

TOPEKA HIGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News from the Paul Fink Room

THS Historical Society/Alumni Association, 800 SW Tenth Ave, Topeka, KS 66612
Website: thshistoricalociety.org Phone: 785-295-3200 Email: thshs2001@yahoo.com Vol. 39 No.3, October 2020

Topeka High Hall of Fame inducting four outstanding graduates

By Vickie Griffith Hawver

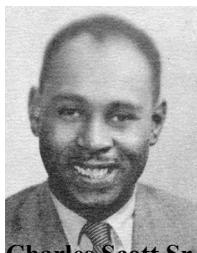
Four outstanding Topeka High School graduates—two lawyer brothers, a saxophonist, and a sculptor—are being inducted into the THS Graduate Hall of Fame this fall.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will not be a ceremony this year, a traditional autumn event at the school's Woodward Library. The four inductees are being honored posthumously, as are two former staff members who are receiving the Distinguished Staff designation.

Portraits of the four honored graduates will be added to the THS Hall of Fame Room and the two staff members' names will be added to the Distinguished Staff plaque outside the THS Historical Society second-floor office. This would have been the 39th Hall of Fame ceremony with 117 THS graduates having been previously inducted and 25 former staff/faculty having been honored with the Distinguished Staff designation.

Next year's Hall of Fame ceremony is scheduled to be held on Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, in conjunction with the 2021 Homecoming Weekend as part of Topeka High's 150th birthday celebration.

The 2020 THS Hall of Fame inductees are:



Charles Scott Sr.

Charles Scott Sr., class of 1940, and John Scott, class of 1938, two of the three attorneys who filed the landmark Brown V. Topeka Board of Education case. John and Charles had suspended their law studies when they were called to serve in World War II, but returned to Washburn Law School and upon graduation, joined their father, Elisha Scott, who had been



John Scott

the third African-American to graduate from Washburn Law, to form the law firm of Scott, Scott and Scott. Charles and John Scott, along with Charles Bledsoe, filed Brown V. Topeka, a fight for the educational equality of all children, on Feb. 28, 1951, in the U.S. District

Court of Kansas. They had worked to recruit a group of 13 families willing to challenge the school board's segregated elementary schools in Topeka and recruited expert witnesses to testify about the psychological harm of segregation. The case was unsuccessful in district court, but the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the district court on May 17, 1954, in the famous, far-reaching decision. John Scott died in 1984 at age 65 and Charles Scott in 1989 at age 67.



Coleman Hawkins attended THS around 1920, a saxophonist. Born in 1904 in St. Joseph MO, he began studying piano at age 5,

cello at age 7 and the tenor saxophone at age 9. By age 14, he was playing saxophone around eastern Kansas, mostly in Kansas City. He performed with the Fletcher Henderson Big Band for 10 years in New York, jamming with jazz greats including Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman. He toured Europe and recorded for the Keynote, Savoy, and Apollo labels. He was the leader on what is considered to have been the first ever bebop recording session on Feb. 16, 1944, including Dizzy Gillespie, Don Byas, Clyde Har, Oscar Pettiford, and Max Roach. His hit song, "Body and Soul," is an outpour-

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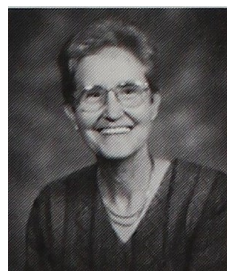
ing of irregular, double-timed melodies that became one of the most imitated of all jazz solos. He died in 1969. He didn't graduate from high school but is being awarded an honorary diploma from current THS principal Rebecca Morrissey.



Robert Merrell Gage, class of 1911, a sculptor. Born in 1892 in Topeka, after graduation from Washburn University of Topeka, Gage left Kansas to study sculpture with Gutzom Borglum, who carved the figures on Mount Rushmore, and Robert Henri, both exponents of the "American Theme" in art, in New

York and France. When he returned to Topeka, he began his first public commission, the statue of President Abraham Lincoln on the Kansas Capitol grounds. In fact, he executed the likenesses of Lincoln in many stages of the president's life, and in 1955 Gage starred in a short film, *The Face of Lincoln*, with that film winning an Academy Award for Best Live action Short Film. His other works include the Pioneer Mother Memorial near the Lincoln statue, the Police Memorial and Veterans' Fountain in Kansas City, and the History of California frieze in Beverly Hills. Some have called him "the American sculptor." He died in 1981.

This year's Distinguished Staff members are:



Shirley Huttenhoff, class of 1953, who taught family and consumer science courses in Topeka public schools for more than 50 years. An expert seamstress, she began teaching in USD 501 in 1959, working at Boswell Junior High, Topeka Education Center and Sheldon Elementary School.

She began teaching at Topeka High in 1994, officially retiring in 2010, but returning to teach until 2015. She died in 2017.



Ora McMillen, who taught home economics at Topeka High from 1917 to 1951. She initiated the tradition of the Topeka High graduation Daisy Chain of junior girls dressed in long pastel dresses and hats.

Second Chances



In 1957, **Marita Leonard, class of 1960** and **Roger Christian, class of 1959**, met at Topeka High School, when Marita was a sophomore and Roger was a junior. They were in the THS Band and both played the clarinet. A romance began, however it was on-and-off through 1959 when Roger graduated. He went on to attend

Washburn University. Marita also went to Washburn after graduating the following year, yet they never saw one another during their time at the university. Their paths crossed only three times during the sixty-some years following high school. They each went different directions in their lives. Roger had married and so had Marita; however, both had become widowed in the recent years.

For nearly two years, Marita had been praying to bring someone into her life to be a companion and help alleviate the loneliness following the death of her husband, Sam.

Behold, Washburn University Alumni Association's After Hours monthly social! Roger began attending late in the summer of 2018, following the death of his wife, Sherrie, a year earlier. Marita had already been attending the socials for a time. The second time Roger was there, he asked Marita, "Why did you break up with me in high school?" "I can tell you why!" she responded. "We need to talk and have a deeper discussion about this situation," he said. Over lunch a couple of weeks later, Roger found out that his teenage dating pattern had not been acceptable to her so she made the decision to move on with her life during her senior year at Topeka High and enjoy the life of a graduate. Thus, the lunch they had in September of 2018 creates the "rest of the story" and a happily ever after second chance.

150th Oral History Project - Sharing Memories

By Vickie Griffith Hawver

Rick Friedstrom, class of 1969, is finding his years as an insurance salesman are paying off for a volunteer job he's doing for his alma mater: He's spending a lot of time chatting with fellow Topeka High graduates about their memories of the school.

And he's loving the job.

The Topeka High 150th Planning Committee, of which Friedstrom is a member, wanted to get stories from graduates about what they remember about Topeka High: favorite teachers, favorite classes, good or bad events, just plain life as they experienced it while at the school. The original idea was to send out questionnaires for graduates to answer and return.

But instead, committee members wondered, why not record the reminiscences and preserve the graduates' voices?

"They wanted to get people to sit down and talk," Friedstrom said. "They told me, 'You're retired, you were in insurance, you're used to visiting with people,' and I gave it some thought and decided sure, I'll do it."

In his first 30 days on the job, Friedstrom has interviewed 19 people.

"We take about 10 minutes for me to explain what we're doing, I turn the recorder on, and then it's a visit, a dialogue. I ask a few questions to get it started and pretty soon, it's just two friends getting together," Friedstrom said.

And they are getting together, despite the pandemic. For many visits, Friedstrom and the graduates sit on a deck or back porch, six feet apart, wearing masks. One visit was on the patio of a local bar and grill. Another was at the new plaza at Topeka High. Only several people he has asked to interview have declined, and that's been because of the pandemic.

He has visited mostly folks in Topeka but has made several trips outside the city. He has done one phone interview so far, and may check into doing interviews over the Internet. But he really likes the in-person visits.

"I am enjoying sitting down with people," he said. "I feel like I'm going back to work for New York Life again, visiting with people. After we're finishing up and I put everything away, they say something, and I put the recorder back on because they've got more to say."

Friedstrom visited one alum, who due to a stroke had a little difficulty conversing but at the end of the visit, the person said, "This is the most fun I had talking about things in a long time." That made Friedstrom's day.

Calling upon his insurance sales experience, at the end of each interview, Friedstrom asks if the person knows anyone else who might be interested in talking to him—essentially, asks for a referral. And he gets them.

Friedstrom is using a special recorder that Gary Krohe, class of 1971, donated to the Topeka High School Historical Society. Friedstrom could use some help with transcribing the recordings.

"That's the next step, how we transcribe and how we preserve," Friedstrom said, adding that how—in written or audio form or a combination—all these memories will be shared hasn't been determined yet.

"It's not a project to be done next week," Friedstrom said. "It may last as long as I want it to last. We're not sure how it will be presented yet, this history of the people who attended Topeka High."

Friedstrom can be contacted about this project to preserve memories as part of Topeka High's 150th celebration at 785-217-5813 or rfriedstorm1@gmail.com



Rick Friedstrom, right, interviewed **John (THS 1950)** and **Alicia Laing (THS 1957) Salisbury** on the Barrett Western Plaza on a Saturday morning in September.

Black & Gold Report

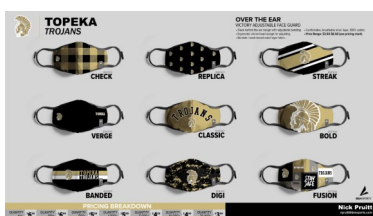
The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, located in Kansas City, MO., unveiled an exhibit featuring items from Gil Carter. Carter passed away on May 31, 2015 at the age of 83, is a member of the Shawnee County Baseball Hall of Fame and National Baseball Congress Hall of Fame while also being honored with the Pride of Kansas award from the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame.

TROY TODAY



Rafael Garcia/Topeka Capital-Journal

THS senior, Chrishayla Adams was selected as the statewide student president for Jobs for America's Graduates - Kansas. She hopes she can use the position to inspire others to learn to use their voices, much like she did when she first joined the career preparation class, instructed by Teresa Leslie-Canty (THS 1983) and Carlos Kelly (THS Head Football Coach). After completing a video making her case for the position, students at a statewide conference of JAG-K participants chose her as the organization's next student president.



Under the leadership of **Kelm Lear (THS 2021)**, the THS Interact Club procured masks for the student body and staff, with almost 6,000 extra for replacements.



THS 2020 Homecoming is one for the books. The pandemic didn't stop the longstanding tradition. Clubs set up displays at Hummer Sports Park. Thanks to **Dick Carter (THS PTO President)** for the use of his vintage truck, **Denise Heavner (THS Faculty)** and **Sheila Brunkow Krohe (THS 1999)**.



The Kroger Stores sponsors the Community Rewards Program of Dillons. Go to www.dillons.com/communityrewards and shop for Topeka High.



SHOP AND GIVE WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME - It's easy!

- Start at smile.amazon to support the THS Historical Society every time you shop.
- Amazon donates .5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service
- Support your favorite charity, the THSHS by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com.

Wondering what to do with your used car, truck or motorcycle? Donating your old vehicle to the Topeka High School Historical Society is convenient, easy, and may qualify you for a tax deduction. And best of all, your donation of that used vehicle will make a big difference in supporting Topeka High projects.



All you need to do is to complete the Vehicles for Charity simple form on the THSHS website or call 1-866-628-2277 and we'll take care of the rest. We will pick up your vehicle, arrange to have your donation towed, and provide you with a tax-deductible receipt, all at no charge to you. Call 1-866-628-2277 or online at www1.thsweb.org/alumni/vehicles-for-charity.



Consider including the
**TOPEKA HIGH SCHOOL
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In your estate planning
Call the THSHS office for details
(785) 295-3200

IN MEMORY OF OUR GRADUATES

Gordon V. Scott 1933
 Irene Hinman 1936
 Mary Staley Woodhull 1939
 Max D. Shaw 1939
 Elliot H. Woodhull 1939
 Jean Badders Daniels 1940
 Katherine Kelly Galbraith 1941
 John S. Dean 1942
 Ruth Wright Hupe 1942
 Idress U. Stovall 1943
 Norton Belknap 1943
 John P. Holliday 1944
 Mary Lou Allen Neill 1945
 Paul A. McAlister 1945
 Herbert McPartling 1945
 William G. Ziegler 1945
 Philip T. Keeshan 1946
 Madge Tillinghast Garrison 1947
 Martha McGill Senogles 1947
 Joyce Harrison Smith 1947
 Janice Hammond Walker 1948
 Harry E. 'Gene' Echols 1948
 Frederick R. Guild 1948
 Darlene Heberling Gooding 1949
 Marilyn Archer Stutts 1949
 Gene Davenport 1949
 Lois Proctor Trace 1949
 Spencer W. Finney, Jr. 1949
 Richard D. Lewis 1950
 Galen L. DeGraw 1950
 Barbara Bradstreet Boltz 1951

William G. Wallace 1951
 Clinton H. Thompson 1951
 M. Joan Pauley Diehl 1952
 Fred S. Jackson 1953
 Kathleen Haskell Olweiler 1953
 Gerald 'Bud' Kinder 1953
 Janet Crews Stratton 1953
 Marquita Henry Cummings 1954
 Joyce Ridinger Trostle 1954
 John 'Jack' Shields 1954
 Laura Graves Richmond 1955
 Nancy Henley Whiffen 1955
 Arkie G. Hudkins, Jr. 1956
 Helen McGrew Garner 1956
 Robert Jovalis 1956
 Thomas A. Munson 1957
 Darlene Graham Dozier 1957
 Judith Berry Chapman 1957
 Dixie Wettengel Flott 1957
 Carol Sandbloom Oswald 1957
 Ruth Huffman King 1957
 David L. Stah. 1957
 Nancy Stamm Finley 1957
 Velma Soudek Dinkle 1957
 Anna Schumann Smith 1957
 Joyce Robinson Elliott 1957
 Sherman Keeling 1957
 Janice Marlow Cathcart 1957
 Carole Masquat Garrison 1957
 Merrill E. McCall 1957
 Robert A. Anderson 1957

Marian Gates Swain 1957
 Virginia Clark Staton 1957
 Travies Berryman Smith 1957
 Gary Morgan 1957
 Ruth Scales Everett 1958
 Janice Taylor 1960
 Peter B. Barham 1960
 John J. Dominguez 1960
 Suzanne Robinett Brown 1961
 Jim Kelly 1961
 Nels A. Anderson IV 1962
 Tommy J. Royer 1963
 Patricia Wilder Rokey 1964
 Judy Hunter Doyle 1963
 Karen Alumbaugh Simpson 1965
 Fred L. Stewart, Jr. 1965
 Homer G. (Bert) Johnson III 1967
 Vicki Luthye Lee 1967
 Terri McClelland Johnson 1967
 David P. Holle 1969
 Janet Henderson Jones-Gast 1971
 James E. Slover 1971
 Daniel L. DeHart 1972
 Catherine Dycus 1973
 Debbie Briman Latta 1974
 Laurie McFarland Ritchie 1978
 Matthew Fox 1983
 Frederick W. 'Erick' Benke IV 2004
 Phoenix Nesmith 2017

~ 2021 CLASS REUNIONS ~

Homecoming 2021 - September 24 - THS vs Manhattan

| <u>Class</u> | <u>Dates</u> | <u>For More Information</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|---|
| Class of 1960 | Postponed until 2021 | jpfuetze@gmail.com, samari0043@gmail.com |
| Class of 1965 | Postponed until 2021 | cadair47@gmail.com |
| Class of 1970 | Postponed until 2021 | dwdscednal@yahoo.com (Postponed) |
| Class of 1980 | Postponed until 2021 | mbrentnall@gmail.com, Facebook, www.topekahigh1980.com |
| Class of 1985 | Postponed until 2021 | Chuck Metzger |
| Class of 1990 | TBA | Facebook |
| Class of 2000 | Postponed until 2021 | TaCarra82@yahoo.com, Facebook |
| Class of 2010 | Postponed until 2021 | williamchristopherdale@gmail.com |
| Class of 1961 | September 24-26, 2021 | skipglad43@windstream.net |
| Class of 1971 | May 28-29, 2021 | pmorgan379@gmail.com, Facebook, |

The THS Historical Society assists class reunions by: 1. providing classmate contact information 2. arranging THS tours 3. facilitating the use of the building 4. offering discounts for memberships during reunions. Go to thshistoricalsociety.org for words to the school song, THS graphics, information for reunion coordinators and more. **Let the THSHS know if your class is having a reunion and we'll help you get the word out to your classmates.**

Updates on the 150th celebration

Surviving and thriving after 150 years! This incredible milestone for Topeka High School deserves our best effort ever. Events throughout the next two years will help current students, graduates, today's faculty, former staff and the community connect with each other as we celebrate.

Topeka High has withstood challenges with fortitude, from dealing with differing opinions about the necessity to provide more than an 8th grade education for Topeka youth, an epidemic and keeping up with technology in a 90 year old building.

An example of Trojan endurance happened over 150 years ago. After Lineus A. Thomas survived the torment of the infamous Andersonville prison camp during the Civil War, he headed home to Kansas. To cross the Mississippi, he boarded the steamship Sultana. Carrying three times the load it was designed for, the Sultana exploded. Thomas was one of the 20 percent who survived. Then he came to Topeka and became the first principal of Topeka High School. In 2021, Topeka High will salute another type of endurance - its 150th anniversary. This demands a fete like no other and we are inviting you to play a crucial role in making it happen.

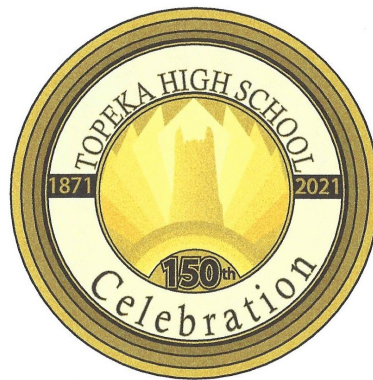
Events in 2021 might need to be rescheduled to later dates. The Black & Gold Gala, originally planned for January 2021, has been rescheduled for December 2021. The even will be a musical gala and VIP dinner with a holiday flair featuring **Richetta Manager (1971)**.

The new plan for *Fiddler on the Roof* is to move it to November 2021. The THS Theatre Department hopes in a year from now they will be able to do it justice and invite alumni to join in the production.

They will be replacing it this year, contract pending, with a show called *Songs for a New World*, which is a "very theatrical song cycle" centered on the theme of hitting a crossroads moment in your life, or encountering a major unexpected life event, that forces you to "have to make a choice, or take a stand, or turn around and go back." An appropriate musical for the times.

On April 24, 2021 alumni can relive their youth at a sock hop that will coincide with the THS prom. The students will be in the cafeteria and the adults in the

new gymnasium, where **Sal Cruz, (1989)** will be the disc jockey. Sponsored by **Michael Stimpert (THS 1962)**



'Crawl Kansas Avenue' on May 28, 2021 and enjoy the Topeka downtown establishments. The film by **Gary Krohe (THS 1971)** who brought us "Portraits of Troy," will be shown at the new Evergy Plaza on Kansas Avenue.

A graduate art show will open on Friday, June 4, 2021, sponsored by **Becky Robb Dickinson (THS 1972)**.

The annual Chimes Concert will be on the lawn on Sunday, June 27.

When students return for classes in the fall of 2021, the 1871 opening day of Topeka High School on Friday, September 17 will be celebrated with birthday cake for students and staff, sponsored by **Gayle and Alice Terry (THS 1951) Vernon**.

Homecoming assembly & parade on Friday, September 24, 2021 with a special halftime show at the football game. Open House, Graduate Variety Show and Finale on Saturday, September 25.

You can keep up with events and activities through the **Topeka High 150 Facebook page**, at **Topeka-High150.com** and at the **Topeka High School Historical Society website**. THSHistoricalSociety.org.

Get involved:

We need people for committees planning the various events, as well as people to help host & sponsor them. Let us know how you would like to help by sending an email to TopekaHigh150@gmail.com.

Sponsor Opportunities:

- ◆ 4-5 fiberglass Trojan statuettes - \$10,000
- ◆ 150th banners on Tenth Ave. - \$1,500
- ◆ THS 150th City bus wrap - \$1,000 - \$3,000
- ◆ 150th buttons for Students & Staff - \$2,700
- ◆ Gala & Concert - \$6,000, plus a recording
- ◆ Evenings/Afternoons with THS celebrities - \$1,000 per event
- ◆ 150 Years of THS, the book by Douglass Wallace (1965) - \$5,000
- ◆ 150 Years of THS, the documentary - \$10,000
- ◆ Grand Finale at Homecoming - \$20,000
- ◆ Graduate Variety Show - \$5,000
- ◆ Advertising & Publicity - \$5,000

THS Historical Society Supporters (On a mission for THS)

Graduation Year _____

First Name _____ Last Name (at graduation) _____ Current Last Name _____

THS Spouse's First Name _____ Last Name _____ Spouse Graduation Year _____

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES – (for operational expenses & THSHS special events)

| | Amount |
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| Yearly (\$25) | \$ _____ |
| 5 Years (\$100) | \$ _____ |
| Special annual payment of \$1 for each year since my graduation (i.e. Class of 1966, 50 years since graduation=\$50) | \$ _____ |

I want to give a membership to:

Name _____ Graduation year _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Membership levels: ____ Yearly (\$25) ____ 5 Year (\$100) ____ 10 Year (\$175)

Total \$ _____

Check enclosed: ☐ (payable to THS Historical Society or THSHS) TOTAL \$ _____

Charge account: ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ American Express ☐ Discover (**\$50 minimum requested**)

Name on Card: _____

Number: _____ - _____ - _____ CV # (required) _____

Expiration Date: Month _____ Year _____

Mail to: THSHS, 800 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66612, or pay dues online at: <http://www.thshistoricalsociety.org/>

EACH ONE TREAT ONE! ***Looking for something fun to do?***

Random acts of kindness have been popping up all around the country during this stressful virus time. We know many of our fellow graduates don't even know the Topeka High Historical Society exists. Why not treat one of your friends to a surprise annual membership in the society for something fun to do? You could be a hero to them for this small act of generosity and they could then find out what is going on at THS through the society's newsletter and the THSHS Facebook page. We have been running around 1700+ members and would love to get in touch with many more of our graduates as

new members. You can help make that happen. If you appreciate the society and what we are doing, please consider this a chance to do a one-to-one act of kindness and send them a free membership right out of the blue. People always enjoy a free gift from a friend, especially as a surprise! If they enjoy it, they can then do the same for another of their friends.

Fill out the form on this page and send the payment to: THSHS, 800 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66612 or pay online at thshistoricalsociety.org

THSHS NEWSLETTER ONLINE

Let us know if you are interested in receiving the THSHS newsletter online. This might be a good option for you if you travel or leave your primary address part of the year.



THS Historical Society
800 W Tenth Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

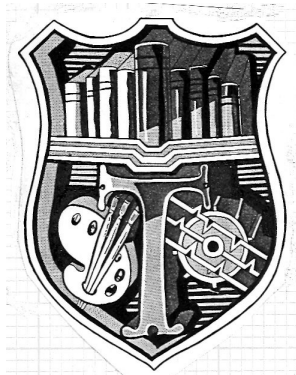
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The THS Historical Society has a new software program that will help us keep better track of our members and donors. You might have recently received a notice of your expired or soon to be delinquent dues payment. An aspect of the new program is it doesn't recognize life member payments in the same way as our old system and you might have received that dues payment reminder. Even though we haven't offered a life membership for several years we certainly honor those of you who joined us at that level. Consider setting up a recurring annual dues payments online at thshistoricalsociety.org It's easy!

The THS Historical Society appreciates our members!

Help us get the word out about our mission to support Topeka High. Encourage a classmate or friend to join the THSHS. Consider giving a THSHS membership to a sibling or classmate as a gift. You don't have to be a THS graduate to be a THSHS member. All who are interested in historic preservation of a Topeka landmark are welcome. You can remit your dues by completing the form on page 7 of this newsletter or by going on-line at thshistoricalsociety.org and renewing by credit card.



THS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACCOUNTS

THSHS ENDOWMENT - Established in 2019 to sustain the operations of the THSHS and encourage building preservation - administered by the Topeka Community Foundation

THSHS 150TH - These funds are used for the celebration activities/events
THSHS TOWER SOCIETY— established in 2009 to be used for building projects - list of donors is included once a year in the THSHS newsletter and on the THSHS website

**MEMBERSHIP DUES AND YEAR
END APPEAL**— These funds are used for operating expenses of the THSHS.