

# The University of Texas at Arlington

ENDOWMENT PROFILE

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## Jillian Michelle Smith Professorship in Family Violence Research

ON DEC 28, 2010, Arlington Police Officer Jillian Smith responded to a 911 domestic violence call at an Arlington apartment complex. Officer Smith had completed her officer field training just 15 days earlier and had turned 24 years old just 10 days earlier. As Officer Smith interviewed the victim and her 11-year-old daughter, the husband returned to the apartment with a gun. When he began shooting, Officer Smith placed herself in front of the daughter, ultimately saving the girl's life but sustaining fatal injuries.

Jillian Smith had wanted to be a police officer since she was in the sixth grade. She graduated *cum laude* from The University of Texas at Arlington in August 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminology and criminal justice and a minor in sociology. She graduated from the Arlington Police Academy in August 2010.

To honor Jillian Smith's heroic actions, members of the advisory council for the UT Arlington School of Social Work decided to create the *Jillian Michelle Smith Professorship in Family Violence Research*. Robert Gladney, chairman of the social work advisory council, had already challenged members of the council to help raise \$125,000 to establish a professorship in family violence research. The council agreed to do so, unanimously, each making a personal commitment. After Officer Smith lost her life, the council agreed to rename the professorship in her honor.

"We knew that naming the professorship for her would serve both to honor her actions and inspire future scholars to develop research-based practical solutions for the terrible problem of family violence," said Gladney.

In April 2011, at the School of Social Work's annual Night of Excellence fundraising banquet, the council agreed to designate all funds from the evening to the new professorship. By May, the council reached their fundraising goal of \$125,000. These gifts will be matched by UT Arlington's Maverick Match, a program

that leverages the university's natural gas royalties to match endowment gifts of \$25,000 or more, thus creating the \$250,000 *Jillian Michelle Smith Professorship in Family Violence Research*.

Social Work Professor Beverly Black, who joined UTA in 2008, has been named the professorship's first recipient. "It's certainly an honor," Black told the *Star-Telegram*. "My hope is that one day there won't be any more need for research on domestic violence...that the issue will have been solved."

Doug Smith, Officer Smith's father, said he and his family are honored by the new endowment.

"If my daughter were here, she would be very pleased," he said. "Anything positive that results – for example, better training for police officers responding to family violence calls – would be good."



Officer Jillian Smith

Arlington Police Chief Theron Bowman, who earned a Ph.D. in urban and public affairs from UT Arlington in 1997, said Smith understood that her life's calling was to help others experience the kind of caring and stability she experienced in her own life. "I know that Officer Smith would be honored that her battle against family violence continues," Bowman said. "Her legacy is secure through the dozens of future beneficiaries of the endowment bearing her name."

If you'd like more information about how to start an endowment, please contact:

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