



Foundations Commit \$2.5 Million to New Headquarters for State Historical Society's Kansas City Research Center

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KANSAS CITY, MO, Feb. 10, 2020 – Historical writer LaDene Morton remembers the first time she visited the archives of the State Historical Society of Missouri's Kansas City Research Center. It was 2009 and Morton was researching the first of four books she would write about the city she calls home. The Kansas City author remembers trying to find the obscure location of the research center that is located on the top floor of Newcomb Hall on the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus. But, first, there was a hill to climb from the parking lot and a long flight of stairs to reach her destination.

“Coming back down from the building with materials in hand, I felt like a pack mule,” said Morton, who is excited about the proposed location in Miller Nichols Library where there is plenty of parking nearby and accessibility.

The Kansas City Research Center is another step closer to its goal of relocating to the Miller Nichols Library on the UMKC campus as part of the library's renovation plan. The Sunderland Foundation recently awarded \$2 million and the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank, Trustee awarded \$500,000 to fund the move and renovation work that will put the State Historical Society's collections in proximity with other significant Kansas City archives housed at the Miller Nichols Library. The proposed new center will expand from 3,100 square feet to approximately 5,100 square feet. It will allow the majority of Kansas City collections to be stored on-site with an automated system providing five-minute retrieval times.

Currently, the center stores many of its collections at the University of Missouri's records center in Columbia, which can take up to two weeks for delivery. For Morton, the quicker retrieval service will significantly reduce the amount of planning time required to meet a publishing deadline. Researchers and other patrons of the proposed center will also enjoy expansive views of downtown Kansas City and the expanded space will allow the State Historical Society to increase public programming and further its mission of collecting and sharing Missouri history.

Established in 1980, the Kansas City Research Center is one of six State Historical Society research centers located throughout Missouri. The Kansas City Research Center holds the largest local history collection in Kansas City. Its holdings cover a wide range of topics, including more than 17,000 sets of architectural drawings, the J.C. Nichols Company Records, the Miller Nichols Papers, the Jewish Community Archives, and the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City Records. All of these collections document the vibrant history, growth, and development of Kansas City and Missouri.

In addition to both the Sunderland Foundation and the William T. Kemper Foundation grants, the Miller Nichols Charitable Foundation donated \$250,000 and Steve and Marianne Noll have committed \$50,000 to the \$3 million project. That brings the total amount raised to \$2.8 million for the relocation from Newcomb Hall to Miller Nichols Library. The State Historical Society also plans to raise an additional \$2 million to create an endowment for its Kansas City Research Center.

Lucinda Adams, Associate Director of the State Historical Society, sees the move as an opportunity to attract many generations of patrons to use the resources of the Kansas City Research Center. “We are very grateful for these gifts that will allow us to preserve Kansas City history well into the future. I see our new location as a gathering space for Kansas City history enthusiasts, scholars, students and community members. It’s exciting to be moving forward to sharing Missouri history with the greater Kansas City community,” said Adams.

CONTACT: Lucinda Adams, Associate Director, State Historical Society of Missouri. Office: 816-235-1544
email: AdamsLu@shsmo.org Visit us online: shsmo.org