

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Dale Beasley

2020 SW Winterview Ridge
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

District of residence: 2
Years as a resident: 22
Education: East High School, *Kansas City, Missouri*
Calvary Bible College and Theological Seminary
Current Employment: Pillars of Truth Church, *Pastor*

Interest in Serving Community:

I have been a part of the Lee's Summit community for over 20 years and have watched the community evolve. There is a way for each of us to contribute, express ourselves, and serve. We all have a mix of experiences, passions, values, desires and skills. Every journey has purpose. With a heart of passion, we can all have a positive impact on the community. I am committed to a community that is united on every level.

Other Activities:

City of Lee's Summit Human Relations Commission—Chair

City of Lee's Summit Police Department—Chaplain

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Rachel Courtney
4025 SW Ward Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

District of residence: 1
Years as a resident: 14
Education: Cheyenne East High School, *Cheyenne, Wyoming*
William Jewel College
University of Central Missouri, *Master of Science in Education-Special Ed*
Current Employment: Self, *Homemaker/Mother of Four*

Interest in Serving Community:

I was very inspired by the Mayor's message for diversity inclusion and want to have an active part helping in this mission in the community I love.

We're a transracial adoptive family so children and racial justice are a big part of my heart. My background is in education with my graduate degree being in special education so I'm very in tuned to a gentle organized teaching approach in order to bring others together for one goal. I love learning about other cultures and backgrounds and celebrating those.

Other Activities:

I'm passionate about helping others who struggle and volunteer for my church and neighborhood building houses for the poor or collecting goods for those in need.

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Member Bio

Allan Gray

2332 NE Smokey Hill Drive
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

District of residence: 4
Years as a resident: 35
Education: Paseo High School, *Kansas City, Missouri*
Morehouse College, *Bachelor of Science-Political Science/Intl. Affairs*
Current Employment: Zhou Brothers Art Center, *Partner*

Interest in Serving Community:

I wish to continue to provide service and leadership to the City and community after servicing in a variety of capacities for the city through the years. I am specifically interested in helping to create a more diverse community.

Other Activities:

UMKC Conservatory—Boardmember

KC Friends of Alvin Ailey—Boardmember

Black Archives of MidAmerica--Boardmember

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Fred Grogan

1121 SW Coachlight Drive
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

District of residence: 2
Years as a resident: 35
Education: Susquehannock High School, *Glen Rock, Pennsylvania*
Bates College, *Bachelor of Arts-Political Science*
Arizona State University, *Master of Political Science*
University of Missouri, *Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science*
Current Employment: Retired (Previously President of MCC Longview)

Interest in Serving Community:

I have been active in Lee's Summit civic activities since moving here in 1985. I served as chair of the Quality 88 bond issue campaign, served for 8 years on the city planning commission, and have served on many community civic group and non-profit boards as a member and officer over the years. I believe strongly in participating in community life in order to help create a community with a high quality of life for all its citizens.

I believe that I have brought strong analytical skills, listening ability, organizational skills, and leadership ability to the organizations I have served. I believe in welcoming and listening to all voices and helping to find common ground among competing viewpoints and interests.

Other Activities:

Lee's Summit Historical Society Board—Chair

John Knox Village Premier Life Board—Boardmember

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission
Member Bio

Melanie Harding

612 SE Westwind Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

District of residence: 1
Years as a resident: 28
Education: Lee's Summit West High School
Rockhurst University, *Bachelor of Communication Sciences & Disorders*
Current Employment: Lee's Summit R-7 School District, *Behavior Coach*

Interest in Serving Community:

I would like to offer my unique perspective as a lifelong Lee's Summit Resident and member of the LGBTQ community. I believe my experiences can help shape the community's culture of diversity and inclusion.

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Lorenzo Harrison

1401 SW 3rd St, Apt A2
Lee's Summit, MO 64061

District of residence: 2

Years as a resident: 10

Education: Lee's Summit North High School
Missouri Southern State University, *Bachelor of Business Administration-
Secondary Business Education (enrolled)*

Current Employment: Lee's Summit R-7 School District, *Hawthorn Hill Elementary School
Before and After School Services Site Coordinator*

Interest in Serving Community:

I am interested in serving on the Commission for Diversity and Inclusion to help make recommendations regarding diversity issues within our city and to help provide ways for our city to be more inclusive. Some key qualities I feel that I would offer are integrity, competence, insight, dedication, and effectiveness.

Other Activities:

United Church KC—Boardmember

Word and Deliverance Evangelistic Ministries—Boardmember

Lorenzo Harrison Ministries International—Boardmember

Lorenzo Gives Back—Boardmember

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Barb Henson

1103 SE 5th Terrace
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

District of residence: 4
Years as a resident: 37
Education: Union High School, *Union, Missouri*
Missouri University of Science & Technology
Current Employment: Retired

Interest in Serving Community:

I have seen many changes over the years in LS. Increased diversity and inclusion can only make this city better. In my career, parenting, Housing Authority participation, and volunteering activities I have gained a greater understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion. I am very open-minded and thorough in my thought process.

Other Activities:

Lee's Summit Housing Authority—Boardmember

John Knox Village Premier Life Board—Boardmember

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Levi Holland

500 NW O'Brien Road
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

District of residence: 3
Years as a resident: 6
Education: Tri-County Community School, *Thornburg, IA*
Olivet Nazarene University, *Bachelor of Youth Ministry*
Nazarene Theological Seminary, *Master of Divinity*
Current Employment: Post Coffee Company, *Co-founder & Roaster*

Interest in Serving Community:

I believe that our community should be as equitable as possible, to not only be a place of equality, but a harbor of equity for all of the residents. What that means is for Lee's Summit to be not just be a place of residence, but a place where people from diverse backgrounds, cultural and socio-economic, can thrive. I have a master's level education in Pastoral leadership with 15 years of experience, and 6 years of entrepreneurial ownership skills. I truly believe in the investment of people to make communities thrive, and with this commission, to make sure that opportunity not only serves majority culture, but sets up the success for our growing minority cultures, because at the end of the day, we all hail from the same town, and I want that to be a place where people are proud to be from.

Other Activities:

Local, Home Church Pastor

Pro Deo Youth Center—Volunteer

Equity in LSR7 Parent's Group—Member (and location host)

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Sharon Ivy

604 NW Brookhaven
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

District of residence: 2
Years as a resident: 11
Education: Raytown South High School, *Raytown, MO*
Missouri State University, *Bachelor of Accounting*
University of Missouri-Kansas City, *Juris Doctrate*
Current Employment: Stinson LLP, *Manager of Diversity and Inclusion*

Interest in Serving Community:

The City has experienced some challenges related to diversity and inclusion in recent years, notably within our school district. This, combined with the national movement for social justice, places the City in a position to think strategically about what we want our community to look like in the future. I would like to be a part of the discussion and collaborate with other citizens as we look to create a community that is diverse, inclusive and welcoming to everyone. I am the Manager of Diversity and Inclusion at a large law firm where we are addressing unconscious bias, hosting opportunities for honest dialogue and creating structures which allow all of our constituents to thrive. Prior to working in diversity and inclusion full time, I practiced law for over 10 years in Kansas City. I look forward to using my expertise in diversity and inclusion to support the Commission.

Other Activities:

Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association's Diversity Section—Member

Kansas City, Missouri Chapter of Jack and Jill of America—Member

Assistance League of Kansas City Advisory Council—Boardmember

St. James United Methodist Church—Member and Middle School Sunday School Facilitator

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Saadia Mahmood

4435 SW Creekview Drive
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

District of residence: 2
Years as a resident: 4
Education: Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate Institute (High School), *Toronto, ON*
University of Missouri-Columbia, *Bachelor & Master of Accountancy*
Current Employment: NBH Bank (dba Bank Midwest), *Director of Enterprise Risk/Chief Information Security Officer*

Interest in Serving Community:

Lee's Summit is our home. The only way to truly show our investment to our home is through continuous self-reflection to further self-improve and providing service to support the end goal. We've been on national media for how our school board is grappling with D&I and recent pivotal events and sentiments further illustrate the gap between various groups within our community still exists. From an ethical perspective, D&I is an imperative.

Our efforts in assessing what we define as diversity, what our goals are, how we hope to achieve those goals, I expect, will be invaluable in helping our community continue staying relevant, innovative, and prosperous. Mayor Baird, for example, during his last State of the City had mentioned the need to continue attracting younger generations. This is a great example of the impact this Commission can have. The younger generation's demographics, values, and interests could be greatly addressed by our Commission's efforts.

Personally, I'm a first-generation immigrant: both my parents are from India. I spent nearly a decade of my life in Saudi Arabia and another in Canada. I know what it's like to be from the outside and having to find a way to belong. In our core family, my husband and I are a mixed-race couple with four children. We near daily must address how to meld our two cultures as well as our two religions. Our goal is to raise complete human beings who are impactful to the world around them while fitting in and standing out.

For a personality perspective, I am a very driven individual. My strengths are in assessing risk. I'm a true dissenter. A true dissenter is needed always to help ensure concepts/ideas are assessed completely from many perspectives before rolling out.

Other Activities:

Bank Midwest's EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee-- Core/Founding Member

Kansas City Chamber's Centurions Leadership Program—2019 Graduate

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Ben Martin

302 NE Keystone
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

District of residence: 4
Years as a resident: 32
Education: Pacific High School, *Pacific, MO*
Culver-Stockton College, *Bachelor of Speech and Theater Education*
University of Central Missouri, *Master of Arts-Theater*
Current Employment: Retired

Interest in Serving Community:

This issue intersects with my experiences on so many levels. Education is at the center of this concern. Not only the formal institutions of school-based education, but also the informal revelations about how to interact in a diverse community are open for a wide ranging and discerning conversation. I especially feel that the Arts can play a huge role in bridging gaps and including people from all backgrounds. Yet, the Arts in general have a LONG way to go to achieve diversity and inclusion within their own ranks. I look forward to exploring all the facets of these issues and working to open hearts and minds (or keep them open) to make Lee's Summit a better and more welcoming community.

Other Activities:

Downtown Lee's Summit Cultural Arts Committee—Member

Rotary Club of Lee's Summit—Member

Lee's Summit Christian Church—Member

Lee's Summit Arts Council—Past Member and Chair

Summit Theatre Group—Former President, Founding Board Member, and Director

Chamber of Commerce—Past Chair of Education Committee

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Claudia Meyer

1021 NE Serenity Lane
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

District of residence: 3

Years as a resident: 16

Education: William Woods University, *Educational Doctorate Program (enrolled)*
William Woods University, *Education Specialist*
University of Central Missouri, *Masters in School Counseling*
Webster University, *Masters of Curriculum Instruction & Instruction*
University of Central Missouri, *Bachelor of Arts in Education*

Current Employment: Guadalupe Centers Middle School, *Principal*

Interest in Serving Community:

Diversity is a global topic that deserves attention. These days, most people know diversity and inclusion is important for a culture and community to thrive, so it makes sense that maintaining diversity discussions in our community is important, as well.

I believe that a primary role for any community leader should be to make sure all its members feel both supported and challenged. If members are not supported and able to express themselves, then they won't contribute. That is why support and autonomy are important to cultivate. Once these open and honest discussions are facilitated and our residents have a level of comfort, they are able to have real conversations with each other, even challenging and creating tension within the community. It is important not to avoid those important conversations — they're good for the community, increasing its value and showcasing its growth.

I want to serve on this commission because of all the amazing possibilities that can come of it. We can brainstorm ideas, have different types of conversations, and have the opportunity to share our perspectives and learn from others as well. How amazing is a community where all its members feel valued? Where assumptions are questioned and alternative ideas are presented — This committee would help our community continue to grow in this area. Diversity not only supports and enhances our community now, but it ensures longevity and future growth.

Other Activities:

City of Lee's Summit Ignite Strategic Plan Collaboration with Educational Partners C4
Implementation Team—Citizen Member

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Bryce Presley

4181 SW Lafayette Place
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

District of residence: 1
Years as a resident: 21
Education: Lee's Summit West High School
MCC Longview, *coursework towards degree in Education*
Current Employment: LSR7 Before & After School Services, *Assistant Site Coordinator*

Interest in Serving Community:

I had many blessings and opportunities growing up in Lee's Summit. It wasn't until I was in Middle School and High School that I saw that my friends and peers didn't have the same opportunities in life that I had; in fact many of them had grown up in broken homes, abusive families, or poverty. About halfway through High School I saw extreme poverty up close on an aid trip to Honduras. It was about that point in my life that I realized that my personal goals and aspirations were very self-focused, and I was doing very little with what I had to help give back and make a change.

My path began to diverge, and my goals shifted to wanting to be a part of change in the world. Since then, I've wanted to get involved with my community at the systemic level, making real, significant, sustainable change. I now work in the LSR7 school district, much of my time and focus there being on at risk behavior students who really need to be uplifted by the staff and adults around them. I've been able to make a change in a few lives there, but I want to go further and help be apart of making the community I grew up in a better place for everyone living in it.

I am pursuing my degree to one day become a teacher and continue to help students in our district, and I've watched as both of my parents have taught in this district for over 20 years, and understand exactly how much hard work and dedication it takes to really make a difference.

Making Lee's Summit a more inclusive and diverse city is one of those many differences that I would like to put the hard work into assisting. This is a need all throughout our city, especially in our schools which should be a more inclusive space that brings together different people, cultures, backgrounds, ideas, and personalities.

With my career in education, my perspective as a recent graduate of the LSR7 district, and my background being raised here and watching this city grow, I believe this Commission would be one area I could really give back to the city of Lee's Summit and make the sustainable change I sincerely seek. Lee's Summit is my home, it's my family's home, and it's a place that means very much to me, and now I'm seeking an opportunity to give back and make it an even better city to live in.

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Karen Schuler

537 NE Victoria Court
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

District of residence: 3
Years as a resident: 28
Education: Ruskin High School, *Kansas City, Missouri*
University of Missouri-Columbia, *Bachelor of Journalism*
Current Employment: United Way of Greater Kansas City, *Director of Community Engagement*

Interest in Serving Community:

In recent weeks, we've begun new conversations about race and the systems that have shaped opportunities and inequities in America. Many in our predominantly white community may believe civil rights is an issue of the 1950's and 1960's. We can certainly see now how inequality persists. There is work left to do.

Lee's Summit is a community that is changing and we can approach our discussion of diversity with awareness, understanding and respect. As we learn from others of different backgrounds, we will address problems where they exist and build a more vibrant, successful community for all citizens.

Other Activities:

City of Lee's Summit Human Relations Commission—Board member

Community Services League— Vice Chair, Board of Directors

Truman Heartland Foundation—Secretary, Board of Directors

City of Lee's Summit Ignite Strategic Plan Community Health and Wellness C4 Implementation Team—Citizen Member

Lee's Summit Diversity and Inclusion Commission Member Bio

Susan Wilson

1257 SW Summit Crossing Drive
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

District of residence: 2

Years as a resident: 16.5

Education: Schenely High School, *Pittsburg, PA*
University of Pittsburg, *Master and PhD of Clinical Psychology*
University of Missouri-Kansas City, *Master of Business Administration*

Current Employment: University of Missouri-Kansas City, *Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion*

Interest in Serving Community:

As a resident of Lee's Summit, I have long been interested in getting involved in our community. When I heard of the Mayor's newly-formed Diversity and Inclusion Commission, I felt that my skill sets and experience could be helpful to this effort. I am a psychologist that has over 20 years of experience in diversity and inclusion strategy, and currently serve as the Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion at UMKC. At UMKC, I have experience chairing a 20 member diversity council. I have consulted with government and a variety of organizations regarding Diversity and including Unity Village, KU, the FAA and three school districts.

I also have board and commission experience; I was a commissioner for Jackson County COMBAT, as well as a member of the Mayors Human Rights Commission (Kansas City). Given that Lee's Summit is becoming increasingly diverse, I believe I can make a positive contribution to Mayor Bill Baird's new initiative. My nature is to be collaborative, to look for "win-win" solutions, and to educate others without a "shame and blame" approach.

Other Activities:

Delta Sigma Theta—Member

Jackson County Chapter of Links Incorporated—Member