



## WOMEN OF THE YEAR

The Women of the Year represent the Panhellenic spirit and have shown devoted service to their sororities, universities, philanthropies and communities. Each Woman of the Year is chosen as a sister who upholds the standards and ideals of her sorority. We recognize the Women of the Year to increase awareness of the great impact Greek women have in the Greater Kansas City community. The following women have been chosen by their sororities and named as their Woman of the Year.



### **Alpha Chi Omega**

#### **Diane Blackwelder**

Baker University

*B.S., Education*

University of Missouri – Kansas City

*M.A., Elementary Education*

Diane has been a lifelong volunteer for her sorority and passionate advocate for membership in Sorority Life. She was installed as the 34th National President in 2012, re-elected for a second term in 2014, and received her 50-year membership pin in 2016. Her leadership with AXΩ locally includes President of the Omicron House Corporation Board, Omicron Advisory Board, President of KC Mu Mu Alumnae Chapter, and currently Alt. Delegate to the GKCAP. Nationally, she was the AXΩ Foundation Chair and Trustee; NPC Delegate for 10 years; Chapter Advisor at Purdue University; VP on the National Council of Alpha Chi from '96-2000, '08-2012. She is also a member of MK chapter of P.E.O. and the Board of the Kansas City Symphony Guild. Diane and her Delta Tau Delta husband, Murray, have been married 48 years, and are parents of two sons, and 3 grandsons.



## **Alpha Delta Pi**

### **Jessica Palm**

University of Kansas

*B.S., Journalism, minor in Business*

As vice president, lead executive of TeamKC: Life+Talent at the Kansas City Area Development Council, Jessica drives communication strategies to attract corporate investment, jobs and talented people. Jessica works with the top 250 companies in the region to showcase KC's lifestyle. She oversees an exclusive leadership group of global HR and recruiting executives and a network of more than 1,000 recruiters in the community. Jessica serves on the KU Edwards Campus Workforce Advisory Board, Advent Health Overland Park Community Advisory Board, KC Rising Human Capital Committee, KC Network Board of the KU Alumni Association and is a graduate of the KC Chamber's prestigious Centurions Leadership Program. She and her husband, Eric, live in Overland Park with their dog, Turk, and are excited to be welcoming Baby Palm this fall.



## **Alpha Gamma Delta**

### **Cynthia "Chi-Chi" Coe Allen**

University of Kansas

*B.A., Personnel Administration*

Although she lives 3 hours away, Chi-Chi Allen joined the ΑΓΔ Greater KC Alumnae Club, and serves as Permanent Secretary and Membership Chairman. At the international level, she has served on the Volunteer Service Team for most of 28 years. She started as a Province Director - Collegians, and has since served on the Member Development, Programming, Philanthropy, Ritual, and Archives committees. Currently, she is an Alumnae Education Specialist. When her daughter was in the collegiate chapter at KU, she volunteered as an Advisor, House Association VP, and Parents Club president. Chi-Chi's honors include: Outstanding Alumna Volunteer (KU Greek community), Heart of ΑΓΔ award (KU chapter), and the Arc with Diamonds and Pearls (for outstanding and faithful service to Alpha Gamma Delta).



## **Alpha Omicron Pi**

### **Cara Mahon**

University of Central Missouri

*B.A., Public Relations*

University of Missouri

*Master's in Journalism*

Cara is a proud member of the Delta Pi Chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi and is serving her third year as a board member of the Greater KC AOII Alumnae Chapter. She also is a board member and volunteers with the Red Shoe Society, a young professional's group that supports Ronald McDonald House Charities. Cara works in marketing and promotions for Valu Merchandisers Company, a subsidiary of Associated Wholesale Grocers. In the evenings, she teaches barre classes at Power Life Yoga and public relations to students at the University of Central Missouri. In her free time, Cara enjoys running, spending time with family and friends, and planning her wedding for the fall.



## **Alpha Phi**

### **Emily Keimig**

Wichita State University

*Bachelor in General Studies –*

*Theatre, minor in Mathematics*

Emily was initiated into Alpha Phi in her hometown of Wichita, KS, where she served her chapter in a variety of roles, her favorite being Director of New Member Education. She now serves as VP-Membership for the Greater KC Alumnae Chapter and coordinates their newsletter and monthly emails. In 2018, Emily received the Chapter's 2018 Sara Ann Hatton Award for her involvement. Her career focus is economic equity, and she works as Development Associate for the ACLU of Kansas, fundraising to protect and advance civil liberties. Previously, she served with AmeriCorps VISTA, a national service program whose mission is to eradicate poverty in the United States. Emily spends her free time volunteering with the Urban Neighborhood Initiative, performing with the all-female theatre troupe Rogue Betty's, and, of course, engaging with Alpha Phi sisters.



## **Alpha Sigma Alpha**

### **Amanda Lind**

University of Missouri – Kansas City  
*B.A., Communication Studies, minor in  
Business Administration*

Amanda began her Panhellenic journey as a founding member of UMKC's Alpha Sigma Alpha Theta Omicron chapter, where she got involved with one of ASA's national philanthropies, Girls on the Run. Six years later, Amanda now works as an Event Manager at a software company, DSI. She continues to be involved in Alpha Sigma Alpha through her involvement in the Kansas City Alumnae Chapter. This is her third year on the board and her second as the Vice President. Community involvement continues to be a large part of her life through volunteering on the Girls on the Run committee and acting as the Alumnae liaison for a UMKC business organization, Enactus. Amanda also provides consultation services for Kansas City small businesses.



## **Alpha Xi Delta**

### **Margaret Bristow**

Lyon College  
*B.A., History*

Margaret joined Alpha Xi Delta as a Zeta Iota sister. At Lyon she was a member of the Pipe Band (dancer & teacher); Instructor of Scottish Highland Dance; and involved with the Arts & Heritage Outreach. She is an Active Member of the KC St Andrews Highland Dancers' Association and involved in several other KC Scottish groups and events. She is an active Alumnae sister serving roles of Event Coordinator and Communications. Her sisters are appreciative of her efforts of highlighting KC Alumnae events in our beloved national Quill magazine.



## **Chi Omega**

### **Wesley Snell**

University of Missouri - Kansas City

*Bachelor's Degree in Harp Performance*

Wesley received her bachelor's degree in Harp Performance from the Conservatory of Music at UMKC and has played the harp at every Chi Omega Convention since 1980. She served as Corresponding Secretary for the KC Chi Omega Alumnae Association and is presently on the Lambda Zeta House Corporation. Wesley's Mother, two sisters, two nieces and daughter are all Chi Omegas. Wesley is a professional freelance musician. She has been a Starlight Theatre harpist for 35 years and will be playing The Wizard of Oz in June. She has performed regularly with the Kansas City Symphony, Lyric Opera, and Kansas City Ballet Orchestra. Wesley is an Adjunct Harp Teacher at William Jewell College and teaches harp lessons and harp ensemble at the Music Arts Institute and out of her home. Wesley is married to James Snell, Associate Dean at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at UMKC.



## **Delta Delta Delta**

### **Suzanne Duncan**

University of Kansas

*B.S., Medical Technology*

Suzanne's service to Tri Delta began at KU as Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer of the Theta Omega chapter. Her degree led to a successful career in clinical laboratory medicine. In 1991, she became an associate of Cerner Corporation in client support, later moving up to software designer, solution manager, and Senior Data Strategist before her retirement in 2015. She has served as President of the Kansas City Northland alumnae for the past four years. Family is a big part of Suzanne's life. She has one son, a daughter, and two stepsons (all married), and 12 grandchildren with #13 due in August. She and husband Glenn volunteer at their church, attend Bible studies, enjoy cultural pursuits and travel widely.



## **Delta Gamma**

### **Lailan Bressle**

Southern Methodist University

*Vocal Performance*

Born and raised in Hawaii, Lailan Bressle exudes the Aloha spirit—a heart overflowing with love and compassion. She has served Delta Gamma as President, VP: Programming, Awards Chairman, Founders Day Chairman, and as a committee member for the alumnae chapter's philanthropic fundraisers. Lailan is currently the chapter liaison to Alphapointe and received their Volunteer of the Year award this past December. She is the recipient of the chapter's Cream Rose Award which recognizes a member's commitment to community service. A graduate of Southern Methodist University with a degree in vocal music performance, Lailan is a champion of the arts and performs around Kansas City with her musically talented family.



## **Delta Zeta**

### **Keli Myracle**

University of Central Missouri

*B.S.B.A., International Business, minor in Spanish and Management*

Keli Myracle pledged Delta Zeta - Epsilon Gamma in the fall of 2013. As a collegiate, Keli held the Social Chair position for one year and has continued her involvement with Delta Zeta after graduating. Keli has been the Risk Management Advisor for her collegiate chapter for two years and held the Vice President of programs for the local GKC Delta Zeta Chapter. Currently, Keli works for a small training and event space business called Training Umbrella, as their Marketing and Event Coordinator. In May of 2019, Keli will be pursuing her passion for travel with her boyfriend, James, and two kitties, Luna and Stella, by moving to China to teach English. You can follow their adventure at [twoticketsaroundtheworld.com](http://twoticketsaroundtheworld.com).



## **Gamma Phi Beta**

### **Diana Zarda**

University of Kansas

*B.S., Political Science &  
Personnel Administration*

Diana was initiated into KU-Sigma in 1982. She has a daughter, son and new grandson! She is employed at Hiland Dairy Foods (formerly Zarda Dairy) as Account-Development Manager providing dairy products for Girls on the Run. She served as Pledge Director and Panhellenic-VP at KU, and most recently served on the Sigma 100-Year Anniversary Committee. She served the GKC Alumnae Chapter E-Board as Founders Day Chair six years which grew to over 100 sisters! Recently she served as Alumnae Data Purge Coordinator. Diana received the Antique, Garden & Home Design Show IIKE Award for outstanding dedication. Community work includes Jazzoo Planning Committee (18 years) and GKC Restaurant Association (20 years). She received the Silver Service Award, Allied Director of the Year and is a member of Forks & Corks, Stems and SAE Parents Club-VP.



## **Kappa Alpha Theta**

### **Jamie Johnson**

University of Missouri - Columbia

*B.S., Finance  
B.A., Communication*

Jamie's Theta alumnae involvement began in 2007. Since then she's held leadership positions including VP of Membership, Scholarship Coordinator and Assistant Treasurer. Her greatest pleasure has been establishing valuable friendships. Graduating summa cum laude from the University of Missouri, Jamie held several collegiate Theta and Panhellenic positions. Most notably she was elected as Theta VP of Public Relations. She served the Panhellenic community as a Greek Life Ambassador, Educator, and Greek Week Steering Committee Chair. Because of her academic achievement and leadership, Jamie was named Mizzou 39, an honor bestowed to 39 outstanding seniors. Jamie currently is a working mother of two who loves traveling and golfing. Presently, she is assistant treasurer for the KAΘ Alumnae chapter and the Greater KC KAΘ Foundation.



## **Kappa Delta**

**Robin Crick**

University of Missouri - Columbia  
*B.S., Accounting*

After college, Robin enjoyed a 15-year career with Sprint where she held several positions and successfully led a billing system conversion. She 'retired' from corporate life in 2003 when her daughter was born. Being at home allowed Robin time to serve several non-profit organizations where she held many leadership roles. In addition, for the past 12 years, she served as POA and worked together with her sister to provide 24-hour care for their terminally-ill father. Robin has continued to support Kappa Delta serving on the Chapter Advisory Board (26 years) and Alumnae Chapter Board (30 years). She was born, raised, and still resides in Independence, MO. She loves spending time with her husband of almost 30 years, John, their children, Delaney and Jeremy, and their two dogs. She loves movies, TV, Disney, and cheering for the Tigers, Royals, and Chiefs.



## **Kappa Kappa Gamma**

**Mary Lou Gibson**

Kansas University

*B. S., Secondary Education Language Arts*

Mary Lou grew up in Independence, KS., went to KU, pledged KKG, married a KKG dishwasher, raised two children, and lived happily ever after! The KKG Alumni Association has been a source of friendship and fun all these years, particularly, the KKG Holiday Homes Tour. In the '80s, she worked with a group of pledge sisters decorating homes on the tour. In the '90s, she was a member of the Omega Chapter House Board. In the 2000s she has been a part of the Homes Tour by being chairman (not every year) of the Gourmet shop...recruiting bakers and fudge makers, taking the proceeds from around \$3,000 to \$13,000 in 2017! Currently, she is a member of the Omega KKG Education Foundation. Outside of Kappa, she is a volunteer for Meals on Wheels and leads a small bible study every week for a group of ladies from the Church of the Resurrection.



## **Phi Mu**

**Amy Larson**

Mississippi State

*Bachelor's Degree in Communications*

*Master's in Guidance and Counseling*

Amy has been married to Erik Larson since 1993 and has three children. Her daughter, Sarah Caroline was a Phi Mu at Mississippi State, as well, which made her VERY happy! She started a photography business working exclusively in black and white film and hand painted color onto the portraits. Her family moved to Overland Park in 2003 where they raised their children. She got her Real Estate License in 2011 and has been a very busy real estate agent with ReeceNichols since that time. Amy enjoys traveling with her family and tries to get back to Mississippi to see family and friends as much as possible. She is a member of Colonial Presbyterian Church and served as Vice President of Membership for Greater KC Phi Mu in 2016-17.



## **Pi Beta Phi**

**Joanna Miranda Glaze**

University of Kansas

*B.S., Journalism*

Joanna leads and participates in many activities and causes. She remains committed to her sorority and has received the Carolyn Helman Lichtenberg Crest Award, presented to a distinguished individual alumna for outstanding personal achievement in areas of community service. She has also received the Greater KC Alumnae Club Pi Phi of the Year Award and has been president of the club. She has remained involved in her Kansas Alpha chapter, serving on AAC and chairing the Pi Beta Phi Educational Foundation. Currently, Joanna is the Panhellenic representative, chairing the silent auction last year and the brunch event this year. The activities and causes she supports with her time and talent include a multitude of school, church, philanthropic, and nonprofit organizations.



## **Sigma Sigma Sigma**

### **Carolyn Austin**

University of Central Missouri

*B.S., Education*

University of Kansas

*Master's of Social Work*

Carolyn was initiated into Nu Chapter of Sigma Sigma Sigma at the University of Central Missouri in 1961. She is an active member of the Kansas City Alumnae Chapter where she previously served as Secretary. She received her Golden Violet Award in 2015. She especially enjoys their Book Club. She retired from the Shawnee Mission District after 28 years as a school social worker. She has held several positions on the board of the Johnson County Association of Retired School Personnel, including President and is a frequent volunteer at her church. She has been married to Bob for almost 52 years and has two sons, Mike and Chris, and five grandchildren.



## **Zeta Tau Alpha**

### **Barb Reinke**

University of Iowa

*B.A.*

University of Paris at the Sorbonne

*Diploma in French Language*

After graduating from college, Barb spent 37 years in sales with the Hershey Chocolate Company, American Greetings and retired from Crayola. Barb is married and has two sons, Aaron and Ethan. She loves church mission work, both locally and internationally, and whenever possible, presents at local churches on her work in Haiti through Haitian Artisans for Peace International. She has led several trips to Mizak, Haiti, to teach art in the national school, and to train artisans on product development for fair trade sale. In addition, she interprets history at Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop in Olathe, is involved in ZTA, plays flute and hand bells, volunteers at St. Luke's Hospital, walks, swims, and travels the world whenever possible.

