

## Tuesday Topics August 1, 2023

President Mary Lou Davis opened the meeting and reminded those living in District 6 to vote. She then introduced Vicki Buening who spoke about the upcoming fundraiser, Purses with a Purpose, to fund voter education activities on September 7 from 4-7 pm in the Pepper Tree Clubhouse with refreshments. She noted that envelopes were available for those who wanted to purchase a ticket early and save \$5 on a \$10 ticket and that the \$20 tickets allowed the purchaser to bring a friend free of charge.

President Davis then introduced Mary Galligan and Mary Torrence, for the August Tuesday Topics presentation on the Kansas Oral History Project. Davis noted that both Galligan and Torrence have been involved in public service for many years as well as serving on the board of the Topeka Shawnee County League of Women Voters. Galligan retired from the Kansas Legislative Research Department and also worked for the Kansas Board of Regents. Torrence worked in the Reviser of Statute's Office for 39 years and also served as the Reviser.

The Kansas Oral History Project was the idea of Dr. Ramon Powers, President of the Kansas Oral History Board. Powers and Dr. Bob Beatty, professor of political science at Washburn University, tried unsuccessfully to obtain funding from the Legislature for a legislative oral history project in the early 2000s. The Kansas Oral History Project was founded in 2016 and currently the Project has more than 100 archived interviews.

The Kansas Oral History Project is a non-profit organization that depends on volunteers and donations from individuals as well as Humanities Kansas, Evergy, Chapman Center for Rural Studies and others. According to Dr. Jim Leiker, professor of history at Johnson County Community College, the purpose of the Project is to collect, preserve and make available to the general public and educators stories of Kansans. According to Leiker, history is the study of the present to determine which history events are influencing the present. We need history for identity and to understand the present. History can be preserved in written documents, oral traditions, family stories. Early Greek historians interviewed people who had witnessed important events. Written documents can leave gaps or be written by those who have bias. Who are today's interviewees? Legislators, former governors and lieutenant governors, judges, and elected officials.

Some people may think of Kansas as a "flyover state," but Kansas has always been the center of everything from the Civil War, fights over abortion, civil rights, and the early days of Eastern settlers and the indigenous tribes trying to preserve their way of life. William Allen White, editor of the Emporia Gazette and Pulitzer Prize winner, once said, "As Kansas goes, so goes the nation."

In her oral history interview, Carol Beier, former Supreme Court Justice spoke about the role of the Courts. She explained that the other two branches of government, Executive and Legislative, are political in nature. The Judicial branch is independent and impartial. Issues come to the Supreme Court through appeals, directly from lower courts, and original jurisdiction. The Supreme Court keeps records of all cases that include oral arguments. Justices consider facts of the case—evidence, legal issues brought by attorneys, and legal arguments—governing law (rule of law). Everyone is equal under the law.

For more information about the Kansas Oral History Project, please go to [KSOralHistory.org](https://KSOralHistory.org).