



# NEWS

SUMMER 2018

from The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City

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



**CLIFF ILLIG**

**2018 Outstanding Kansas Citian**

November 13, 2018

Kay Barnes Ballroom  
Kansas City Convention Center



Chairman of Board of  
Cerner Corporation

Executive Committee of the  
Heart of America Council of  
Boy Scouts of America

Co-owner of Kansas City's  
Major League Soccer franchise,  
Sporting KC

Board of directors of the  
Stowers Institute.



**RECOGNIZING THE**  
Boy Scouts of America and  
the American Royal Association



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See article on page 4



M/C NSDKC President Steve Noll addresses the crowd with the Monument at rear and wayside exhibit at left.

## NSDKC Monument dedicated

**O**n a chilly April 19 morning, the dedication of NSDKC's Monument was enjoyed at Illus Davis Park at 10th and Oak by about 100 NSDKC members and leading citizens of the Kansas City area. It was the culmination of a five-year project that involved design, site selection, fundraising and construction.

It started with NSDKC Past President Carl DiCapo's dream to honor NSDKC and the remarkable history of the Greater Kansas City area with a significant memorial that would enable future generations to understand our heritage. And he personally raised the funds and contributions that paid for it!

He asked NSDKC Past President Gary Hicks to lead our conceptual design efforts resulting in the five-pointed-star-shaped sixteen foot-tall monument and the texts for the ten interpretive panels on the sides of the monument. In addition to Carl and Gary, NSDKC Past Presidents Chuck Eddy, John Hess, Jr., Diane Boos Pepper and Ross Marshall were on the Monument Committee. The exhibit also features the Monument's twelve Significant Funding Sponsors and Supporters.

Besides the committee, JE Dunn Construction Company, BNIM Architects and other consultants played key roles and are listed on the site's wayside exhibit.

The ten panels on the Monument cover the following Greater Kansas City themes: Grandeur, Early Cultures & Explorers, Westward Expansion, Transportation, Agriculture, Entrepreneurs, Arts and Education, Science & Research, Sports, and accomplishments of The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City.

*MONUMENT continued on page 3*

# The President's Message

**Dear members:**

The energy and excitement displayed at and throughout NSDKC events this year has been amazing! Thank you to all our members and supporters that have supported the Monument and marker dedications and your presence at the first of several "History at the Monument" events.

Allow me to again say "Thank You" to Carl DiCapo and Gary Hicks for their years of effort and dedication that led to the Monument, and the love of our local history that it represents. As we all go about our daily schedules and business, we all see hundreds of people displaying their pride in our City by wearing shirts and hats with some variation of the famous "KC".

Our monument is the only public monument that displays and shares many stories across diverse topics on its ten panels. It has been said that "history is an acquired taste", but love of history spreads across all generations and there can be no doubt we need to learn our past, in order to be good citizens for today and tomorrow.

Allow me to give one more salute to Mr. DiCapo. As a past NSDKC president and OKC honoree, Carl knows that membership is the lifeblood of any organization, and he has stepped forward to lead our NSDKC membership initiatives for the balance of this year. Please accept our collective gratitude for giving your time and energy in tackling this need.

Allow me to ask you (before he does so in the near future) the question. Who do you know that shares our passion for the Kansas City region and our local history? Can we ask them to come on board, with your encouragement?

Preparations are underway for our November 13 Outstanding Kansas Citian Gala at the Kay Barnes Ballroom in the Kansas City Convention Center. Please make plans to attend. You will hear more from us soon!

See you at the Monument for upcoming history programs on July 26, August 23 and September 27. Come enjoy the stories and fun!

Sincerely,  
Steve Noll  
2018 NSDKC President



**2018 President  
Steve Noll**



## OFFICERS & STAFF

Steve Noll  
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Nancy L. Elder  
*1st Vice President*

Dick Retrum  
*2nd Vice President*

Jim Flanagan  
*Treasurer*

John Dunnewind  
*Secretary*

Ray Elder  
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Diane Boos Pepper  
*Immediate Past President*

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

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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.

July 26 at 6:00 p.m. – 2nd Monument Program  
August 23 at 6:00 p.m. – 3rd Monument Program  
September 27 at 6:00 p.m. – 4th Monument Program

## ★ 2018 CALENDAR ★

October 10 at 6:00 p.m. – Annual Membership and Board meeting  
November 13 – 6:00 p.m. - Outstanding Kansas Citian Gala  
December 8 at 11:00 a.m. - Annual Holiday Brunch

# Monument dedication

The circular plaza area, with its field of inscribed granite pavers, features lists of NSDKC Past Presidents, NSDKC Founder Members and NSDKC Outstanding Kansas Citian Award recipients plus many who have purchased space for their names and personal inscriptions. **And inscriptions can still be purchased!**

What a wonderful accomplishment for NSDKC and the Greater Kansas City area!



**Chuck Eddy (at right) and his Dixieland Band**



**Two Keynote speakers Gary Hicks and Carl DiCapo**



**Bill Dunn and Anita Gorman, two key sponsors**



**Above: NSDKC members (l-r) 2nd Vice President Dick Retrum. 1st Vice President Nancy Elder, Susan Hughes, Organizational Secretary Linda Dillon. Standing at right Ray Elder and Norm Besheer.**

**Left: Other Speakers (l-r) 2017 OKC Alvin Brooks, Jackson County Executive Frank White, KC Parks and Rec Director Mark McHenry, KC Mayor Pro Tem Scott Wagner and KC City Manager Troy Schulte.**

## 2018 Outstanding Kansas Citian Gala this November 13

**W**e are delighted to announce that we will honor Mr. Cliff Illig, Vice Chairman of the Board and co-founder of Cerner as our 2018 Outstanding Kansas Citian.

Early in June the OKC Committee had a meeting at Mr. Illig's office and after listening to him expound on his business interests, sports and his love for Kansas City it was clear he is the right person to receive our award.

The OKC Committee was expecting a brief meeting with a very busy man to explain who we are and what he should expect during the November 13th event. But to our relief, he did most of the talking! We learned about his business ventures outside of Cerner, his dedication to the Wizards soccer team and his close connection to the Heart of America Council - Boy Scouts of America organization.

Also we learned of his spearheading work in honor of his partner and co-founder of Cerner, Neal Patterson, to make the American Royal a vibrant part of our city.

During the meeting we decided that we should not only recognize the Boy Scouts of America with a historic marker but also make a second marker for the American Royal to honor Neal Patterson for his work. Both markers will be unveiled during the OKC event.

You won't want to miss this year's dinner, silent auction, music and presentations. It will be **November 13 at the Kay Barnes Ballroom in the Kansas City Convention Center.**

Reserve your seats today for this very special night to honor one of Kansas City's finest!

Richard O. Retrum, Chair  
OKC Committee

## Crime Commission marker dedicated

**L**ike all three of our dedications in April, it was chilly the morning of April 16 as we dedicated the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission marker. By the 10:30 start, there was sunshine, no wind and more than 20 people present.

This marker was erected because of our 2017 Outstanding Kansas Citian Alvin Brooks' long-time connection with the Commission. He was also on the Kansas City Council, and in other areas of city leadership. It was officially presented to the Commission at our November 14 OKC Gala.

The marker was erected on the southeast corner of the Hotel President at 14th and Baltimore because the first meeting of the Commission was at the hotel nearly seven decades ago. It was paid for by donors connected with the Commission.

Crime Commission President Rick Armstrong was a delightful and helpful guy to work with and composed a lot of the text for the marker.

The marker says it was erected in 2017 because that was the intent, but the marker manufacturer had an error on it and it needed to be replaced. So we kept the 2017 date on it.

Speakers for the dedication included our President Steve Noll, Rick Armstrong, Ron Jury (Commission Board member and owner of the Hotel President), Alvin Brooks and NSDKC Past President Carl DiCapo.

Thanks to each one for attending!



**Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission President Rick Armstrong addresses the crowd.**



**The marker unveiling was done by (l-r) Carl DiCapo and Alvin Brooks. Rick Armstrong is at right.**

# Our first NSDKC Monument program was June 28

**O**n a hot evening, about 50 NSDKC members and city leaders gathered for the first of four Kansas City History Series Programs at the new NSDKC Monument in Ilus Davis Park.

Free Italian sausages, hot dogs and water were made available by NSDKC. The event was hosted by Kansas City Parks and Recreation, including grilling, serving, chairs, podium and speaker system. Many thanks to Director Mark McHenry and all his staff!

At 6:30 NSDKC Past President Chuck Eddy convened the program by introducing NSDKC Outstanding Kansas Citian honorees Alvin Brooks (2017) and Carl DiCapo (2001).

He next introduced Kansas City Mayor Pro Tem and NSDKC member Scott Wagner who congratulated NSDKC for our Kansas City heritage preservation efforts.

Chuck then introduced NSDKC President Steve Noll who said our event was the night's hottest ticket in KC!

Three keynote speakers addressed the attendees. The first was KC Parks and Rec Director Mark McHenry who reviewed the history of Ilus Davis Park. About 25 years ago, the City started acquiring the property for the Park which is two square blocks between Oak and Locust and between 9th and 11th Streets. Three years later, all the buildings were removed and park construction started. Located between the 2000 Charles Evans Whitaker Federal Courthouse and the 1937 City Hall, the park was dedicated in 2001.

He also reviewed all the sites that were considered for the Monument such as the Alexander Majors House area, the island at Southwest Trafficway and Westport Road, and Penn Valley Park. But the most ideal site, which was the last site proposed, was Ilus Davis Park for which we have Director McHenry to thank.

The next keynote speaker was NSDKC Past President Gary Hicks, who not only designed the star-shaped



**Gary Hicks speaking in front of Monument**



**Carl DiCapo**



**(l-r) Chuck Eddy, Mark McHenry**

Monument but also designed and authored the ten interpretive panels on it. He also played a significant role in the construction of the Monument with JE Dunn Construction Co.

The final keynote speaker was NSDKC Past President Carl DiCapo who championed the Monument project. It was his idea and he enlisted Gary Hicks to design it. He also raised the \$500,000 cost! In his remarks he spoke about each of the 12 primary sponsors as shown on the wayside exhibit. A great accomplishment Carl!

A very successful beginning for the History Series to be continued on the fourth Thursdays of the next three months; July 26, August 23 and September 27.

# Union Cemetery Tour held May 24

On a cloudy evening, a group of NSDKC members and guests gathered at the Union Cemetery near 28th and Main for an interesting tour. Arranged and led by our Program Chair Marsha Daley, we visited one of the most significant historic sites in the Kansas City area.

NSDKC Past President Gary Hicks was in character as Alexander Majors (1814-1900) at the Majors grave site, accompanied by wife Louise as Majors' first wife Katherine Stalcup. "Majors" told about his life and accomplishments starting with his birth in Kentucky, early life in the Kansas City area, his freight moving empire of Russell, Majors and Waddell, experience as co-founder of the Pony Express, hauling freight for the Union Pacific Railroad, prospecting in Utah, helping create the National Cattlemen's Association and later life until his death in 1900.

Rolland Love, a re-enactor of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, local historian and author, characterized Mayor Milton Payne. He was mayor of Kansas City for six one-year terms starting in 1855 at the age of 26, as Kansas City's youngest mayor. Payne is also buried in Union Cemetery. He died in 1900. The Native Sons placed a plaque on his grave site in 1961 since there was no gravestone.

After the cholera epidemic of 1849 filled cemeteries of both the towns of Westport and Kansas, they started looking for more burial space. In 1857, James M. Hunter deeded 49 acres to the Union Cemetery Assembly. Problem solved!

Opening in 1857, the cemetery was a "union" between the towns of Kansas City and Westport, thus the name. Later, Westport became part of Kansas City. By 1910, the Cemetery Association sold part if the land near 27th and Main Streets. The Cemetery Association deeded the remaining 27 acres to Kansas City in 1937. The Parks and Recreation Department now maintains the grounds.

On December 17, 1937 the Native Sons (NS), now NSDKC, expanded

Gary and Louise Hicks as the Majors



Rolland Love (on porch) as Mayor Payne



their projects and began involvement with Union Cemetery, our first major restoration project.

A new entrance gate and wire fence were completed at Union Cemetery in 1941. In 1945, the plan for the new entrance took shape with NS raising about \$8,000 to fund it.

The mid-fifties saw continuation of work on Union Cemetery. NS solicited \$29,000 in donations to build a new entrance, just north of today's entrance. The entrance, dedicated in May 1954, was a result of cooperation between NS, the City and taxpayers in restoring the cemetery. NS installed a plaque on each side of the entrance, but both were stolen.

NS also raised \$10,000 for a monument in the cemetery to the early

Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham, dedicated in November 1957. NS placed a plaque on each side of the entrance that but these were stolen from the original wall built in 1956 just north of today's entrance and were replaced with identical plaques at today's entrance in October 1993. In 1990 we placed a small plaque on the Bingham Monument.

In August 1889 cemetery records were lost when the Sexton's cottage caught fire, leaving hundreds of unmarked and undocumented graves. The Sexton's cottage burned again on Halloween night, 1985, but this time the cemetery records were kept off site, so none were destroyed. The cottage was rebuilt in 1990.

Great tour! Good idea Marsha!