



UNITED STATES

The secretary behind Boss's Day

A secretary in Illinois asked for a day to thank bosses. She picked her father's birthday, and it stuck.

WHERE Deerfield, Illinois

WHO Patricia Bays Haroski, a secretary who asked for a day to thank bosses

WHEN 1958 to 2026

4 min read

The story

National Boss's Day falls on 16 October. Few people ask where it came from. The usual story starts in a small office in Illinois.

A secretary and her father

Patricia Bays Haroski worked as a secretary for State Farm, an insurance company, in Deerfield, Illinois. Deerfield is a town north of Chicago. News reports say her boss was her father.

In 1958, she registered "National Boss's Day" with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. That is a national group of businesses. She chose 16 October. It was her father's birthday.

Reflecting on how my father had helped his white collar daughters and sons many times with their problems concerning their work, I decided to register his birthday.

PATRICIA BAYS HAROSKI, AS QUOTED IN UNCLE JOHN'S
BATHROOM READER, 2013

In plain words, she wanted to honor a man who had helped the people who worked for him. Her father had helped them with problems at work.

She also hoped the day would help bosses and workers get along. Reports say she felt young workers did not always see how hard their bosses worked.

1958

year the day was
registered

1962

year the governor
proclaimed it

1979

year Hallmark began
selling cards

From one office to the calendar

Four years later, in 1962, Illinois governor Otto Kerner proclaimed the day. A proclamation is a public announcement by a leader.

The aim, says ABC7 Chicago, is for workers to thank bosses for their hard work. NBC Chicago adds that the day is a time to recall a boss's kindness and fairness through the year.

In 1979, the card company Hallmark began selling Boss's Day cards. Today the day is not a public holiday. When 16 October falls on a weekend, many people mark it on the nearest working day. In 2026, it falls on a Friday.

Not everyone likes it. Some workplace writers say workers should not feel they must buy gifts for the person who controls their pay.

The idea is simple. Notice what a boss did well, and say so. You can do that on any day of the year.

The day began as a thank-you. A thank-you needs no gift.

How it unfolded

- **1958** Haroski registers the day with the Chamber of Commerce.
- **1962** Illinois governor Otto Kerner proclaims it.
- **1979** Hallmark starts selling Boss's Day cards.
- **2026** The day falls on Friday, 16 October.

CHAPTER TWO

What makes it special

Most holidays grow from big events. This one is said to have begun with a daughter's thank-you to her father, who was also her boss.

It grew because others took it up: a governor in 1962, then a card company in 1979.

OUR TAKE

A small thank-you can grow into a habit shared by a whole country.

CHAPTER THREE

What we can learn

1 Thank people for something specific

Haroski named what her father had done. He had helped workers with their problems.

Try this: Write one sentence that names exactly what a boss or teacher did for you.

2 Thank those who help you grow

She thanked the person who had helped others at work.

Try this: Pick one person who helped your work this year and tell them so.

3 Start small and let it spread

One registration in 1958 led to a governor's proclamation four years later.

Try this: Try one small habit with your team for a month.

4 Keep thanks free of pressure

Some writers say gifts can pressure workers. Thanks needs no gift.

Try this: Say thanks in words or a short note, not in a purchase.

ONE THOUGHT TO TAKE AWAY

A thank-you costs little and can last
for years.

Sources

ABC7 Chicago

[National Boss's Day: History, connection to State Farm in Deerfield, Illinois \(2019\)](#)

NBC Chicago

[Wednesday is National Boss's Day, and the national holiday started in Illinois \(2024\)](#)

Uncle John's Bathroom Reader (Portable Press)

[It's National Boss Day \(2013\)](#)

Fact-check note: This story is thinner than most. Every account of how the day began goes back to one origin story, told by Haroski herself and repeated by the National Day Calendar website. The three sources agree with each other, but I found no record from 1958 or 1962, such as the Chamber of Commerce register or the governor's proclamation, and Wikipedia marks the father's-birthday detail "citation needed". So the story says only what the sources report. NBC Chicago spells her first name "Patria"; the other sources write "Patricia". The quote comes from Uncle John's Bathroom Reader, which says she "explained later"; I could not find where she first said it. The 1979 Hallmark date is from NBC Chicago, which cites the National Day Calendar. The criticism of the day is from Wikipedia's summary of a 2015 U.S. News column, which I did not open. Lines marked "Our take" are interpretation. Everything else comes from the sources above.