



BRUSH CREEK **K**COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
*growing kansas city*

# BRUSH CREEK CORRIDOR CHRONICLE

January 2010

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## Dear Kathy,

Welcome to the first edition of the Brush Creek Community Partners (BCCP) e-newsletter. This is our effort to keep you up-to-date and connected regarding events in the Corridor. There is so much going on with Bus Rapid Transit on Troost, the Green Impact Zone, an Urban Renewal District and other work by individual neighborhoods that we wanted to extend our reach and speed of delivery. Please let us know if you have news that we can help deliver.

If you are not familiar with BCCP, we are a convener and collaborator acting on behalf of neighborhood, governmental, educational, faith-based, business and cultural entities along Brush Creek from State Line to Elmwood and 39th Street to 63rd Street. Our Board of Directors is one of the most diverse and influential in the city with a rare East-West focus rather than North-South. We are convinced that Kansas City will be richer if we can remove Troost as a racial barrier and bring all the residents within our footprint into full partnership with the resources along the corridor. That is the focus of our board and Executive Director...we invite you to join us in this worthwhile pursuit.

Rob Givens, President, BCCP Board

## PRESTIGIOUS CORRIDOR INSTITUTIONS CELEBRATE SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

The Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City's oldest arts organization, is 125 years old this year. The campus moved to its current location at 44th and Warwick in 1927.

In 1910, Rockhurst College was chartered by Missouri and soon became the first institutional presence along the Brush Creek Corridor.

Both of these institutions of higher education have big plans to observe these milestone anniversaries in 2010.

### **KCAI Is Honoring the Past, Creating the Future.**

When a group of Kansas Citians got together in 1885 to start a Sketch Club "to talk over art matters in general and to judge pictures," they could not know they were creating an institution that would become a distinguished four-year college of art and design - the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI).



Kansas City Art Association and School of Design was incorporated in 1887 "to conduct a school of instruction in drawing, painting, modeling and designing and the construction and maintenance of buildings suitable for such purposes." Today, KCAI is a private, independent four-year college of art and design with a budget of over \$15 million. It awards the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with majors in animation, art history, ceramics, digital filmmaking, fiber, graphic design, illustration, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture and studio art with an emphasis on creative writing. As part of its 125 anniversary it has announced the launch of a four-track major in digital media.



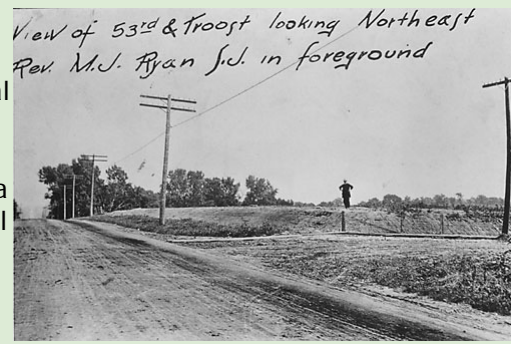
Kathleen Collins joined KCAI as president in 1996. Since then, the Art Institute has completed improvements to the campus totaling more than \$27 million.

KCAI's quasiquintennial will be celebrated with a variety of events and activities during 2010. On February 20 a black-tie-optional anniversary gala will take place in the Grand Ballroom of the Kansas City Convention Center ([www.kcai.edu/gala](http://www.kcai.edu/gala)). Throughout the year, area art museums and galleries will host exhibitions of work by KCAI graduates and faculty. On October 8 the college will hold an alumni reunion, symposium and old-fashioned birthday party, complete with a cake in the shape of historic Vanderslice Hall, a three-story 1896 residence that houses the college's admissions and administrative offices.

### **Rockhurst Celebrates First 100 Years.**

In 1909, Rev. Michael Dowling, S.J., bought 25 acres at 53rd Street and Troost Avenue for \$50,000. The charter for awarding degrees was granted to Rockhurst College by the state of Missouri the next year, the centennial of which is being observed this year. The academic life of Rockhurst began with the opening of the high school in Sedgwick Hall in 1914 with the first college classes offered in 1917, conducted by one faculty member.

Rockhurst was the first institution built in Kansas City's Brush Creek Corridor. To appeal to a largely non-Catholic community, the name of the Jesuit college was chosen to describe the area, "Rock" being the stony area and "hurst" for a nearby grove. Sedgwick Hall at 52nd Street and Troost was built on what was then the outskirts of Kansas City. But with real estate investments being made nearby by Kansas City Star publisher and real estate developer William Rockhill Nelson and J.C. Nichols, growth in the southern part of the city was anticipated. Historians have referred to the college in its earliest days as "the little school on the hill."



Founded as a school for men, in 1969 Rockhurst became coeducational in all divisions.

Today, the 55-acre campus has more than 3,000 students from 26 states and 20 countries served by 495 full-time and part-time faculty and staff. It has been an anchor in the Brush Creek Corridor and along Troost Avenue, investing \$75 million in new construction and campus improvements in the last 15 years.

The Rev. Thomas B. Curran, O.S.F.S., became the 14th president of the university in 2006. Under his leadership, Rockhurst completed a five-year strategic plan which is guiding the completion of a campus master plan.



Rockhurst University's year-long Centennial Celebration kicks off on Wednesday, February 3, with a talk by the Rev. Greg Boyle, S.J., "Tattoos on the Heart: A Theology of Compassion and Kinship" at 7:30 p.m. in the campus Convocation Center. As founder of the largest gang intervention program in the country, Boyle will discuss the theology of this ministry and how one can find God through helping others. The lecture will be preceded by a Centennial Reception that evening from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Massman Hall. These events are free and open to the public. Visit [www.rockhurst.edu/100years](http://www.rockhurst.edu/100years) to find more centennial information and to reserve your attendance at these events.

## BCCP BOARD MEMBER LANGENKAMP NAMED ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

Bob Langenkamp has been named assistant city manager of economic development for the City of Kansas City. Langenkamp's appointment by acting City Manager Troy Schulte is effective immediately.

Schulte's intent in refocusing this Assistant City Manager position on economic development is to better utilize city staff the Economic Development Corporation to create partnerships and leverage resources to address unmet needs in entrepreneurship, small business assistance, and workforce development. In addition to leading the city's economic development efforts, Langenkamp will serve as the City Manager's liaison to the Aviation, City Planning and Development, and Convention and Entertainment Facilities Departments.



Langenkamp has served as assistant director of the City Planning and Development Department since December of 1998. He joined the city in February 1989 as a planner in the department's Planning and Urban Design Division. In November 1993, Langenkamp was promoted to assistant to the director for Economic Development for the department. He has also served as the department's Economic Development Projects Division Manager.

Langenkamp has been a member of the Brush Creek Community Partners Board of Directors the last four years. He has also served on the Boards of Directors of the Downtown Council and the Port Authority of Kansas City as an Ex-Officio member.

## SHOPS ON BLUE PARKWAY GROW

Two new businesses are moving into the Shops on Blue Parkway. Kansas City Beauty Supply, LLC is leasing 4,531 square feet at 4203 Blue Parkway and Luxury Nails is moving into 1,516 square feet at 4201-A Blue Parkway.

In October, the addition of Boost Mobile, Blue Parkway Cleaners and Burger King as tenants in The Shops on Blue Parkway was announced. Greg Patterson and Susan Scott of Greg Patterson & Associates negotiated the leases.



## COMING UP IN THE CORRIDOR

### **Drums, Puppets, Books**

A Children's Festival of Black History, Saturday, February 6, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center, 3700 Blue Parkway, \$3.00 admission

charge. For more details and to RSVP call 816-519-2986.

### **Black History Month Activities**

The Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center at 3700 Blue Parkway is hosting various activities. For more details, click [here](#) to visit the website.

### **Kansas City School Board Candidate Forums, Debates and Other Events**

- All Candidates Public Forum, Tuesday, February 23, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center, 3700 Blue Parkway;
- Sixth Sub-District Candidates Public Forum, Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Greater Mount Zion Baptist Church, 4600 Cleveland;
- At-Large Candidates Public Forum, Monday, March 22, Visitation Church, 5141 Main St.;
- All Candidates Public Forum, Thursday, March 25, Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center, 3700 Blue Parkway.

### **Around the World in 80 Days**

*Around the World in 80 Days* is at the Kansas City Repertory Theatre with performances now through Sunday, February 14. Spencer Theatre, 4949 Cherry. For more information or to purchase tickets click [here](#).

### **Kansas City City Council Budget Hearings**

- Council District 3: Saturday, February 13, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Gregg/Klice Community Center, 1600 John "Buck" O'Neil Way;
- Council District 4: Saturday, February 20, 10 a.m. to noon, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 11 E. 40th St.;
- Council District 5: Saturday, February 13, 10 a.m. to noon, Southeast Community Center, 4201 E. 63rd St.

For more information: <http://www.kcmo.org/CKCMO/011410A>

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**For a complete listing of events and activities  
in the Corridor,  
visit  
[www.kcartswalk.com](http://www.kcartswalk.com)**

### **THEIS PARK ALONG BRUSH CREEK**

*(reprinted with permission of the Kansas City Parks & Recreation Department)*

### **History**

Theis Park is named for Frank A. Theis who was a grain merchant and Chairman of the Board of Simonds-Shields-Theis Grain Company at the time of his death. He was at one time President of the Kansas City Board of Trade and was on the Board of Directors of a number of companies and involved with many civic organizations. He also was on the Kansas City, MO Board of Park Commissioners from 1950 until his death in 1965, serving as President of the Board from 1952-1965.

The property now known as Theis Park was part of the William Rockhill Nelson estate in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1947 bonds were passed to develop the property as a "Cultural Center park", an idea suggested by real estate developer J. C. Nichols and others. They envisioned a park that linked the Kansas City Art Institute and the Nelson-Atkins Museum on the north side of 47th Street with the then proposed Midwest



Research Institute, the Barstow School, the University of Kansas City, Menorah Hospital and Rockhurst College on the south side of the property. After some legal issues were settled, bonds were sold in 1953 and the property for the park was purchased from the William Rockhill Nelson Trust by the Kansas City, MO Board of Park Commissioners in 1955. A small area of property on the east side of the park was purchased from the University of Kansas City.

On the property at that time were a few houses just south of 47th Street, now Emmanuel Cleaver II Boulevard, between Oak and Locust Streets. They were built in the early 1900s as part of a project of William Rockhill Nelson, owner of the Kansas City Star and Kansas City Times newspapers. Mr. Nelson had these houses and several other houses built in the vicinity of his home Oak Hall (torn down to build the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art) where some of his employees at the newspapers could live. Just south of the houses in the new park area were streets, open grassy areas, and the Rockhill Tennis Club. The tennis club was removed in the middle 1950s and the houses were torn down in 1961.

In 1950, planning began to place a memorial fountain in the "Cultural Center" park to honor local businessman and philanthropist William Volker who died in 1948. Mr. Volker was on the boards of many charities, gave much of his money to charitable work, and was a supporter of the University of Kansas City, now known as the University of Missouri at Kansas City, located near the park. A road built at the south end of the park property in 1948 was dedicated as Volker Boulevard in 1950. The fountain with the theme of the Good Samaritan, which honored Mr. Volker's charitable work, was the last work of Swedish sculptor Carl Milles. The fountain was dedicated in 1958. Due to the juxtaposition of Volker Boulevard, the Volker Fountain and the fact that the park did not have an official name, the park was very commonly called "Volker Park".

Following Frank Theis' death in 1965, the park area was named the "Frank A. Theis Memorial Mall" in 1966 and later changed to Frank A. Theis Park in 1991.

### **Ornamental Structures**

William Volker Memorial Fountain, "St. Martin and the Beggar" by Carl Milles

### **Amenities**

Large, open grass way; 2.42-mile exercise trail along Brush Creek; well-placed natural amphitheatre perfect for theatrical performances and wedding ceremonies,

rain garden

**Location:** Oak and 47th streets, across from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

<http://www.kcmo.org/CKCMO/Depts/ParksandRecreation/TheisPark/index.htm>

For more information about  
Brush Creek Community Partners,  
visit our website at

[www.bccp.org](http://www.bccp.org)

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