

SHL Advocates for Seniors in Johnson County

In 1969, states were encouraged by an act of Congress to create a body of seniors who would identify issues important to older adults age 60+ and educate their respective state legislative bodies about those issues. States started adding advocacy groups, and the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (KSHL) was created in 1982 as a unicameral legislature composed of 125 representatives. All are 60+ years old and are elected from their county of residence. Wyandotte, Johnson, Shawnee and Sedgwick have five additional representatives.

The Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature identifies priority concerns of Kansans over 60 years of age; develops resolutions designed to address those identified concerns; and presents those resolutions to the Kansas Legislature & Governor as recommendations for state policy. SHL representatives advocate for the KSHL Legislation with State Legislators, testify at hearings held regarding KSHL Legislation, and meet with seniors in their county & district about legislation affecting older adults.

Meet the Johnson County Delegation to the Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature

Every two years, 6 delegates for Johnson County are selected. There is no election if six or fewer candidates file for this position. In February 2019, five incumbents filed, and will serve terms again to represent Johnson County in the SHL. One person will be appointed. The 2019 Johnson County SHL delegation, so far, includes:

Mary Penrose has a Master's degree in Adult Education and has worked in adult education and real estate. She is an advocate for the Homeless and Women's Shelters, and has an interest in the well-being of seniors and youngsters. She advocates for people to be active, informed, and connected to community resources.

Gerald D. Ireland will use his experience and knowledge as an advocate for the elderly. He is retired from the U.S. Navy and worked as a Hospital Business Office Manager. He has been a caregiver for his parents, and is married to an R,N. who specialized in eldercare. He is an advocate for healthcare and maintaining our Medicare system.

Jeanie Adkins-Peine is an advocate for Grandparent Compensation, having the Grocery Tax eliminated, and expanding affordable transportation. She worked with a touring agency in Mexico, has volunteered with 4th graders in the Shawnee Mission School District, helped veterans in rehab centers, rode with the Patriot Guard at military funerals, and worked with the elderly and mentally challenged adults.

Gary Rex Scott has enjoyed serving on the KSHL as Treasurer for the last three years, and looks forward to continuing to advocate for the interests of seniors in Johnson County. He is native Kansan, taught 32 years in the Shawnee Mission School District, and 8 years at Johnson County Community College.

Katherine Hoffman is a retired Administrative Assistant from the Johnson County District Court, serves on the Commission on Aging, and is involved with the Daughters of Isabella, advocating unity, friendship, and charity. She is interested in presenting seniors' concerns, and is open to new ideas in support of public needs.

Chuck Nigro is retired from health care management, and is an active volunteer with the Johnson County Commission on Aging, the Olathe Rotary Club, and the League of Women Voters. He has worked in health care administration with KU Medical Center, Jackson County Public Hospital, Truman Medical Centers, Swope Ridge Geriatric Center, Deaconess Long Term Care, and been Executive Director of the Johnson County Nursing Center and Aberdeen Village. He is the past chair of the Johnson County Commission on Aging and plans to use his experience in the health care sector and awareness of senior issues to help the SHL become a more effective entity.

