



# NEWS

WINTER 2026

from The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City

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



## OUTSTANDING KANSAS CITIAN — 2025 — GALA

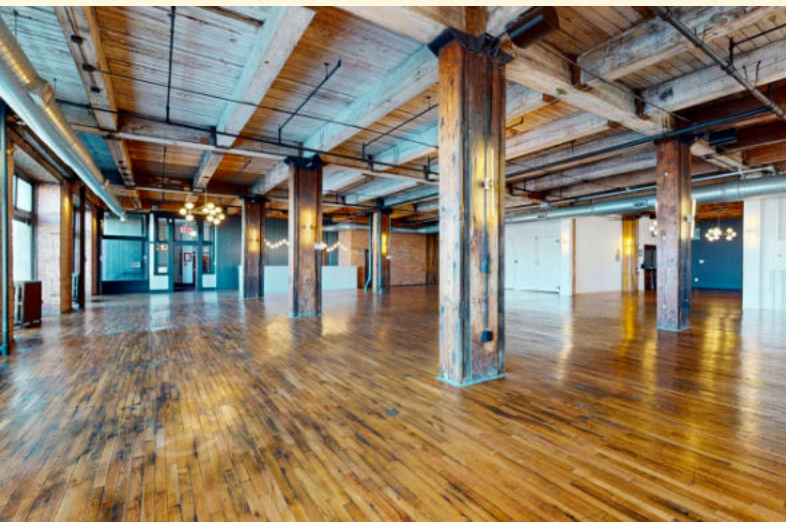
### Outstanding Kansas Citian Gala Honoring Bill Haw Sr.

The honoree for this year's event was **Bill Haw, Sr.** distinguished Kansas Citian (honored posthumously).

Attendance at the 52nd annual event was held in the historic Hobbs Building in the West Bottoms. The award was received by **Bill Haw, Jr.** who spoke about the history and current plans for the West Bottoms and The Livestock Building. **Bill Haw, Jr.** in 2013 founded Haw Contemporary, a nationally recognized art gallery. He also owns and operates multiple properties in the historic West Bottoms including the historic Livestock Exchange Building which has over 200 tenants. The Exchange Building is serving as a powerful incubator for small businesses and entrepreneurs. **Mr. Haw, Jr.** received a crystal piece in remembrance of his father which will be displayed on his desk and was appreciated. A silent auction was part of the evening's entertainment.

**Bill Haw Sr.** was a Kansas City businessman, rancher, and philanthropist whose vision shaped both Kansas City and the Flint Hills.

After earning a degree in English from the University of Missouri and serving in the Army, **Haw** built a successful career at Commerce Bank before becoming



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**Michael Gerken**  
2026 President

**Dear Members:**

Since 1932 our organization has inspired our members to pursue their curiosity about the achievements of the founders and developers, both past and present, of greater Kansas City. Through our calendar of activities, we add knowledge, insights, and appreciation of our history. While doing so we strengthen the social fabric of our GKC communities.

*“History is about life. It assists us to look forward. It gives us a sense of marvel...it makes us more thoughtful and understanding human beings.”*

— **Historian, David McCullough**

We brand our events ‘Member Experiences’ to highlight how topics, locations, programs are selected to broaden our appreciation of history and help us connect the dots to parallels of today’s opportunities, development, and challenges.

Thanks to past President **Christy Chester**, Administrator **Nancy Elder**, **Linn Mills**, **Marsha Daley**, **Paul Christianson**, **Tom Platt**, **Steve Noll**, **Bob Denzel**, **Joann Collins**, and many others, 2025 was a great year of member experiences.

Our 2026 Member Experience Committee chaired by **Lucinda Rice-Petrie**, is currently working on our calendar of 2026 experiences. These will include our annual Outstanding Kansas Citian, and Merit & Service Awards events that occur in the Fall. Watch for dates and details to be announced. We welcome your suggestions for future experiences. Any specific contact information you have is greatly helpful. Send your suggestions to [admin@NSDKC.org](mailto:admin@NSDKC.org).

Remember, if you have not done so, renew your membership. And keep in mind we have room for new members. Invite your associates to join us as we celebrate GKC history.

 **Mike Gerken**  
2026 President

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*A list of all committees and committee chairs is available at [NSDKC.org](http://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.





H-2134 LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE, KANSAS CITY, MO. ©1918 FRED HARVEY

## Outstanding Kansas Citian Gala Honoring Bill Haw Sr.

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CEO of National Alfalfa in the 1970s. He transformed the struggling company into National Farms Inc., one of the nation's largest cattle feeders.

In Kansas City, **Haw** played a key role in saving and revitalizing the historic Livestock Exchange Building, once the largest livestock exchange in the world. He went on to develop additional properties in the Stockyards District, helping spark the area's revival.

**Haw's** legacy of stewardship and leadership continues to benefit both Kansas City and the Flint Hills.

The OKC Gala was held in the historic Hobbs Building, built in 1905 as a distribution center. The building has survived floods, over a century of use, and thrives today as a historic event space. Traditionally sponsorships and donations are received for ongoing NSDGKC programs; there were approximately 50 people in attendance. Also, in attendance to celebrate our new OKC honoree were past OKC honorees, **Dr. Matt Naylor, Bill Dietrich, Jonathan Kemper, Whitney** and **Day Kerr**.

Serving as our MC for the evening was Kansas City Royals broadcast team member, **Jake Eisenberg** who interviewed **Bill Haw, Jr.**

### West Bottoms Looking Forward

As we honored **Bill Haw, Sr.** and the history of the West Bottoms, our event also included a view of what is on the horizon for the West Bottoms. **Grant Hromas** representing SomeraRoad development projects, plus **Mike Zeller** and **David Brain** developers of The Rock Island Bridge project, were interviewed by **Jake Eisenberg**. Our attendees were able to ask some great questions. Interesting information was shared about exciting things coming to the historic West Bottoms. Our members are looking forward to future member experience events in the West Bottoms.

# Recent Board Initiatives



During 2025 your Board of Directors focused on a refresh of our Bylaws, including our governance committee structure. Our focus was clarity, broadened perspective, and impact. A proposed model committee structure was utilized during 2025 to enable the Board to validate its effectiveness. Adjustments were made as we learned. The final Bylaws updates and committee model were approved at our October 2025 Annual Business Meeting. The updated Bylaws can be found on our website.

Our website was another Board priority. A new platform, format, and functionality are currently being designed. The new model, look and feel, will enable more graphics, improved mobile-device navigation, easier updating, etc. Our implementation target is March 2026.



Current NSDKC.org Website

The Finance Committee guided by **Jim Flanagan** and **Nancy Elder** completed their analysis of our 2025 financials and proposed a 2026 budget at our January Board meeting. The 2026 proposed budget was adopted by the Board.

## Board Meetings



2025 Board of Directors meetings were held January, March, May, July, September, and November with Executive meetings held in the off-months between board of directors' meetings. Meetings scheduled for 2026 are board meetings in January, March, May, July, September, and November, with Executive Committee meetings in February, April, June, August, October, and December.

➔ Annual dues are payable for the year 2026. A reminder notice was sent out the week of February 9th to those who have not paid their dues for 2026. Dues are \$35.00 for individual membership and \$50.00 for a couple. Payment can be made on line or checks sent to NSDGKC, P.O. Box 25513, Kansas City, MO 64119. ←



## NSDGKC Annual Membership Meeting

The Carriage Club – 5301 State Line Road, Kansas City, Missouri – October 15, 2025

**T**he annual meeting of The Native Sons & Daughters of Greater Kansas City was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at The Carriage Club. Our special guest presenter was NSDGKC member **Dr. David Trowbridge**. David is the UMKC Wm. T. Kemper Associate Research Professor, Department of History. **Dr. Trowbridge**, the creator of The Clio, a free website and mobile application that connects thousands of people to information about nearby historical and cultural

sites. Many of our NSDGKC historical markers are referenced on The Clio, which can be accessed at [theclio.com](http://theclio.com). As is the custom, the proposed board of directors had been sent to all members and the election was held at this meeting. In addition, the organizational By-Laws had been updated and appear on the [nsdkc.org](http://nsdkc.org) website. In the updated By-Laws, committee names and functions were changed to better reflect the activities and goals of each committee.



### Opportunities to Contribute Your Expertise

Each of our Committee Chairs focus on strengthening our organization. A key component of that strength is the engagement of our members with interest, knowledge, and skills to contribute to strengthen the committees. Consider contributing your talent. You will enjoy learning more about our organization and connecting to other members. Currently, we particularly could use assistance in our communication and membership growth areas. Reach out to any of our Board members or send an email to: [admin@NSDKC.org](mailto:admin@NSDKC.org). We welcome your assistance.



### Opportunities for Next Generation Folks

Ponder this idea. People build professionalism through involvement in and contribution to organizations. If you have adult children, grandchildren, associates, friends who could benefit from enhancing their professional skills, building their confidence, strengthening their network of contacts, a great way to do so is through contributing their talent to civic-focused organizations. Invite them to be your guest at future Member Experiences. Share your stories of how your life, your connections, your skills were enhanced because you became involved with NSDGKC.

# Annual Past Presidents Luncheon welcomes 2026 President Michael Gerken



**Standing (l-r) Steve Noll – 2018, Diane Boos Pickman – 2017, Nancy Elder – 2019, Mike Gerken – 2026, Christy Chester – 2024 & 2025, Joe Vaughan Jr. – 1998, Linda “Linn” Mills – 2021, Ray Elder – 2023.**

**Seated (l-r) John Hess, Jr. – 2016, John Hess, Sr. – 2002, A. J. Cameron – 1990, Dan Creasy – 2005, Dan Sturdevant – 2009, John Dillingham – 2003.**

Missing from the photo was Whitney Kerr, our host for the luncheon.

**A**nually the Past Presidents of NSDGKC gather at the River Club in support of the incoming president and to express their continued support for the organization. This year the event was held on Monday, November 10, 2025.

Fifteen attended the luncheon to greet incoming president **Mike Gerken**. Thanks to **Christy Chester** for her last two successful years and her plans for the upcoming year of 2026. The picture is taken each year in front of the Thomas Hart Benton painting.



Back row (l-r): John Bluford, Kelly Laughlin, Jill Kratz, Diane Euston, Linda "Linn" Mills, Joanne Collins, Dr. Carmaletta Williams, Chuck Haddix. Front center: Christy Chester.



# NSDGKC Holiday Brunch at Indian Hills Country Club



The annual Native and Sons of Greater Kansas City Holiday Brunch event was on Saturday, December 13, 2025 at the Indian Hills Country Club. There were 40 members and guests in attendance. A delicious brunch was served and awards were presented as follows:

- 🌿 **The James Anderson Award** presented to **Ms. Diane Euston** for her work in historic preservation over multiple years, most recently The Sauer Castle in Kansas City, Kansas.
- 🌿 **The Lee I Pickering Award** for Excellence presented to **Chuck Haddix**, of KCUR Radio and the Kansas City Art Institute.
- 🌿 **The George E. Hicks Award** for Perseverance presented to **Mr. John W. Bluford III**, a healthcare executive and founder of the Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute.
- 🌿 **The Carl J. DiCapo Award**, presented to **Dr. Carmeletta Williams** who is the Director of The Black Archives and a retired professor of English, and English and African American Studies.
- 🌿 **Special Recognition** was given to **Ms. Linda "Linn" Mills**, a past president and director of NSDGKC for her many years of service and successful events for the organization.
- 🌿 **Special Recognition** presented to the two nieces of **Ms. Alice Kitchen** (posthumously), a champion if women's and children's rights, receiver of a Presidential Award as a Champion of Change, and founder of Amethyst Place.



The full text of each award can be seen on the Awards Section of The Native Sons & Daughters website at nsdkc.org. Those in attendance at the brunch were also favored by a three-piece jazz combo from The University of Missouri Conservatory Department who played softly during the meal.

