



Greetings, Cougar Historians....last May, 14 year-old SMCC graduate Miles Manning got a lot of media coverage, but tween-agers at South Mountain isn't a new phenomenon... check out this story from June 20, 1995....wonder where David Smith is today?

# COLLEGE CHILD

## Boy, 12, on a course for higher learning

By Lisa Tyler  
The Arizona Republic

David Smith appreciates the ride his mother gives him to college each morning, but he'd just as soon kiss her goodbye in the parking lot and walk to class on his own.

Dorothy Smith can't have any of that. She escorts David across campus, making sure he arrives safely at the door to advanced algebra, then meets him when it's over.

After all, David is 12.

He spends afternoons playing with other boys his age, who, after they tire of video games, pizza and basketball, sometimes tease their brainy friend.

"I hear a lot of smart-guy jokes from my friends. *Doogie Howser*

jokes," David said, "but I do everything else I normally do, except go to college in the morning."

David is the youngest student ever to attend South Mountain Community College. And although it's not unusual for an ambitious high-school student to take freshman college courses, administrators are scratching their heads about how to accommodate David, who passed his community-college entrance exams and has every right to attend.

"We have an open-door policy here," said Tony Bracamonte, dean of admissions. "But it gets blurry when you talk of kids this young. Generally, the policy is used for high-school students."

Not every bright student who passes the entrance exam belongs in

college, Bracamonte said. For starters, sometimes it's the parent's idea, not the student's.

"If mom drags him in by the ear because he's bored, maybe getting into trouble, then maybe this kid belongs in a summer recreation program instead," Bracamonte said.

"There are all kinds of social benefits to high school, to free time and hanging out with friends. Plus, our instructors have different expectations than high-school teachers. They aren't child-development experts."

But David's algebra teacher, Mitzi Ferrell, said her youngest student is adjusting well to the college classroom.

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Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic  
David Smith, 12, gets help from his teacher, Mitzi Ferrell, at South Mountain Community College, where he is the youngest student ever to attend.

## Boy, 12, sets a course for higher learning

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"He's not afraid to ask questions. That's a good sign," said Ferrell, who attended classes at South Mountain Community College while she was still a student at South Mountain High School.

A bright boy with a bright future, David has a lot of options.

He can continue in school with his peers, attending college courses at night and during the summer for enrichment.

If he wants to, his parents said, he could enroll in college this fall, just two weeks after he turns 13.

In August, David, his parents and a slew of elementary-school and college counselors will meet to decide what's next.

If David chooses college, he'll begin computer classes in the fall and eventually major in computer programming.

He knows starting college doesn't mean the end of his childhood.

"My friends will all be in high school," he said. "I can go to dances or the prom or whatever if I want to."