



Planning for Permanence: the Speeches of J.C. Nichols
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Responsibilities and Opportunities of Kansas Realtors

Topeka, Kansas October 6, 1937

We of our profession in Kansas are the builders of our time – we follow a race of noble builders – are we carrying on true to our great heritage?

Picture much of our state – first an inland sea with its prehistoric monsters – eons elapse, these mysterious creatures are replaced by stampeding buffalo, fleet antelope, and roaming Indians.

Time marches on – columns of clanking Spaniards penetrate the plains – soon to be followed by creaking prairie schooners filled with missionaries to the Indians and hardy pioneers who, muskets by their sides, fought their way from Missouri River landings across unknown territory, braving grueling hardships, carved a path of civilization and building westward.

Unbelievable privation developed a sturdy people who laid the enduring foundation of our state – guerilla raids; county seat wars; 17-year locusts; hordes of grasshoppers; devastating prairie fires; cyclones; savage Indians, cholera, chills and ague could not stem the tide, or turn the purpose of the conquering daring of our forefathers.

Here, destiny decreed that the cavalier of the south and the puritan of the north; two contending streams of civilization; should meet in the grim struggle of slavery, and Kansas became the opening battlefield for the nation in a deadly social and economic civil war, spreading to every corner of our land. The ancestral heroism of the men and women of that time bred a Kansas Spirit which guided the whole future growth of our state. The sublime story of those early days when peaceful settlers shouldered their guns to destroy the blight of slavery is one that yet stirs our souls even as it then stirred the soul of the world.

The war ended. Those fighting pioneers, in stern self-reliance, returned to their bibles, and their plows. They were not a downstream type – did not float with the tide – so again they courageously became the builders of their time.

Droughts, pests, lack of markets for the fruits of their toil could not turn them back to the comfortable eastern homes from which they had come.

On the forlorn, sun baked, treeless prairies of the western part of the state they built their houses on ranches and cattle ranges. On the rolling hills of the eastern area they convert the virgin lands into farms.

In times of famine these determined pioneers ate buffalo meat, and even the grasshoppers which infested their fields. The annals of those days are spectacular in

romance of conquest. The cowboys' paradise bred a race of its own. "Boot hill" cemeteries were common.

The ox-drawn plow; the hand reaper and the packhorse, blazed trails throughout the state. First came the building of a church for worship of a lonely people; the rearing of children; the building of schools; all true to the enlightened, determined purposes and passion of one of the noblest groups of crusaders known to history.

Then arose the village general store, displaying the trading posts of earlier days; and became the meeting place and news center of the whole countryside.

Railroad building sped across the state to gain the rich resources of our toiling people; elevators to house the increasing supply of grains; and flour mills, began to rise. Freight rates were exorbitant – interest rates unbearable, and years of struggle still confronted an undaunted people.

This reclaiming of Kansas from a wilderness at the crossroads of the Santa Fe and Oregon trails; and the opening of its vast areas affected the whole national structure. It was the glorious, thrilling epic of the time.

Land booms developed; town site sales flourished. Hard times came like an avalanche – farms were foreclosed; disastrous land booms collapsed and ghost towns became common. Was the spirit of Kansas dying? Would caravans of defeated pioneer begin an eastward trek, devastating and depopulating the state?

Of no answer can we as realtors be more proud – these fathers and mothers of ours responded by erecting more schools, colleges and universities – more and better homes, barns, stores and public buildings!

Red winter wheat was imported from Russia and found to be adapted to the scanty rainfall of the great Kansas plains – and now Kansas harvests annually enough wheat to make 47 loaves of bread for every person in the U.S.!

Creameries were built and canneries established to make nearby markets.

They delved into the earth and produced some of the world's richest salt mines – They played a part in the discovery of the mid-continent oil field – today our second most important industry.

Throughout the state this intelligent, willing, hard-toiling race studied and learned rotation of crops, plant breeding, conservation of soil; up breeding of livestock as Carrol Merriam said today they met their obligations.

Yes, the Great American Desert was yielding to the sturdy hand of the builder – a great face-lifting operation on Mother Nature was under way. Covered wagons with "Busted" signs heading eastward were gone.

As Kansans successfully hewed a state from the wilderness, so did they pioneer in bringing into the state every possible crop and domestic animal adapted to turn those crops into wealth and food for a rapidly growing population.

New grains and grasses were sought; Alfalfa from Persia; sweet clover from Asia; soy beans from Manchuria; sorghums; blue grass; and lespedeza; were added to bins of the grain storage warehouse of the world.

Motorized farming found its most fertile outlet in Kansas, where its people, quick to lead in every advance whether economic, spiritual, or social, responded with bold and thoughtful energy. Even the picturesque cowboy was passing – scientific farming led the march onward.

Orchards were planted along with flower gardens – bleeding Kansas was no more – natural gas, coal, gypsum, lime, lead, helium gas and zinc fields were added to the long list of natural resources abounding in this prolific state. Immense cement, glass and brick plants; and meatpacking plants were built, as well as a long list of varied factories essential to our economic future.

In literacy, in libraries, in art, in music, schools, homes and in innate culture of its people, Kansas stands high. Its people, ever willing to try new ideas; its youth in sturdy devotion to idealism, always to a step further.

Today we have great highways; streamlined trains, airplane factories, and no state has given to our country more leaders in every field of human endeavor.

With all this inheritance almost within the memory of one generation, shall we, Realtors of our time, squander a glorious legacy – this splendid drama of colossal pioneering?

Let me pause to pay tribute to builders of certain Kansas towns and cities.

Puritans from New England and pioneers from Ohio were alert to planning of urban communities. Even in those rugged, perilous days they stopped to think of creation of parks in many of these towns. They placed their courthouses in open squares grouping their business buildings around this meeting place. Their streets were laid out on broad, liberal lines – the old cow path streets of Boston were a thing of the past.

Take your beautiful capital city of Topeka in which we are meeting today. The placement of its capitol building in an open park – its broad, masterful Kansas Ave., its generous provision of parks and playgrounds; its great high school; beautiful homes; zoning law; segregated industrial areas. Certainly a capital city of which every Kansan can be proud.

Note the rapidity with which the storefronts of the shops in many towns throughout this state have been remodeled in tune with the spirit of the age. A new highway goes through overnight the whole commercial picture of the business street begins to readapt itself to a new era and the dawn of new opportunities.

Many of our cities, such as Salina, can boast of the finest residential sections to be found anywhere; laid out on modern lines of curving streets; spacious lawns; careful restrictions; and devoted to the purpose of protecting the amenities of home life.

Ride through town enjoying the great development of oil fields through Midwestern Kansas; note the excellent architecture of many new homes being built. Note the cleanliness generally surrounding these homes.

Through all of this the Kansas realtor has played his part, true to the sacred heritage of the early builders.

But what are the opportunities and responsibilities of Kansas realtors of today? Shall we continue to carry the flag of onward progress? Shall we be a strong, powerful influence in up building of every activity of our state? Shall we be students of every advanced thought and idea relating to the development and protection of property values?

Today I believe we are upon the threshold of a great evolution in real estate standards and practices. Every new highway that enters our town presents new opportunities. Every change in merchandising methods; every advent of new industry has its relation to the merchandise we represent. Yes, we can still serve as pioneers.

Let us not forget that we are responsible for a merchandise, "real property," of greatest value and with most direct relation to every human activity confronting any group of businessmen.

I say to you, if you do not have proper sewerage disposal in your community, you should be the first to accept the blame.

If you have not established zoning regulations to protect property values and to direct future growth of your town, you should take responsibility.

If you are planning and developing a new subdivision for homes without providing proper self-perpetuating residential restrictions, you are not true to our faith.

If you are not promoting industry for your community, if you are failing to assist in the best use of our farms; then you cannot claim that you are living up to the ideals of our profession.

Remember, Kansas came from a line of builders!

The time has long since passed when you should merely serve as agents for transmission of values. Even the farmer boy constantly strives to grow better corn; the factory hands vie with one another to improve their product; the scientist and the chemist risk their lives in their efforts to discover new things or promote knowledge for betterment of mankind.

I say to you, we as a profession ramify in more directions; have more human contacts; more business relations and more vital interest in every activity in our communities; more far-reaching interest in the progress and prosperity of our farms; success of our industries; and the whole future of our state than any other one group of men. We cannot prosper in a static community. We must be a part of dynamic growth.

If eyesores exist in your town or county you should be the one to rise up and battle against them.

If there is an unsightly development along the highway in your county; an old dump of discarded automobiles or refuse along a vacant tract as you approach your town; you should be the first to blush for shame.

If hideous, blaring billboards are encroaching upon your residential section, you should devote your time to eliminating them.

One of the greatest contributions to modern real estate science is the establishment and preservation of neighborhood values. We have long since abandoned the idea that the value of a home or business property is not dependent on its

surroundings. In my judgment at least 50% of the maintenance of the value of a home or business structure depends upon its environment. A beautiful home with excellent architecture and landscape treatment; a fine up-to-date store with an appealing front, built along the most modern lines, cannot battle alone against run-down, dilapidated surroundings.

Whether we are devoting our time to building, selling or renting of homes; or whether much of our effort goes to building or management of business property; we should become the best-informed experts of our community in property management. In expert management advice lies a great field of opportunity for every realtor.

We should array and battle against unnecessary taxes so deadly and so detrimental to real estate ownership in our entire country. The recent recognition of this principle in Kansas by passage of a sales tax law, encourages all property owners. State ad valorem taxes, should be abolished.

If we are true to the ideals and aspirations of the great pioneers of our state we must not discourage home ownership. Let our state become a community of tenants and the one greatest single factor in community interest, in state loyalty and national patriotism will be destroyed.

Let's get down to what we can do to improve ourselves in selling real estate.

In Germany a few years ago a conference was held by the National Cash Register Company at which sales representatives from all of Europe were present. After a lengthy program it was announced they would have the pleasure of hearing a report by one of the salesmen in Germany who had rolled up the greatest record of cash register sales of any man in Europe. Every man in the room was immediately attentive and expectant. They were eager to hear a presentation of sales methods and ideas that would enable them to make more sales.

An insignificant appearing German arose from the audience amid great cheers, heralded as the greatest salesman in all of Europe. He walked confidently to the center of the state, addressed the chairman and then said the following sentence of 13 words; "Gentlemen, there is no question about National Cash Registers which I cannot answer." He thanked his audience and returned to his seat.

For a few moments there was complete silence and then a burst of applause which almost raised the roof. Every man in the room suddenly realized that those 13 words were the actual path to success in selling. That one statement by this lone salesman did more to stimulate sales in that organization than anything that had happened in the history of the company.

Realtors of the state of Kansas, may I apply this to you? Are there any questions about your merchandise which you cannot answer?

If you are selling farms do you know all the facts pertaining to every farm you present?

Do you know the chemical analysis of the soil?

The efficiency of the farm layout?

The nearby markets?

The tax rate?

The most profitable breed of livestock for that farm?

If you do not know these things, you are untrue to our profession in offering farms.

Let's keep this in mind – we as realtors should not be mere puppets through which a channel of exchange may run. It is our task to build values and preserve them.

If you are offering a home for sale – stop and think.

Do you know everything about that home that you, yourself, would wish to know before you invested your own life's savings in it? Perhaps it represents the largest investment your client has ever made, or ever will make, the most important family event that will ever occur to him.

The mere argument that it's a great bargain; or reasons why its present owner is in distress and willing to sell cheap, is not salesmanship.

Haggling about price is not salesmanship.

Analyze and properly appraise the value of the property through all the years he may use it as a home. The old practice of horseback appraisal given with no knowledge or analysis is obsolete and a crime to our profession.

You should know everything about the construction of the building; cost of maintenance; rate for water; taxes; permanency of the neighborhood; whether it is the trend of increasing or decreasing values; and always determine whether or not it is within the ability of your buyer to own it. You should not oversell him.

If it is in a restricted district you should carefully inform him how much surrounding area is under restriction and to what point injurious encroachment may come.

While speaking of buying or building a new home, let me say that I believe the reported shortage of housing units in the U.S. is somewhat exaggerated. Much guessing has come from housing groups, governmental officials, labor unions, and material concerns claiming shortages running from 5,000,000 to 7,500,000 units.

Labor costs and material prices based upon possible demand resulting from such uncertain figures could be unjustifiably increased and seriously check sound building activity.

Overbuilding, particularly in certain sizes of homes might again occur. It is our duty to caution our clients not to be over-swayed by expectation of immediate skyrocketing of building costs based on such estimated shortages.

To return to knowing your merchandise – I say to you that once your client realizes you are conscientiously endeavoring to analyze every feature about the property that is of interest to him, you will gain his confidence and be in much better position to ultimately make the sale. This same thing applies to industrial, farm, or commercial property.

Time has passed when a failure in some other business can, overnight, have business cards printed, hang up a sign, and become an honored member of our profession. It requires years of study and hospital training for a man to enter with credit into the profession of medicine; it requires years of training for a man to take his place as a member of the American Bar. Engineers devote years of study before it is safe to accept a commission to design a large dam, water system, or sewerage disposal plant.

Throughout this land there has been a feeling that almost anyone could become a real estate man. Unless we who claim to be accredited members of the realtor profession are willing to accept the task of long training and study of our problems; affiliate and work without estate and national real estate organizations; unless we are willing to devote energy and thought required to be able, like the man in Germany, to answer any question about our merchandise, then I say we are not keeping faith with our profession.

Advent of the combine has changed the value of millions of acres of Kansas lands; terracing of our farmlands; fertilization – conservation, introduction of drought resistant crops, have written new opportunity into the farmers' problems. Is the farm salesman alive to his profession if he is not cognizant of these things?

Anyone building a home today is faced with a mystic and confusing maze of varied products of insulation – building materials; numberless varieties of paints; and a great multitude of other items. We should be slow to recommend any product until we are very sure of our ground.

A decided revolution has taken place in the interior arrangement of a home. Economy has been affected by elimination of the old front parlor – basements today are used for things undreamed of a few short years ago – Pullman type kitchens save millions of steps. Heat producing paint is a thing that may come; also health glass in windows; and clean, dehumidified air are already here.

Displacement of the horse and buggy by the automobile transformed the stable into a garage which at first was placed at the rear of the lot – gradually as we became better acquainted with it, it was placed in the basement or attached to the house. If this affects your insurance rate, you should tell your client so.

The idea of the front porch has largely disappeared. First it moved around to the side of the house for greater privacy as traffic increased; and in recent years it has been moving clear around to the back of the house, developing the garden side of the house into an outdoor living room.

Is it not our problem to eliminate the extravagant cornices and needless ornamentation in the design of our houses? Certainly, simple, functional design should be the dominant note in the type of houses we build.

There is a definite tendency today to overload our homes sold to people of moderate means, with unnecessary mechanical equipment. Much of this is doubtless worth while, nevertheless, we as a profession should be honest in pointing out the additional original investment; interest on that investment; and probable maintenance cost through the years.

This same knowledge of costs is essential to a realtor who is handling commercial property.

For instance, a 16 ft. room may be 2 or 3 ft too wide for a shop without center counters; or may be 1 or 2 ft. too narrow for a client who wishes to use a center counter.

Bulkheads may be too deep or too shallow.

Ceiling may be 1 or 2 ft. too low if he ever wishes a mezzanine; or several feet too high if he does not need a mezzanine.

A room erected to a 40 ft. depth may not provide proper storage space in the rear. If you recommend a 75 ft. depth you may be loading him with unnecessary space.

Location of stairway to the basement may be all right for storage purposes, while it would be much better in another location for merchandising.

Lighting fixtures may be right for the old idea of merchandising, but completely inadequate for modern display.

The very color of the woodwork may double the cost of his electric lighting.

Then, the location you recommend for him may not be the proper one for his particular business.

A traffic count may disclose that his side of the street has a small percent of women shoppers passing his shop though his merchandise may only appeal to women.

And again I say to you, every man handling commercial property for retail purposes should first feel the responsibility of thoroughly analyzing all problems confronting his client, making a careful survey of the buying power of the community; a careful study of chances for this business to prosper.

The foregoing applies just as strongly to handling of industrial property. It is essential that you know possible trade territory; switching tax, power and lighting rates; probable competition, and advantages of one location over another. You can see that it is important for a realtor to have this complete knowledge (remember the German salesman).

The country doctor must know treatment of pneumonia as well as measles; your town lawyer must be able to handle a damage suit or a divorce suit; and neither would dare assume the professional right to undertake the case until he had referred to his scientific journals or his books of law to properly prepare himself to treat his patient or represent his client.

The problems of the realtor in the small town are different than those of the realtor in the metropolis. In a large city a realtor may specialize, though I contend where we assume to represent any type of property responsibility rests upon us to have all procurable information – to be a constant, alert student – to keep abreast of changing times, and be able to give intelligent, constructive advise to those who place their interests in our hands.

Pioneer farmers who struggled in early days to make Kansas the great state it now is, had to learn various products adapted to the soil – they had to learn the difficulties involved in raising different breeds of livestock. Kansas was wrested from almost unconquerable forces of nature by those dauntless forefathers of ours because they tirelessly studied their problems – toiling early and late in blistering heat of summer and

freezing days of winter to improve their situation. May I appeal to you, today, that every realtor in the state of Kansas feel the same responsibility and apply the same exhaustless energy and thought to questions confronting them as our sturdy pioneers devoted to the conquest of the wilderness which is not Kansas – (and like the German, know your property!)

It takes work to remain current with the swiftly moving times in which we live. Every invention, every new law that is passed, even turmoil of foreign countries, may have repercussions within our business. (The surprising development of the soybean with its some 300 uses ranging all the way from plastics, automobile parts, to draperies, clothing and dishes, spells new opportunity for farmers. Why should wool from our great flocks of sheep be shipped to distant points for fabrication?

Do you know that it is suggested that rubber may sometime be made from goldenrod? Food from sunflowers? In fact, the very weeds along our roadsides may have great potentialities to build our farms and bring growth to our cities and towns. These experiments, still in laboratory stage, may open new opportunities of growth for our state.

Did you know that more than 3,500 articles can be made from petroleum products? Many refineries for out Kansas cities – factories as yet unknown may be built alongside them fabricating new oil products. From cornstalks, oats and wheat straw, much of which has gone to waste upon our lands, cellulose is now being made in laboratories which with practical application may create new markets for farm products and build factories throughout Kansas.

From corn, alone, today is being made over 100 articles – all the way from dry ice to safety glass and lacquer.

Doorknobs, bottle caps, and many other items are being made from the despised corncob.

In St. Joseph, a factory is making a building board from straw.

In Atchison, alcohol is made from corn. In Lawrence paper is manufactured from straw.

In K. C. today more than 200 articles are being made from buttermilk. In our own business we are using paint made from casein in milk.

The pipe stem or penholder in your pocket may have been made from milk! Even silk-like filaments are being made from milk and manufactured into draperies and other such articles of daily use. Yes, toothbrushes, dishes, and carpets from milk! The old family cow may some day feed and clothe us at the same time.

From our great coal bearing regions in Kansas, revolutionary announcements may come concerning new products to serve mankind.

Also, let's not overlook our enormous supply of sand, gravel and cheap natural gas in Kansas, which can be manufactured into glass, brick and glass building blocks as well as a material like silk and wool which is woven into sweaters, hats, purses, rugs and yarn – even glass bathing suits are becoming well known!

In a few years much of the furniture in our homes may come from our cement plants.

Products from our salt beds are rapidly increasing.

Miraculous as it may seem, synthetic chemistry is outdoing nature in breaking down molecules and rearranging atoms to make articles of daily use and necessity. This juggling of atoms spells future growth for every Kansas town and future prosperity for every Kansas farm.

Is it not the duty of every realtor who has cast his lot in Kansas to be profoundly interested in the prospect of the great and potential chemical backlog?

Do you not see that in this manner the end of the furrow on the farm may lead to the smokestack in the town nearby?

And, the hand on the plow on the farm may grasp the hand on the loom in the town?

Mining of salt, pumping of oil, the increased use of every raw product may spell the dawn of a new day.

The dust storms in western Kansas have presented a mighty problem today for realtors of that region. Just as those stalwart crusaders of the early days conquered this land with its seemingly insurmountable hardships, I am a firm believer that the dust storms will be overcome and that region continue to grow and prosper. I hope that every realtor in that section feels that it is his duty to give every thought and every bit of his energy to help combat this problem of his time and his part of Kansas.

During the past several years we have suffered from terrific droughts calling for revamping of methods of farming. Our agricultural colleges and experimental stations are doing a wonderful job studying crops and handling soils to withstand this disheartening onslaught of nature, yet, I say this is a subject in which every realtor in the state is deeply interested.

If terracing of land conserves our moisture, the realtor should be first to carry the idea to every farmer in his community.

If the grasshopper plague is to remain for years, the realtor should be first to study and recommend methods of destruction.

In all of this I wish again to call your attention to those 13 German words. Apply it to yourself. Can you say "Gentlemen, there is no question about the type of property which I sell that I cannot answer"?

Then there is another problem to which I wish to call your attention. Real estate has never enjoyed interest rates comparable to other types of security. Why should corporation bonds enjoy a rate of 3 to 4% with real estate paying from 5 to 8%? With proper real estate financing, based on sound, safe appraisals by expert realtors, why should not a mortgage on property be as safe security as it is humanly possible to own? I am not referring to rates of interest on loans representing a high percentage of the value of the property.

We, as realtors, must take our share of the blame that for years we sold and financed property for clients with 3 to 5 year loans when we knew it was impossible for them to pay at maturity. Many large insurance companies are now making 20-year loans on reasonable amortization basis. We know from experience that whether it is a home, office building, or retail store building, if we depend upon savings, or earnings, it is seldom possible to pay in full for the property in less than 20 years or even more.

In my opinion a home in a safe neighborhood should be financed on a 30-year basis. In many European countries loans are made extending over 40 to 60 years. Backed up with carefully prepared and enforced restrictions there is less risk for a lending company on such long time home mortgages than the obsolete plan of short time paper.

The same is true of farm mortgages.

In Europe such mortgages enjoy lower rate than industrial bonds.

Foreclosure records of Kansas would be different if financing had been on a proper sound basis.

I have had many conferences with larger insurance companies as to policy of a 25 to 30 year payment plan. This is certainly not as extreme or foreign to their way of thinking today as the 15 or 20-year plan was a few years ago.

It is safe to assume that 9 out of 10 of the realtors in Kansas will remain in the real estate business for their lifetime and in the same locality; that many of their sons will follow them. If this be true, is it not your vital interest that your cities be physically good? Is it not your responsibility to create and stabilize property values and living conditions, making your city more practical, better planned, more efficient, and more orderly? If you permit plats to be filed with unnecessary jogs, is it not your fault? If your town is full of fire hazards, is it not your responsibility? If unnecessary money is expended in making sidewalks in quiet residential streets as wide as those on major streets, you are contributing to waste. If bad throats of traffic develop you should be aroused. Remember, traffic increases with the square of your population.

Are your public buildings, such as the courthouse, fire stations, city hall, public library, etc., conveniently and effectively located? Have you convinced the people of your city that in a civic center the cumulative effect of the good appearance of a number of well related public buildings is far greater than the sum of the units of these buildings scattered through the city? Are all the public buildings located in an impressive manner, with appropriate dignity to the greatness of your city? Such a civic center becomes a rallying place of public life – and crystallized a spirit of love of indomitable force in building patriotism and ambition for your town.

If your streets are being platted all the same size and same width with no regard to needs or functions; if all your blocks are being standardized in size, you are not keeping up to the trends of the times. Residential blocks may well be 1,000 to 1,500 feet long in this motor age.

Most of your cities are still small, their frames still plastic and not hardened beyond repair. Now is the time to apply most advanced ideas of city planning and civic uses in the future growth of your community. This is even more important in a small town ambitious for future growth.

If you are permitting ugly and squalid developments along the approaches to your city that are an eyesore to your whole community, you should be the one who is raising hell about it.

If your building code permits flimsy construction of short life, you should be leading the movement to require more enduring type of building.

Does ugliness confront the visitor to your city? Or does a good order of things and a heart-warming beauty delight and charm the visitors and make them wish to live with you in your hometown?

Are you permitting an unnecessary crowding of houses on lots too small?

Have you created in your city or town impressive architecture, masterful highways, residential areas of inviting appeal and charm, commanding attention and holding respect of your visitor, imprinting in his memory an indelible picture making him return to you again and again? Have you created a civic order that has grappled the hearts and love of your citizenry in a manner that they will never for long leave the city or town they call their own?

Have you given a quiet domestic character to your residential streets? So designed as to discourage business traffic? So adapted to topography as to create interesting home sites? Affording the best currents of air? Preserving best views and most desirable orientation of the house? Assuring harmonious environment to which the owner of every home is entitled? The term “backyard” should be unknown and replaced by the “gardenside” of the house – a real living lawn in which children may safely play and the family may enjoy the great outdoors.

Yes, we are members of a great profession, and a great association!

Our state was founded by a race of indomitable builders, and we are justly proud of the state they created.

We are the builders of today. Our responsibility cannot be ignored.

Time still marches on from the days of the inland sea. In a few short years we leave our heritage to the next generation. Will it be one of which our children, and our children’s children may be proud?

Will Kansas in its race for commercial prosperity and good living be able to compete with the nation?

Let us pledge a vow of determination, as Kansas realtors, that we will do our part, that we will know our merchandise, that we will build well; that we will serve our clients with all the diligence, honesty and knowledge that our profession demands; that we will ever be true to the caring courage; stupendous sacrifice and triumphal achievement of the pioneer builders of Kansas.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN048

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols' objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911-), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols' private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.