

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FEBRUARY 26, 2019

CONTACT: Sarah VanLanduyt
sarah@artsjoco.org
913-894-2720

ARTS COUNCIL OF JOHNSON COUNTY ANNOUNCES DR. MARY E. DAVIDSON AS 2019 SHOOTING STARS HONORARY CHAIR

OVERLAND PARK, KS – February 26, 2019 – The Arts Council of Johnson County (ACJC) is pleased to announce Dr. Mary E. Davidson as the 2019 Shooting Stars Honorary Chair.

“Dr. Davidson has long been an avid advocate for both the arts and education. We are incredibly honored for her to be a part of this year’s Shooting Stars Program,” said Sarah VanLanduyt, ACJC Executive Director.

In March 2002, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige appointed Davidson as the secretary’s regional representative (SRR) for Region VII. With headquarters in Kansas City, Region VII includes the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

As the secretary’s regional representative, Davidson served as the department’s liaison to state and local education agencies, public and private schools, colleges and universities and elected representatives of local and state government organizations along with a variety of other education stakeholders.

In addition, Davidson served as assistant director of the William T. Kemper Foundation from 1993 to 1997. She was assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Kansas Regents Center from 1976 to 1992.

Davidson began her education career as a teacher. She taught fifth, sixth and seventh grades in the Kansas City, Missouri, School District at Edwin C. Meservey School and the William Rockhill Nelson Demonstration School. She taught science for K-7 grades for the Kansas City School District's educational television station KCSD – TV Channel 19. She also hosted a program called “Something of Interest” on Telecable, which is now Time Warner Cable.

Davidson also hosted a television program called “It’s Our Community” for the Johnson County Community College television station and is executive director of the Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Charitable Trust.

Davidson and her late husband, Bart, have been long-time supporters of Johnson County Community College and its Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2005 an area on the second floor of the museum that serves as a project space for local artists was named the Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen

Gallery. In 2015, Davidson helped to found the Kansas Focus Gallery on the Nerman Museum's first floor and acquire works from artists associated with Kansas.

Davidson received a doctorate in education administration from the University of Kansas. She received her master of arts in science education for elementary teachers from Columbia University and was awarded a bachelor of science in education at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

In a volunteer capacity, Davidson served as chair of the Board of Overseers for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, receiving the Coast Guard medal for meritorious public service. In addition she served as president of the Overland Park Rotary Club and president of the Overland Park Rotary Club Foundation Board, commissioner of the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Overland Park Planning Commission and the Johnson County Community College Foundation Executive Committee. She served as chair of the World War I Museum Board of Directors and as interim president and CEO of the World War I Museum. Davidson serves on the governance board of the Children's Campus of Kansas City, Kansas. In addition, she was a member of the executive committee of Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area Board of Directors.

In 2007, Saint Teresa's Academy chose Davidson to receive the Mother Evelyn O'Neill Award for Excellence in Education. In 2010, Davidson received the Hugh Speer Award for Distinguished service to Johnson County Community College.

"Throughout Dr. Davidson's educational and professional career, she has been a true Champion of education and the arts. It made perfect sense asking her to be this year's Shooting Stars Honorary Chair. I'm truly grateful Dr. Davidson agreed to serve in that role," said Brian Williams, ACJC Board President.

The Shooting Stars Program promotes the positive impact arts education has on our students by honoring student achievement in the literary, performing and visual arts, providing students with resources to help them achieve their creative career goals, awarding scholarships for college and supporting teachers with honorariums. The 22nd Annual Shooting Gala will be held at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art and Yardley Hall, Johnson County Community College on Sunday, April 7, 2019 at 3 pm.

###