those states. She worked with development officers, grassroots volunteer fundraisers and leadership, engaged in dedicated conservation funding campaigns and helped coordinate communications and PR related to DU's policy efforts and messaging.

In 2017, Ms. Smith founded and ran her own policy consulting firm, Ellis Smith Policy Solutions, LLC. ESPS was a full-service public policy, legislative advocacy, and government affairs firm specializing in conservation, wildlife, and sportsman's issue advocacy. Ms. Smith worked with state and federal conservation NGOs, associations and state wildlife agencies across the country on a wide range of federal policy issues and consulted on legislation such as the Farm Bill, Water Resources Development Act, and annual appropriations bills amongst others.

In 2019 Ms. Smith took the position of CEO of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, the oldest and largest conservation organization in the state of Mississippi. She was hired in this role to help steer the organization through a turnaround, navigate them through a high-profile lawsuit involving high-ranking state officials, rebuild the board and staff, and redirect priorities to get the organization back to its original mission. Working for this non-political 501(c)3 organization, known as a political advocacy and watchdog group, she provided strategic, operational, and financial leadership for MWF, a non-profit conservation corporation, in close coordination with the Board of Directors. She managed a team of staff, plus various independent contractors, directed all federal and state public policy and advocacy efforts to ensure Mississippi's wildlife, natural resources and hunting and angling rights were protected, managed the budget, comprised of both private donations and public grant funding, administered and ran the grant-funded programs and guided communications and public relations outreach to both the general public and MWF's more than twenty thousand supporters. After three years at MWF, she transitioned to the Board of Directors and while no longer on staff, still helps still their wildlife and sportsman's policy work.

With the launch of Sequoya Strategies in 2022, Ms. Smith went back to full-time policy consulting work, concentrating mostly on federal policy, but also taking on a limited number of state issues. She is fortunate to be able to choose to work on those issues which she truly believes in, and considers working on a worthy cause for change the ultimate blessing.

***“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that really matter.”***

***–Martin Luther King, Jr.***