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### **Founders Leave Board But Stay Loyal**

by Sondra McCoy

In 2000 and 2001, the last three of KLT's founding board members retired or resigned. The first was Sarah Dean who had been with KLT before it was incorporated and retired when her term expired in 2000. Her brother John Simpson wrote the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws in July, 1990. Current KLT vice president Kelly Kindscher approached Sarah with the idea about conservation easements in 1990. Sarah had worked with the Kansas Rural Center and had an interest in farmland management. Sarah served as Treasurer of KLT for several years and considers KLT a much "needed organization in the state of Kansas."

Marsha Marshall left the KLT board later in 2000. She and her husband moved to Vail, Colorado. Marsha had been involved in environmental work in the state for a long time and had been a lobbyist for and a founding member of the Kansas Natural Resource Council. She also served on the Kansas Water Authority. Marsha remembers that back before 1992, landowners had no way to protect their land or their use of land in perpetuity--"something that was not possible in Kansas until the founding of the Land Trust and subsequent legislation that allowed for the protection of easements...I remember Wes Jackson (of The Land Institute in Salina) saying that we ought to be involved in something during our lifetime that is more important than we are and last longer. For me, the Kansas Land Trust fits that bill."

Diane Simpson retired from her KLT board post in April 2001. Her interest in the purposes of the trust began in the mid-1970s, when she lived in Salina, Kansas and became friends with Dana and Wes Jackson of The Land Institute. After Diane moved to Lawrence to pursue a law degree, she retained her interest in the purposes of The Land Institute. When the Elkins Prairie just west of Lawrence was plowed under in 1990, alarmed citizens looked to ways to preserve the vanishing prairies and other valuable landscapes. In responses to the plowing of the prairie, concerned citizens--including Sarah, Marsha, and Diane--organized the Kansas Land Trust. Through the years, Diane's legal expertise led her to work with conservation easement language and with landowners. She is pleased that there is more interest now in acquiring easements, due in part to the favorable tax treatment and to more citizen interest in obtaining conservation easements for their property, Diane remembers with fondness her work with the dedicated KLT board. "KLT has been a bright spot in my life."

All three former board members, Sarah Dean, Marsha Marshall, and Diane Simpson, worked through those early difficult days when legislation had to be passed in order to protect and conserve an ecologically valuable piece of property. In the nearly twelve years since KLT's founding, much progress has been made. All three of the longest-serving founding board members remain dedicated to the Kansas Land Trust and can be counted on to continue their support for many years to come.

Note: Members of the original KLT board were Sarah Dean, Ernie Eck, John Simpson, Joyce Wolf, Diane Simpson, Marsha Marshall, Sandy Strand, Bill Ward and Steve Hamburg. Kelly Kindscher signed the Articles of Incorporation as "incorporator."