**Mission Statement**

The Douglas County Historical Society encourages civic engagement by supporting the research and interpretation of county history through active exhibits and thought-provoking educational programs.
At an April Hometown Teams program, Leonard Monroe shares his memories of playing basketball for the Lawrence Promoters during the days when segregation was common.

Bike Polo was one of the unusual sports featured at Larryville Offbeat Sports Day at the East Lawrence Rec Center in June.

Students from Haskell Indian Nations University help celebrate the September opening of the exhibit Under Protest.

Conservator (continued)
Nancy Helmstadter
Jene Herron
Bill & Carrie Hougland
John & Sheila Immel
Robert & Sheryl Jacobs
Don & Alice Ann Johnston
Charles & Carol Jones
Thomas F. Keegan, Sr.
Kennedy Glass
Paul Kincaid
Betty Laird
John & Linda Lungstrum
Jane W. Malin
Julia & Joe Manglitz
Gayle B. Matchett
Newton C. McCluggage
Bill & Jean Mitchell
Brian Moss
Tom Murray
Bill & Becky Myers
Jerry Nossaman
Steve Nowak
Suzanne & David Nutt
Dean Owens
Mary Lou Penny
G. Joseph & Diana Carlin Pierron
Roger & Sue Pine
Kent & Cathy Pringle
Bob & Sandra Schumm
Jan Sheldon & Jim Sherman
Glee & Geraldine Smith
Smith Service Company, Inc.
Joe & Rita Spradlin
Ruth D. Sterbener
Steve & Pat Sublett
Nancy & Scott Thellman
Victoria Thomas & Roger Lambson
Austin & Ruth Turney
Randy & Edna Van Schmus
Lorie A. Vanchena
Dustin & Kathy Walker
Chuck & Karen Warner
Dan & Phyllis Watkins
Norman & Anne Yetman
Kurt & Pennie Von Achen

The following members contributed to the 2015 Members’ Challenge:

David & Mary Kate Ambler
Judy & Dave Billings
Peter and Rosalea Carttar
Phil & Phoebe Godwin
Leonard Hollman
Kathleen & Bill Argersinger, in memory of Bill and Marnie Argersinger and in honor of Eliza Mae and Blythe Fewins

Sponsorships
In 2015, program support was provided by the following:
• Checkers Foods—Oak Hill Cemetery Tour/Tails and Traditions Festival
• Englewood Florist—Oak Hill Cemetery Tour
• Stephens Real Estate, Inc.—Oak Hill Cemetery Tour
• Warren-McElwain Mortuary—Oak Hill Cemetery Tour
• The Toy Store—Summer Games Series
• Mass Street Soda—Soda Fountains of Kansas
• City of Lawrence—Offbeat Sports Day/Civil War on the Western Frontier
• Lawrence Transit System—Civil War on the Western Frontier
• Scotch Fabric Care Services—Civil War on the Western Frontier
• Eldridge Hotel—DCHS Annual Meeting
Membership

The Douglas County Historical Society closed 2015 with 232 members. Funds raised through membership dues are the primary source of support for exhibitions and public programming at the Watkins Museum. 45% of our members support the Society at an enhanced level with annual gifts of $100 or more. We would like to recognize those members in particular for their generosity.

Jabez Watkins Director’s Circle ($5,000+)
- Capitol Federal Foundation
- Barton P and Mary D. Cohen Charitable Trust
- Patrick & Maureen Costello
- Ethel and Raymond F. Rice Foundation
- Dolph Simons Family Fund of the Douglas County Community Foundation

Benefactor ($1,000-2,499)
- Jerree and Harley Catlin
- Lew & Carolyn Phillips
- Mick Ranney
- Gary Smith & Janet Cinelli
- D. Elaine Taylor

Patron ($500-999)
- David & Mary Kate Ambler
- Katie & Ken Armitage
- Redmond & Aileen Callaway
- Ann Gardner & Tom Gleason
- Norma Decker Hoagland
- Thomas & Barbara Holland
- John & Ardith Pierce
- Scotch Fabric Care Services

Preservationist ($250-499)
- Cork & Barrel
- Webster & Joan Golden
- Ken Carr
- McDonald’s of Lawrence
- Jerry & Judy Niebaum
- Rumsey-Yost Funeral Home
- Dale Slusser & Sherry Fowler

Conservator ($100-249)
- Adecco Personnel
- Kathleen & Bill Argersinger
- Markie & Peter Bieri
- Judy & Dave Billings
- Jeannette Blackmar & Jack & Jacob Hofman
- Robert & Sharon Brown
- Patricia Campbell
- Peter & Rosalea Carttar
- Leslie E. Christenson
- Marshall & Sandee Crowther
- Dennis & Judy Dailey
- Virgil & Jan Dean
- Vicki & Joe Douglas
- Christopher & Kaye Drahozal
- Guy & Dede Dresser
- David Dunfield & Pat Graham
- The Eldridge Hotel
- Emprise Bank
- Donna Gatts
- Mike & Julia Gaughan
- Sandra Gault
- Stephen Glass & Terese Gorman
- Phil & Phoebe Godwin
- Cap & Kitty Gray
- Sue & Al Hack
- Emil & Bette Heck

From the President, David Ambler

It has been another year of growth and development for the Douglas County Historical Society and the Watkins Museum of History! In every aspect, it has been a year of new achievements in our facilities, programs and, most importantly, our visibility and importance to the Douglas County community. Success is not always measured in numbers. Several special and unique gifts this past year underscore the increasing importance and regard that local families have for the Watkins Museum. In particular, two families have enhanced the value of the museum’s iconic 1870 children’s playhouse. The shutters that once covered its windows were found and donated by the playhouse’s original donor. Another family gave a memorial gift to renovate the playhouse, which will be an important feature in the upcoming remodeling of the third floor. Other gifts this year give witness to a growing value of the Society and Watkins Museum to Douglas County.

Growth in the number of exhibition visitors and program participants was exceeded only in the quality and uniqueness of these offerings. The variety of exhibitions ranged from a textile history of Lawrence through a review of the 1939 National Cornhusking Contest held in Lawrence to thought provoking activities examining the treatment of emigrant tribes in Franklin County, Kansas.

During 2015, we completed the renovation of the main stair hall that not only made it more physically attractive but allowed it to become another area for displaying Douglas County history through new wall hangings and window coverings. Now the Board and museum staff are turning their attention to the major renovation of the third floor. This renovation will pave the way for new core exhibits focusing on the social, educational, commercial and political forces that have shaped Lawrence and Douglas County throughout its history. No report on the Society and Watkins Museum can end without a resounding “thank you” for our talented and energetic staff and volunteers and you, the members, who help make all this possible. We hope you will join us for the exciting events and activities planned for this year!
Collections

2015 was a great year for collections at the Watkins. New collections additions cover a diverse range of Douglas County history. As information spread about last year’s *Dark Command* exhibit, the museum received a number of artifacts related to the premiere. Sam and Becky Campbell, along with Charles and Katie Becker, donated a hat signed by John Wayne, Gene Autry, and other movie stars who visited Lawrence for the premiere. Other donors gave the museum a magazine from Republic Studios documenting the premiere, production stills, and a Spanish language movie poster from the film’s showing in Mexico.

Acquisitions also provided more information on civil rights issues in Lawrence. Mike Silverman donated 20 years’ worth of information about the LGBT community in Kansas as well as the Simply Equal campaign to protect the housing and civil rights of citizens discriminated against based on their sexual orientation. Sports fans will appreciate the LHS letter jacket and *LIFE* Magazine article documenting Lawrence High’s 1960 football team, whose record-breaking streak of winning games drew national attention.

Staff and volunteers worked hard to continue organizing unprocessed collections from past years. Through their efforts the museum has uncovered a number of artifacts previously unknown by staff. These rediscovered objects include an ushers badge from the 1940 premiere of the film *Dark Command*, a chair and dresser made for the Van Hoesen/Wilhelmi playhouse, popular with the museum’s youngest visitors, and nails fused together by the heat from fires set during Quantrill’s raid.

Volunteers

Twenty-seven individuals provided 3,270 hours of volunteer service in 2015. DCHS/Watkins Museum volunteers helped improve record-keeping and storage of the collection, welcomed visitors, helped keep the museum looking great, and assisted with tours and public programs. We thank the following dedicated volunteers for their ongoing commitment to the DCHS and Watkins Museum:

- Bill Arick
- Katie Armitage
- Tom Arnold
- Lindsay Crick
- Monica Davis
- Abe Eitzen
- Donna Gatts
- Will Hickox
- Mike Higley
- Joan Hughes
- Dorothy Ingersol
- Ken Karr
- Charles Kelly
- Aylo Lippe
- Jeff Lopez
- Alissa Mehlan
- Tegan Modica
- Kathryn Newman
- Kaustubh Nimkar
- Bethann Rea
- Edward Reyes
- Precious Sanders
- Anne Sargent
- Charlie Thomas
- Dustin Walker
- Kathy Walker
- Zach Dodson

*2015 Volunteer of the Year*

2015’s volunteer of the year has not been involved with the museum for long, but has made many contributions in that short time. Monica Davis assists public researchers, staffs the front door on Wednesday mornings, has helped restore woodwork, and carries out research for museum programs and exhibits. We are very glad she chooses to share her many talents with us. Thanks Monica!

**Special Thanks**

Many people helped make the May 3 Oak Hill Cemetery walking tour a success:

*Event Committee:*
- Katie Armitage, Monica Davis, John Jewell, Jan Shupert-Arick

*Event Tour Guides and Volunteers:*
- Dave Ambler, Bill Arick, Ken Carr, Jerree Catlin, Cole Finley, Ann Gardner, Judy Jewell, Brittany Keegan, Abby Magariel, Steve Nowak, Charles Thomas, Bob Thurber

*Interpreters:*
- Frank Baron, Maggie Postma Carttar, Monica Davis, Jan Elder, Charles Jones, John Musgrave, Verdell Taylor, Bob Wandel
Facilities Improvements
In 2015 the DCHS carried out just over $34,000 in capital repairs and improvement projects. These projects help ensure the long-term preservation of the Watkins Building and enhance visitors’ experiences of the museum.

2015 capital projects included:
- Gutter and storm drain cleaning and repair, $3,345
- Replace HVAC systems in collections storage rooms, $13,443
- Replace AC condenser for second floor gallery, $3,856
- Replace damaged slate roof tiles, $7,057
- Complete restoration of third floor windows, $6,384

Grants
In 2015, the Douglas County Historical Society received grants from:
- The Ethel and Raymond F. Rice Foundation
  $18,278 to support museum internships
- Douglas County Natural and Cultural Heritage Grant Program
  $85,125 to support infrastructure improvement and renovation on the museum’s third floor to prepare for core exhibit installation
- Douglas County Community Foundation
  $5,000 Community Grant for window coverings and interpretive wall panels in main stair hall
- City of Lawrence
  $30,000 to support main stair hall renovation and third floor core exhibit development
- Kansas Humanities Council
  $300 for Speakers’ Series program
  $1,485 for Hometown Teams presentations and Larryville Offbeat Sports Day.
- Mid-America Arts Alliance
  $7,500 Artistic Innovations Grant for Kansas Peoples History Project
- Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission
  $5,000 Strategic Investment Program grant for Kansas Peoples History Project

2015 Exhibitions
- A Stitch in Time: Lawrence History Through Textiles
  January 30-April 11, 2015
- Pleasant Distractions: Leisure Time in Lawrence
  Opened February 27, 2015
- Movie Stars on Mass Street: Lawrence and the Dark Command Premiere
  April 18-August 23, 2015
- Progress Report: Education in Lawrence
  May 19-September 9, 2015
- Memorials and Memories: Honoring Lawrence’s Union Veterans
  May 22-September 27, 2015
- Four Days in Cornville: The 1939 National Cornhusking Contest
  August 28-December 5, 2015
- Under Protest: Emigrant Tribes in Franklin County, Kansas
  September 25, 2015-January 9, 2016
- Shared Spirits: Exploring Dia de los Muertos
  October 6-November 30, 2015
2015 Programs Overview
Events at the Watkins grew in new directions in 2015. Audiences new to the museum attended programs both on- and off-site, and collaborations between the Watkins and other organizations from across the city and state continued to serve the community.

New Audiences
Several sports-themed programs linked to the Kansas Humanities Council and Smithsonian “Museum on Main Street” program welcomed audiences and participants that had never visited the Watkins. The Offbeat Sports Day in June, the Lawrence Promoters talk in April, and the “Four Days in Cornville” exhibit all drew widespread attention to the Watkins.

Partnerships
The Watkins and the City of Lawrence partnered for several programs in 2015. The Oak Hill Cemetery Tour in May, the Offbeat Sports Day, the Mud Fort program, and the improved bus services for Quantrill’s raid tours during Civil War on the Western Frontier in August were all a result of this great partnership. In addition, collaborations with the Spencer Museum of Art, the Lawrence Public Library, KU Museum Studies, the Toy Store, Kansas Public Radio, the Kansas Humanities Council and other groups continued to provide new and engaging programs to the public.

Maggie Herrington
The flagship educational program at the Watkins continued to grow, this year reaching nearly 650 third-graders and their teachers at twelve Lawrence elementary schools. This hands-on history lesson encourages children to think about life in 1860s Lawrence from the perspective of a real girl from that time.

A cooking demonstration using healthy foods at October’s Food Day

2015 Attendance at a Glance
- Attendance for the year was 15,482, a .5% increase over FY 2014
- Walk-in visitors accounted for 6,669 of the total
- 983 people participated in a guided tour of the Watkins Museum
- 2,017 people attended meetings or rental events at the museum
- 118 researchers visited the archives
- 3,828 people attended programs at the museum
- 1,862 attended museum programs and presentations held off-site

Distinguished Visitors
In July, the Australian Ambassador to the U.S., Hon. Kim C. Beazley, AC, and a party from the embassy in Washington, D.C. visited the Watkins Museum. Museum staff led the party on a Quantrill’s raid walking tour of downtown Lawrence. Ambassador Beazley has a great interest in the history of the American Civil War and was fascinated to learn more about Lawrence’s role in the conflict.

Research
In 2015, collections staff Brittany Keegan and Cole Finley, and research volunteers Monica Davis and Tom Arnold, devoted 487 hours to assisting 164 patrons with research questions by phone, e-mail, and in person. As part of fulfilling these requests, 113 photographs and 275 pages of documents were scanned. $365.40 in research fees were collected and several hundred dollars in donations were received in gratitude for their research efforts.

Rights and Reproductions
The museum received 25 reproduction requests in 2015. Collections staff provided scanned images of 75 items from the collection for reproduction in a variety of print and online publications and exhibits.

Athletes on the KU Quidditch Team demonstrate the sport during the Watkins Offbeat Sports Day held at the East Lawrence Recreation Center.