

# SPECTRUM

## Agency Update from the Executive Director

I am pleased to report that the Commission continues to receive accolades for its efficient and effective administration of the Kansas laws prohibiting discrimination and for the dedication and competency of the Commissioners and our agency's staff. The days of having a large backlog of complaints awaiting investigation with extensive case processing delays are gone. The Commission is accessible to the public in all parts of the State of Kansas and provides effective remedies for persons victimized by illegal discrimination.

In Fiscal Year 2004, which ended on June 30, 2004, the Commission completed processing as to 840 complaints, with 564 remaining open. The average case processing time was approximately 6 months or less. In FY 2004, the Commission recovered \$1,435,516.00 for persons who filed com-

plaints alleging that they had been discriminated against in violation of the law. In comparison, when our backlog of cases reached its peak in 1995, there were 2,768 open complaints on file, and the average case processing time was approximately 22-24 months. In FY 1995, the Commission only recovered \$358,556 for complainants. The agency now has a manageable caseload and is adequately funded to perform its challenging duties. (Copies of Commission Annual Reports containing more detailed information of this nature can be downloaded from the KHRC website at <http://www.khrc.net> or can be provided upon request to our Public Information Officer).

Our third-party mediation project with Kansas Legal Services continues to be successfully utilized by parties involved in complaints filed with



**William V. Minner**  
Executive Director

the Commission and has been studied by many other agencies.

This summer KHRC representatives attended the Annual Meeting of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA). At that meeting a resolution was passed congratulating KHRC Chairman James E. Butler on his lifelong dedication to the cause of civil/human rights and his many years of service as a KHRC Commissioner. The resolution additionally recognized the KHRC as "one of

the most successful Civil and Human Rights offices in the nation." It is unprecedented for KHRC and a member of the Commission to have received such international recognition from our peers in this profession.

In further recognition of Chairman Butler, the success of the agency, and the resolution recognition from IAOHRA, Governor Kathleen Sebelius added to the compliments by awarding Chairman Butler with a Certificate of Recognition.

As a final note specifically to Mr. Butler, all past and present Commissioners, and agency staff who have worked so hard to improve the agency's success, I offer my congratulations and say, "Job well done." We will make every effort to see that the success continues.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>Butler Reflects</b>	2
<b>Meet the New PIO</b>	2
<b>Brown Site Opens</b>	3
<b>Chicago Conference</b>	4
<b>New Diversity Training</b>	4
<b>KRHC Briefs</b>	5
<b>A Look at the Numbers</b>	5

## New Assistant Director Hired

Ruth Glover joined the Kansas Human Rights Commission staff on November 3, 2004. Ruth was hired for the position of Assistant Director in the Topeka Office. Ruth has a Bachelor of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from Kansas State University.

Ruth has extensive budget, fiscal, and administrative experience with several state

agencies, most recently with the Kansas Department on Aging, and Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my first months with the Commission and look forward to many more," Glover said.

Ruth originally from Wamego, now resides in Topeka with her husband, Brad Buchanan, and two children, Jacob and Sarah.



**Kansas State Capitol Building**

# Reflections of the Past and Visions of the Future

When Martin Luther King Jr. Day was celebrated in January, Chairman of the Kansas Human Rights Commission James E. Butler submitted an editorial piece to many of the state newspapers. Consequently, some of the state media outlets published his letter. The following is a portion of the piece which was submitted by Mr. Butler, as he reflected on the changes he has seen in the area of civil rights, and a part of the vision he has for the future endeavors of the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

As we reflect on the seventy-sixth birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., it is important to remember the achievements of yesteryear. Segregated lunch counters, sitting in the back of the bus, and sending children to segregated schools far outside their own neighborhoods are distant memories.

But, as we relish these past accomplishments, it is imperative to carry those feats forward by preventing and eliminating

today's discriminatory acts. As Kansans, we are fortunate our forefathers realized the enduring importance of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity by enacting the Kansas Act Against Discrimination in 1953, making Kansas the twelfth state with an anti-discrimination law. Representative Myles Stevens of Kansas City was particularly instrumental in passing this legislation.

When we remember Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, it is easy to think of distant places like Memphis or Atlanta. Topeka, Manhattan, Wichita, Dodge City, or dozens of other Kansas towns don't cross our minds, but they should. From July 2003 to June 2004, 855 discrimination complaints were filed with the KHRC. The KHRC received 10,453 inquiries and resolved 841 cases of alleged discrimination, recovering \$1,435,616 for complainants. This last figure does not include the value of positions or jobs, which may have been

obtained by the Commission for complainants, nor does it include other non-monetary remedies.

As we commemorate the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., we should rightfully, reflect on the progress our society has made and Kansas in particular.

Although the number of complaints alleging discrimination has declined, we still have strides to make: 855 complaints are 855 complaints too many.

We urge all Kansans, on this occasion filled with remembrance of the past and hope for the future, to protect their federal and state rights by reporting today's discriminatory acts in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations to the KHRC. Our Topeka office can be reached at 1-888-793-6874. We also urge interested parties to subscribe to our Spectrum newsletter or participate in our Annual Employment Conference.



**James E. Butler**  
KHRC Chairman

Chairman Butler is the longest serving Commissioner in the history of the Kansas Human Rights Commission, serving under five Kansas governors. Chairman Butler was commended by the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies in August 2004 for his lifetime dedication to the cause of civil and human rights and his 25 years of service to the State of Kansas and the KHRC.

## Teaching the Public About the KHRC

Former history teacher Jeremy Deckard was hired January 7, 2005, as Public Information Officer for the Kansas Human Rights Commission. Jeremy had worked as an Intake Specialist for the KHRC prior to being promoted to the PIO position.

In this position, Deckard is responsible for educating the public on Kansas Discrimination Laws, publishes the *Spectrum*, aids in the preparation of the agency's annual report, and coordinates the annual KHRC

Employment Law Seminar.

Prior to his employment with the KHRC, Deckard taught history and social studies in Topeka.

Deckard earned his Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Pittsburg State University. Deckard also worked as a Sports Writer for the Pittsburg Morning Sun. Jeremy, originally from Marquette, lives in Topeka with his wife Amy and their two pugs Poncho and Lefty.

## Thoughts on the KHRC

**"This agency probably wins the award, at least during the time I've been in politics, for the most improved agency in state government and performance. I think they are an example of what really can happen if people decide to work together and get their job done right. I'm pleased that you (the Budget Committee) feel that they are on still on track."**

**Representative Melvin J. Neufeld,  
Ingalls, Kansas**

# Educate and Remember.....

## Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site Opens

The Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site opened its doors on May 17, 2004, as the 50th Anniversary of the Brown v. BOE decision was celebrated.

The historic site offers several exhibits and interactive lessons to educate the public about not only the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court Decision, but also in the events and people who made up the Civil Rights Movement.

The Brown decision, which was made in 1954, came a year after the Kansas Act Against Discrimination was passed.

As the Kansas Human Rights Commission continues to educate the public and enforce the act by which it was created, so too does the Brown

Civil Rights Act of 1964, if it were not for the Brown decision in '54," Minner said. "Brown is very significant to all of us who work in the field of civil rights."

"Since we've opened in



v. BOE National Historic Site May 2004, we have had more than 20,000 visitors," Miller said.

One of the ongoing goals of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site is to be a player in the education of young people about the civil rights period.

"This National Park is not just about the story and struggle of African Americans, it's about depicting the legacy of Brown v. Board of Education, and the Civil Rights Movement as a whole," LaTonya Miller, Public Affairs Specialist said. "I'm sure that the goals of the Historic Site and the Kansas Human Rights Commission are similar, in that, we strive to educate society and all people."

William V. Minner, Executive Director of the KHRC, also understands the significance of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court Decision.

"We certainly recognize that you would not have had the

**Above Picture: The Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site**

# KHRC Commissioners

**James E. Butler**

*Chairman*

At Large, Manhattan

**David A. Hanson**

*Vice-Chairman*

Legal, Topeka

**Errol V. Williams**

Industry, Topeka

**Deborah A. Wheeler**

Industry, Emporia

**Brenda C. Jones**

Labor, Kansas City

**Beth Bradrick, Ph.D**

Labor, Pittsburg

**Lou Ann Thoms**

Real Estate, Topeka

*By law, the Commission must represent particular areas of the workforce and community. In addition, no more than four Commissioners may belong to one particular political party. The Governor of the State Kansas appoints all seven Commissioners to serve the Kansas Human Rights Commission.*

**" We conclude that, in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place."**

**Chief Justice Earl Warren**

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

From his opinion of the court

Decided May 17, 1954

# "Make No Little Plans..."

## Members of the KHRC attend the 56th Annual IAOHRA Conference in Chicago

"Human Rights Agencies as Architects for Change" was the theme of the 56th Annual International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) held in Chicago, Illinois on August 5-9, 2004. In attendance from Kansas were Commissioner James Butler, Chairman of the Kansas Human Rights Commission; Commissioner Brenda Jones; Commissioner Errol Williams; and Mr. William V. Minner, Executive Director.

IAOHRA President, James L. Stowe stated that "The world is ever changing demographically with issues of human interaction becoming more and

more complex. There yet remains one field of work and endeavor dedicated and positioned to shape, change, and manage the human affairs of our society. The field of work is human and civil rights and those who are endeavoring to be the managers or architects of change are you and I."

The host of the conference, Rocco Claps, Director of the Illinois Department of Human Rights and his staff were instrumental in making the conference experiences educational, enlightening and entertaining. Held in downtown at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers Cityfront Center, the setting

related closely with the "make no little plans" quote from the renowned Chicago architect, Daniel H. Burnham, who in 1909 devised the Plan of Chicago.

Conference highlights included the IAOHRA 2004 Conference Lifetime Achievement Award given to Reverend Willie T. Barrow, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, Inc. and a panel discussion regarding the employment of people with disabilities including members Jill Sheehan/ Sears Roebuck and Company and Dr. William Kennedy Smith, Center for International Rehabilitation; and an overview of Human Rights Issues by

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson.

One of the conference highlights brought the spotlight home to Kansas as Commissioner James Butler was recognized for his lifetime dedication to the cause of civil and human rights, and his 25 years of service to the state of Kansas and the Kansas Human Rights Commission. Mr. Butler was presented an award, and recognized during a luncheon by IAOHRA President, James Stowe. Kansas was also recognized as the first agency to showcase employees, commissioners, and daily operations at an IAOHRA conference.

## Diversity Training Available Soon

The Kansas Human Rights Commission will soon add a new presentation topic that will be offered to the public. "The Economic Advantages of Diversity Management," is a presentation that will soon be offered through the Public Information Program.

This presentation will focus on the "Four Layers of Diversity" and looks at different examples of how the issue of diversity is addressed in current businesses. The KHRC has had a number of groups ask about the availability of diversity training through our agency, and it is an area that our agency is address-

ing.

The Public Information Program also offers presentations on the topics of Fair Housing, Third Party Mediation, Sexual Harassment, as well as a general overview of the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

These presentations and training sessions are offered to the public free of charge. If your business or organization has a need for a KHRC presentation please contact Jeremy Deckard, KHRC Public Information Officer at the Topeka Office: (785) 296-3206.



The Spectrum is a publication of the Kansas Human Rights Commission. Free Subscriptions are available. If you would like to be placed on our mailing list, please contact the Topeka Office. All comments and suggestions are appreciated, and should be addressed to the editor, Jeremy Deckard: (785) 296-3206 or [jeremy.deckard@khrc.state.ks.us](mailto:jeremy.deckard@khrc.state.ks.us). Copies of the Spectrum can be taken from our web site in PDF format. We also anticipate being able to distribute the Spectrum via email in PDF format. If you would like to receive a copy of the Spectrum via e-mail please contact Jeremy Deckard. Visit us on the web at [www.khrc.net](http://www.khrc.net).

## Agency Briefs

### Kirksey Promoted

Orie Kirksey was promoted to Investigative Administrator in May 2004. Kirksey originally from El Paso, Texas, has worked for the KHRC for more than 10 years and was the Intake Supervisor prior to her promotion.

### McKinley Promoted

In September 2004, Kelly McKinley was promoted to the position of Intake Supervisor. McKinley was previously hired in June 2002, as an Intake Specialist. McKinley is originally from Topeka, and currently resides in Topeka.

### Gusman: New SI

The Dodge City office has hired a new Special Investigator. Herminia Gusman was hired by the KRHC after working with truant students in the Dodge City Area. Gusman speaks fluent Spanish, and will also do some of the education presentations in Western Kansas.

### Easterling Hired

Robert Easterling was hired as an Intake Specialist in February 2005. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Kansas University and his Masters of Science in Administration of Justice degree from the University of Louisville. Easterling comes to the KHRC after working for the Shawnee County Election Office.

## The KHRC's Mission and Philosophy.....

### Plus a Look at the Numbers

The mission of the Kansas Human Rights Commission is to prevent and eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities in all employment relations, to eliminate and prevent discrimination, segregation or separation, and ensure equal opportunities in all places of public accommodations and in housing.

The agency's philosophy is to act in accordance with the highest standards in pro-

fessional conduct, ethics, efficiency and accountability. Realizing that the principles of equality and protection of basic human rights are the most noble of human efforts, we dedicated our activities toward the purpose, believing that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.

Below you will find statistical information concerning the number of complaints that were filed with the Kansas

Human Rights Commission in Fiscal Years 2003, and 2004.

While it is the goal of our agency to eliminate discrimination, as one looks at the data, it is apparent that the KHRC is working towards that goal.

In order to file a discrimination complaint, please call one of our four offices. Our agency information is located on the folded portion of this newsletter.

### COMPLAINTS FILED FY 2004

AREA	COMPLAINTS
EMPLOYMENT	809
HOUSING	7
PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION	39
TOTAL CHARGES FILED	855

### COMPLAINTS FILED FY 2003

AREA	COMPLAINTS
EMPLOYMENT	832
HOUSING	5
PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION	33
TOTAL CHARGES FILED	870

*The above statistical data is included in the Kansas Human Rights Commission Annual Report. To view the agency annual reports in their entirety please go to [www.khrc.net](http://www.khrc.net) and click on the Annual Report Links.*

## KHRC Annual Employment Law Seminar

The Kansas Human Rights Commission will once again host an Employment Law Seminar in the Fall of 2005. A date for the seminar has yet to be announced. However, expect a date to be announced in

the Summer Edition of the Spectrum. The Seminar is a one-day event that will take place in Topeka, KS. The Seminar will offer information about current Employment laws.

Anyone interested in attending can contact Jeremy Deckard, Public Information Officer, at (785) 296-3206 to be placed on a mailing list for future information concerning the seminar and the KHRC.

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∴ Eternal Vigilance is the ∴  
∴ Price of Freedom ∴

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