



# The Rockhill Times

## President's Letter

Winter 2019

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays Dear Neighbors,

I hope 2019 was a truly wonderful one for you, and that you are excited about entering a new decade. The Rockhill neighborhood had a good year without much to worry about but a lot to be excited about.

We welcomed eight new families into the neighborhood, saw the old tennis courts come down and a "Walking Wall" meander across the lawn, played mini golf at the Art Course and had a fun time at our annual picnic.

Speaking of new neighbors, the real estate market was a good one in Rockhill this year. Houses came and went fairly quickly. It is great to see lights on in the former Rockhill Tennis Club. The Peter and Heather Caster family now live there and are working on restoring it back to a home. Their address is 4520 Kenwood Ave.

The beautiful house on the corner of Campbell and Emanuel Cleaver II now belongs to the Randy and Jerry Behrmann. Their address is 4644 Campbell St.

As many of you may know, Galen and Jeffie Mussman moved into another house in Rockhill and sold their home on the corner of Emanuel and Holmes. The new owners are Dan and Nancy Abraham, and we are very happy they happened upon an open house at 704 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.

Galen and Jeffie now live at 4401 Rockhill Road which they have beautifully renovated.



The yellow "farmhouse" on the corner of Rockhill and Emanuel is now owned by Jack Hedrick. He is excited about renovating the home and making it his own. The address is 4701 Rockhill Rd.

The next house to sell was 807 E. 47th (or Emanuel). We welcomed Sam Correll and Spencer Claiborne to the neighborhood in the spring. I get the feeling they really love their historic house and Rockhill!

Sadly a long time and special neighbor, Audrey Sokoloff, passed away and her house sold. But happily, a young couple purchased it and are now living in the cool house. They are Tyler Ryan and Kimberley Severinsen and their address is 4456 Rockhill Terrace.

4709 Rockhill Road also sold to a young couple and their baby. It is the house on the corner of Rockhill and 47th Terrace and next to the yellow farmhouse. Welcome Ryan, Sarah and baby Lillian McAlister!

And recently Lisa Hickok became the new owner of the beautiful restored home at 4545 Rockhill Terrace.

Last but not least are the new owners (but not new neighbors) of 905 Emanuel Cleaver II. After living in their home for several years, Ed Straley and David Lingle decided they didn't want to live anywhere else and they purchased their house.

I know I am looking forward to meeting all of our new neighbors, and I hope you will too soon. The next neighborhood opportunity is the annual May meeting but hopefully we will meet everyone when taking a stroll around our beautiful area.

Best wishes for a terrific holiday season and for 2020 to be filled with love, happiness and good health,

Jamie Closson  
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## Meet the Neighbors

Sylvia began teaching at Notre Dame de Sion shortly after we moved into Rockhill. She subsequently moved to the KC public school system, teaching Learning Disabilities and then becoming a Librarian. She retired in 1966 to join Robert, who had begun teaching in Nagasaki, Japan.

Robert began teaching American Literature at Kansas City University, now known as UMKC, in 1960. He became Chair of the

English Department from 1970-1975. While at UMKC he had three Fulbright appointments to teach American Literature, in Nagpur, India, 67-68, Ankara, Turkey, 73-74, and Beijing, China, 84-85. Sylvia taught at Hacettepe University in Ankara and the American School in Beijing. Robert retired in 1992. But he helped establish a graduate program in American Literature at Kwassui College, Nagasaki, Japan, 96-98.

Robert has published award winning biographies of poet, Melvin B. Tolson; journalist, Edgar Snow; and KC political leader, Leon M. Jordan. His biography of Snow is in the final stages of publication in Chinese.

We moved into Rockhill on Mother's Day, 1968. Holly Hughes, 12 years old, had baked a cake, and the Hughes invited our five children and us to their yard after we unloaded our furniture. That began a close family relation that continues to this day.

We still consistently share Thanksgiving and Christmas together. Our five children matched in age their five. Their girls and ours attended Notre Dame de Sion. On our year in Turkey, Marshall Hughes managed our property and persuaded our tenants who both taught at Sion to get married.

Marshall persuaded us to join the Rockhill Club the year after we moved in. We soon learned to enjoy the swimming pool, the tennis courts, and the various dining facilities of the Club. Robert chaired the club in 1976. We enjoyed the Fire Works on July 4<sup>th</sup>, various club celebrations, and particularly a book club that continues to this day. We also endured the long controversy over the Nelson's refusal to renew the lease to the club. Ultimately, however, we benefitted by moving into a Nelson house, 414 E. 45<sup>th</sup> St, after we sold our home in Rockhill in 2011.

Sylvia was a notable gardener when we lived in our home in Rockhill. We enjoyed

sharing yard parties with our diverse neighbors, and simply sitting on the front porch and enjoying the change of seasons. Now as we have aged and our physical abilities have become more limited, reading has become more important.



## Researching your house, historic neighborhoods, and noted civic leaders...

by Jim Wanser

At Historic Kansas City, we often get inquiries from individuals looking for historic information about a property, a neighborhood, or individuals and events from Kansas City's history. While there are a variety of good books, there are also some excellent on-line resources that can start your research. Frequently, the online search will need a follow-up visit to see the actual document, but the links below will help to inform you what has been indexed and is available to the public.

The Missouri Valley Room Special Collections - <http://www.kchistory.org/>

Western Historical Manuscript Collection Kansas City - <https://shsmo.org/visit/kansas-city>

Manuscripts- <https://shsmo.org/collections/manuscripts>

How To sources with links to other sites:  
<http://www.kclibrary.org/blog/kc->

[unbound/10-ways-research-history-your-home](http://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/city-planning-development/historic-preservation-office-and-commission)

The Kansas City Landmarks Commission -  
- <https://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/city-planning-development/historic-preservation-office-and-commission>

Linda Hall Library  
- <http://www.lindahall.org/>

Historical research can be very rewarding in helping us appreciate and understand the place we live... and why we love our neighborhood and Kansas City!

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## A Block of Parrots

by Libby Gordon

In 1940 I was twelve years old and the block across the then narrow, elm shaded 47th Street became quite lively. The Cunninghams moved in on the corner with four kids and a parrot named Cappy in the kitchen. Behind that house on Brush Creek was the Crowes with two teen agers and a parrot named Polly. They also to my delight had a Scottie, Shadow, and a Sealyham, Patrick, who seemed to have four good legs, but for some reason patrolled the neighborhood on three legs. On the other end of the block were the Martins, an older but very interesting couple and Orville Martin had a parrot named Bill. Jimmy Miller lived just across the street and had a dachshund named Fritz whose bark Bill, the parrot, could mimic perfectly. Behind the Martins lived the Siegels with two kids. No room here to relate the fun and mischief of that time, so I will stop with the three birds.

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*The Spring edition of the Rockhill Times will be distributed in early March. If you have information to share, or notices of recognition or events, please send them to [kmoninger@gmail.com](mailto:kmoninger@gmail.com)*