



# NEWS

SUMMER 2020

from The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City

*Dedicated to the recognition, preservation and restoration of Greater Kansas City's unique heritage.*

## The Native Sons and Daughters Outstanding Kansas Citians 2020 OKC Gala RESCHEDULED TO NOVEMBER 2021

Due to the Pandemic Covid-19 virus, the last three months has been a challenge and struggle for so many members of our community. With the number of Covid-19 cases increasing in Kansas and Missouri, the NSDKC Board Members unanimously voted to postpone the OKC 2020 Gala. The health of our honored recipients, their guests and the members of NSDKC is of the utmost importance.

### Edward (Ed) Eilert

During 2010, Ed was elected to serve as Johnson County Commission Chairman and re-elected in 2014. He served as Overland Park Mayor, 1981–2005. This highly respected community leader has a strong passion for the commitment to support education and economic development.

Please take a moment and read the quotes of those who have witnessed the integrity of Ed Eilert.

Brandon Koenig... *Johnson County is the economic engine of Kansas City not by accident, but due to the sound leadership of Chairman Ed Eilert. Ed brings managerial expertise and business acumen to the job of running the most populous county in the KC metro area. He's seasoned, tough, and forward-thinking with the visionary leadership to ensure we maintain a high quality of life and continue to attract new residents and businesses for years to come.*

Suzie Gibbs... *When I have a question/concern/problem and I contact Ed, he responds immediately either with an answer or investigates the situation and resolves the problem. This is leadership!*

Gary Hicks, Past President NSDKC... *Ed puts integrity far above politics, far above the interest of personal relationships. I appreciate the man's character and I appreciate his vision for our region.*

### Retired Air Force General Richard B. Myers

General Richard Myers became the 15th Chairman



Ed Eilert



General Richard Myers

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 2001. In this capacity, he served as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council during the earliest stages of the War on Terror, including planning and execution of the 2002 invasion of Iraq.

Retired General Merrill McPeak made the following comment regarding Myers. "Myers' preparation from day one has been to use his imagination, and that's what's require here. General Myers was more of a Gary Cooper than a John Wayne".

General Myers retired from active duty military, September 30, 2005.

On April 14, 2016, Richard Myers was selected as the interim President of Kansas State University. On November 15, 2016, the Board of Regents announced Myers would become the University's 14th President.

While he enjoys music, plays the saxophone, golf and tennis, he is best known in the media for his penchant for Harley-Davidsons and repairing beat-up classic cars.

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**NSDKC Garrison Marker Dedication  
July 24 at 6:30 pm**

**See page three for details**

# 2020 President's Message

## Dear members:

At the request of the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors met by way of a Zoom meeting on June 24 to discuss and approve issues regarding important circumstances. The Board accepted and approved Linda Dillon's decision to retire from her position as Executive Secretary. Her nine years of service will be recognized at this year's Holiday Brunch. In addition, the Board approved Past President Nancy Elder to take over Linda's duties effective July 31, 2020.

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation, the Outstanding Kansas Citian Committee recommended, and the Board approved, the cancellation of this year's OKC Gala event which was scheduled for November 4, 2020 at the Overland Park Convention Center. The event will take place a year later in November, 2021 at the same location.

Our first priority in holding our OKC Gala event is the safety of those attending. It was agreed that a banquet and silent auction with over 300 people would not be possible due to the fact that the virus is not under control.

We will have a dedication of the Garrison Marker on July 24. This sort of gathering is possible with everyone wearing masks and practicing social distancing. The dedication of the Union Station historical marker awarded at last year's OKC Gala has not yet been scheduled.

These are difficult times for civic organizations. Meetings, event planning and fund raising efforts are on hold. These are difficult times for all of us. Stay Safe.

Sincerely,  
Richard Retrum  
2020 NSDKC President



**Dick Retrum**  
2020 President



## OFFICERS & STAFF

Dick Retrum  
*President*

Linda F. Mills  
*1st Vice President*  
(Unoccupied)  
*2nd Vice President*

Jim Flanagan  
*Treasurer*

Paul Christiansen II  
*Secretary*

Ray Elder  
*Historian*

Nancy L. Elder  
*Immediate Past President*

*A list of all committees and committee chairs is available at NSDKC.org*

## Newsletter Production

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## MISSION

The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City, Inc. is dedicated to the historic preservation of the unique and rich heritage of the greater Kansas City metropolitan area, both in Missouri and Kansas, through advocacy, education and restoration. It also seeks to preserve and maintain archives of historical interest relating to the development of the Kansas City region and to recognize individuals who have resided therein and contributed to such development.

**NOTE: the new Administrative mailing address, email and phone number**

## 2020 CALENDAR

Annual Board Meeting – October 21, 2020

Holiday Brunch – December 12, 2020

**MEMORIALS: Michael Joseph Siragusa**

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Please plan to attend our NSDKC OKC Gala in November 2021 and meet these two extraordinary men. The exact date will be contained in our fall newsletter.

Note, you will soon see an update to our Website and Facebook page. We are also in the process of moving forward with strategic marketing planning to develop awareness and membership growth. Please stay safe and healthy!

## Historical Markers Report

**Garrison School** – Dedication date July 24 – see elsewhere in newsletter for details.

**Union Station** - This marker was presented at the OKC Gala November 6, 2019. With the assistance of all the helpers at Union Station, the marker post was installed March 5. The Station is open again and they are looking ahead for a dedication day. I expect we will have a date set soon for this fall.

**KC Fire Department** – Cost is being covered jointly by the Fire Department and the Local 42 Union. Ray Elder has led the work on the text along with Gary Hicks and me and it is done. However, the installation site that Ray wants is owned by the State, so he is working to get their final approval. Part of the marker cost has been paid. When we get the site approval and full payment, we will order the marker.

**Johnson County** – This is the marker for 2021 OKC (delayed from 2020 – see page one). The text for the marker is complete, but we probably won't order it for awhile. We are planning to erect the marker at the Johnson County Arts and Heritage Museum on 87th and Metcalf in Overland Park. Gary Hicks and I have been working with them and had a meeting recently with Mary McMurray, their new Director, and some others. We have agreed upon the exact location for the marker near the parking entrance.

# Join us for the Garrison School marker dedication

Friday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m.



**Garrison School - 500 block of North Main Street, Liberty, MO.**

**O**n Friday evening July 24 at 6:30 p.m., we will have our first historical marker dedication in 2020. Led by one of our NSDKC leaders, Chris Sizemore, this marker project publicizes the unique history of the Garrison School in Liberty, Missouri.

Following Statehood in 1821, the education of enslaved and free African Americans was discouraged in Missouri. Following the Freedmen's Bureau Bill of 1866, Missouri Governor Thomas Fletcher appointed Black leader James Milton Turner to create Black schools, one being in Liberty.

The original Garrison School was named by James Gay, principal for 22 years, for Abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison.

The original building burned in 1910, replaced by the current building, same site, in 1911.

The Liberty School District began integrating its high school in the fall of 1954. The final year of a segregated Garrison School was in 1957.

In December, 2003, members of the Clay County African-American Legacy Incorporated, and its Board, purchased Garrison School from the Liberty School District. It is now a cultural center committed to preserving African-American history, celebrating culture and promoting human relations through community events, exhibits and educational programming. The Garrison School Historic District is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and registry of historic sites of Clay County.

The marker was funded by the City of Liberty and the Clay County African-American Legacy Incorporated.

Come join us as NSDKC helps to dedicate this marker. Just go to downtown Liberty and go straight north on Main Street to the 500 block.

**PLEASE WEAR MASKS AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING.**

# NSDKC Markers in key historic locations

NSDKC has been erecting historical markers in the Kansas City area for several decades. They are well located, attractive and full of our local history!

Have you ever thought about visiting these kinds of sites just to view the immediate surrounding area and absorb the historical importance of the stories the markers tell?

If so, four locations in particular that may be worth your consideration to visit are below. **Visit our website NSDKC.org. Click on About Us and then Markers.**



**Fort Osage - Go east of Independence on Highway 24 and four miles north to Sibley**

Our marker erected in 2008 tells the history of Fort Osage which was built in 1808 with a treaty with the Osage Indians. It was negotiated by William Clark after he returned from the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806. The rest of Jackson County was not open for settlement until 1825. Two years later, Independence was founded. So this site is the oldest occupied non-tribal site in western Missouri. The history of the Kansas City area started here!



**Kaw Point - At One Fairfax Trafficway in Lewis and Clark Park at Kaw Point**

Our marker above was erected in 2005 and tells the story of Lewis and Clark's encampment there for three nights in 1804 on June 26, 27 and 28. They proceeded up the Missouri River on June 29. The marker describes their experiences here. Strangely, they saw no tribal members. Lewis and Clark floated by in their dugouts on September 15, 1806 on their return.



**Liberty Arsenal marker on Southview Drive west of Hwy 291 at Old 210 Hwy, Liberty, MO**

The Liberty Arsenal was built by the U.S. Government in 1838 to supply troops stationed at Fort Leavenworth. It was raided in 1855 as part of the Border War between Missouri and Kansas Territory. It was raided again on April 20, 1861 by Missouri Secessionists after the Civil War had begun with the fall of Ft. Sumter, South Carolina just a week before.



**Curran Park, 18th and Swift, North Kansas City**

Our marker was erected in 2005 in Curran Park. We are looking south toward the Missouri River, a little over a mile away. In 1903, Armour and Swift meat packing companies bought lots of land north of the river. Their man, Hugh Curran, implemented development of the land and caused the ASB Bridge to be built, opening in 1911. The bridge, named for Armour, Swift, and Burlington Railroad, opened the gate for further development of North Kansas City. The park was named for Hugh Curran.

This article is intended to illustrate that not only do we place markers about specific events, people and sites around our area, but also to illustrate how our markers carry stories of how our area developed as part of our nation and its westward movement (1803), Missouri's development (1808), the Border War and Civil War (mid-1800s) and finally how Kansas City spread north of the Missouri River (early 1900s).