

MISSION HILLS

MAGAZINE

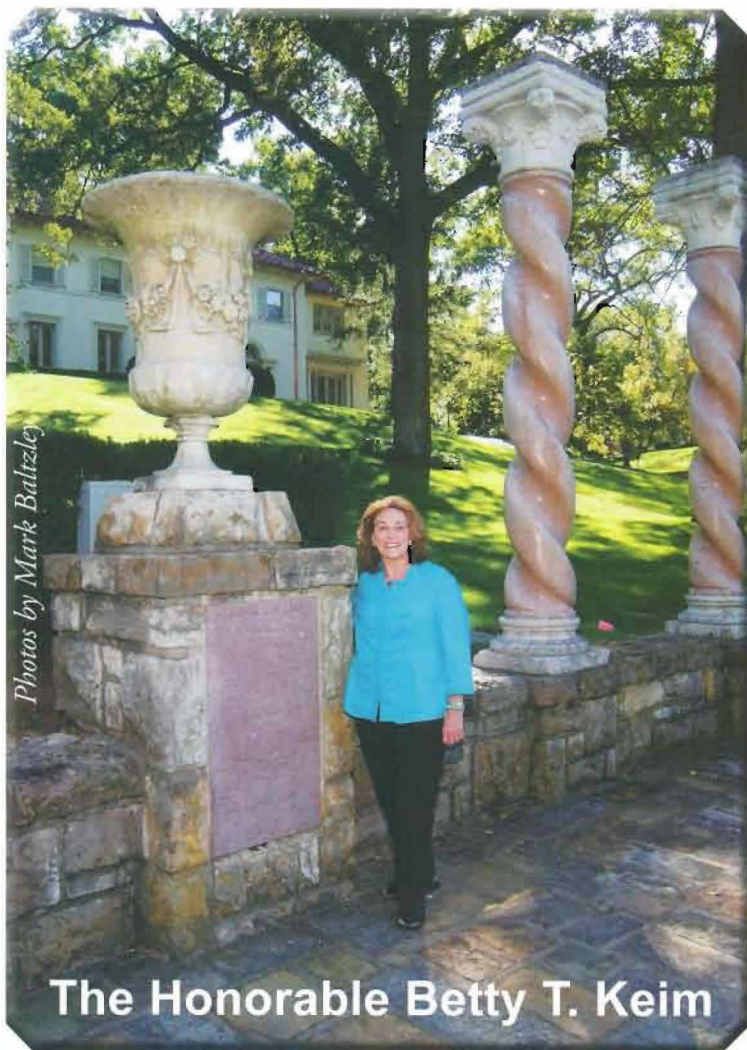


Indian Hills Country Club

**Mission Hills:
Ernest Hemingway's Legacy**

**Kappa Kappa Gamma
Holiday Homes Tour**

**Mission Hills:
The Honorable Betty Keim**



Photos by Mark Baltzley

The Honorable Betty T. Keim

Successful leadership is more than being successful at accomplishing tasks. Successful leadership includes seeing the worth in people and helping them accomplish their goals. Making a positive impact on the community is rooted in the knowledge that making a difference begins with one's own actions and personal commitment to value community excellence. That is the principle in which former mayor of Mission Hills, Betty T. Keim, governed. Warren Bennis, PhD., states it best in his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, "Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing." Leadership has not been something former Mayor Keim sought for herself. She states that leadership has always been a natural progression from involvement to responsibilities for things that were meaningful to her and for a greater good.

A New Start in Mission Hills

Former Mayor Keim and her late husband moved from their home state of Pennsylvania to Kansas. Dr. Keim, an oral surgeon, was offered a position in an established prac-

tice in the area. The young couple decided that it was a good option for them. "We loved the area and thought it would be a wonderful place to live and raise a family" stated Keim. In 1968 the family moved into the home on Drury Lane where they would reside for the next 39 years. Built in 1927, Architect Edward W. Tanner designed a home that proved to be perfectly suited for the family that would eventually grow to include five children, two sons and three daughters. According to Keim, "Our front yard was a football field for many years. The home was fabulous. It was ideal for a family, and in a perfect location."

Platforms for Involvement

Long before involvement in city government Betty Keim was active in several organizations. During the child-raising years, Betty's pursuits were 3 fold: children and family activities; involvements in support of her husband's profession and career; and something for Betty's personal growth. As the children grew, becoming involved in their schools, practices, games and other activities was important to Mayor Keim and led to numerous opportunities where others encouraged her to take on the mantle of leadership. Soon, she had been Room Mother, on PTA boards, president of Notre Dame De Sion College Preparatory School Mother's Club, and Rockhurst High School's Senior Class Sponsor. A nurse by career, she was involved in medical and dental groups. Betty was President of the Auxiliary to the Kansas Dental Association and named Woman of the Year in 1986. She served as President of the Junior League of Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas, and was on the Association of Junior Leagues International Area Council Board.

Mission Hills

Mission Hills lends itself to community interaction and participation on every level. Leadership in the context of local government was another series of progressions for Keim. "I have always been interested in the things going on around me. By the time I became involved in city government, I had established a record of accomplishments. It was not like jumping into something new. It was a natu-



"Betty Keim and Designer Steve Nuss collaborated on the stunning glazed Chinese red dining room. Antique Asian porcelain and accessories purchased by Nuss on a buying trip provide the finishing touches."

ral next step." Keim has found great satisfaction in participation on the local level. Those activities include being President of the Mission Hills Homes Association and its Foundation; member of the City's Planning Commission; Board of Zoning Appeals and the Mission Hills Comprehensive Plan Committee. This led to serving on the city council from 1989 to 2001 and as council president from 1991 to 1993.

Tenure as Mayor

The ability to make a difference, problem solve and inspire others to become involved in community matters was undeniably satisfying to Keim, who served as mayor of Mission Hills from 1993 to 2001, and is among her most enjoyable endeavors, largely because of the willingness of the community to stay informed and involved.

"I always told my staff, that our job was to inform and enable the residents to do what they want within the confines of the laws and ordinances of the city. The community as a whole is quite knowledgeable about city issues.

The residents are exceedingly well informed and extremely active socially and politically. This made my job as mayor wonderfully interesting," she explained. According to Keim, the measurement of the success of a local government is its ability to generate a sense of belonging and pride among its residents. It means that the best problem solving is done by involving the people it most affects. It also requires a level of personal involvement, one skill in which Keim has always excelled. During her tenure as mayor, she was proud to be a part of promoting community involvement in helping to solve issues. One of the issues that every mayor of Mission Hills has had to address, is the extensive creek system that runs throughout the city and is filled with troublesome water flowing from neighboring cities.

"When the weather is nice, the City creeks are lovely. Heavy rain is problematic. I spent many hours walking the creeks and talking to engineers in search of viable creek options. I created a Brush Creek Task Force that reviewed varying and conflicting engineering recommendations. I will always commend that task force for their creative thinking and commitment to the goal. While my term was completed before a solid solution could be found, I am ecstatic that Mission Hills, after a decade of in depth study, now has an excellent plan that protects our citizens, our open channels and our precious ecosystems."

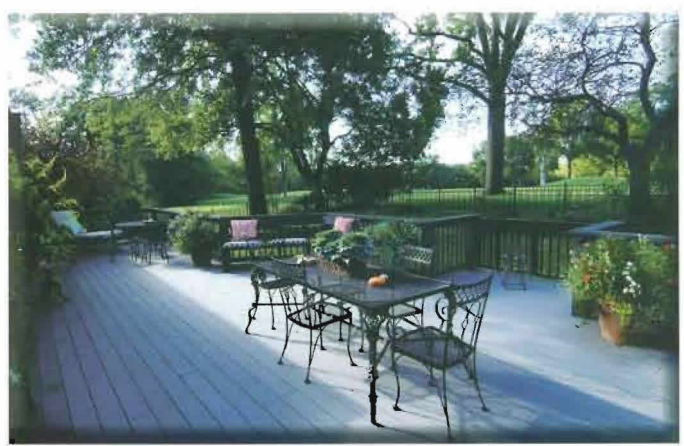
The Honorable Betty Keim relayed some highlights and other events during her tenure. The one that was the most difficult to coordinate was the renovation of City Hall. City Hall had to be relocated to an office complex in Mission, Kansas. Everything had to be moved for the construction. The committees continued to work diligently, as did the dedicated staff. Keim praised the citizens who showed great flexibility and extreme patience. Organizing summer concerts at the Verona Columns Park was an additional highlight and featured several local artists with national and international fame. Among them were David Basse, Angela Hagenbach, Karrin Allyson, Grammy winning Kansas City Chorale, and Lifetime Achievement Award Winner Marilyn Maye. Once there was a cat in the city that regularly sat above a Mission Hill's resident's large window. The cat leaped to its perch and triggered an intruder warning on their alarm. After several unexplainable false alarms, the offender was discovered. This set off

a move to pass a Cat Ordinance. Animal Control testified about the difficulties in catching cats and also in verifying the correct identity of the offending cat. After hearing testimony from Animal Control and Mayor Keim's statement she would not sign an ordinance that could not be enforced, so the proposed Cat Ordinance was withdrawn.

Along with the new City Hall, another major activity under Betty's watch was the 50th Anniversary of Mission Hills. The city was incorporated in 1948, and three committees were formed; one to make an historical video; another to create a gala celebration; and the third to create a family event that would appeal to all ages. The video was made and sold, and the gala Progressive Cocktail and Hors D'Oeuvres event featuring dinner and dancing at the Mission Hills Country Club was successful. In fact, the entire 50th Anniversary celebration was a huge success, the Street Fair in particular. Now and for the last 12 years, on the first Saturday of every June, the city closes streets surrounding Belinder Court, and families bring wagons, chairs, coolers and blankets to enjoy the day. "After my term as mayor was finished, I was deeply honored that the City Council changed the name of the fair to the Keim Street Fair, and created a banner bearing my name. It is a legacy that I will always cherish, and an event I try to attend annually," Keim reflected.

Beyond the City Borders

Mayor Keim's involvement is not limited to Mission Hills, but extends to all residents of Kansas. One of her favorite involvements has been with Kansas Action for Children. A founding member and its first president, Keim was a leader in creating a statewide organization that, for 30 years, has been advocating for change and legislation that protects the children of Kansas. Another important activity has been serving on the Johnson County Community College Foundation Board. Still a participant, she is a past President and recipient of the 2000 Johnson Countian of the Year Award. Also a past-president of the United Community Services Board of Directors, she was the recipient of the Milton E. Erickson Citizen of the Year Award. Keim serves on their Council of Advisors. Mayor Keim's current involvements are numerous and reflect her ongoing interests and passions. She is on the Board of Directors for the



University Of Kansas Hospital Authority and has chaired their Strategic Planning Committee; served as secretary for The Advancement Board of the University of Kansas Medical Center and Hospital; is a longtime Community Blood Center Board member and Vice-President; and currently serves on the Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri Community Advisory Board. Serving on the Board of Trustees for People to People International is another favorite involvement. Participating in diplomatic and humanitarian trips and attending Worldwide Conferences, Mayor Keim has traveled to China, Peru, Italy, and Egypt twice. "I am grateful to have been able to serve as the Mayor of Mission Hills, Kansas. It is a wonderful city that has enriched my life. I hope that my tenure has helped to enrich the lives of my constituents as well.

Keim quoted Warren Bennis' On Becoming a Leader, "Leadership is the ability to translate vision into reality." Betty wants to offer a special message to the residents and community of Mission Hills with a personal quote... "As resident leaders, you, too, can participate in translating the Mission Hills vision into a reality. It's been a great ride thanks for the memories, and see you at the Street Fair."