Examples of effective Civility Award nomination essays

*The following essays convinced the KC Consensus board that the nominee deserved a Civility Award. In general, the essays drew a clear line between the award criteria and the nominee’s work. This is much more effective than when the essay talks about how nice the person is or how hard the person works. Instead, focus on what about the nominee fits the criteria. Where was there conflict that the nominee helped to overcome? What process did the nominee use to address the situation? How did the nominee engage people in making progress together? If you have any questions about whether your essay, or if you would like some coaching, please get in touch with Jennifer Wilding at* *jenwilding@consensuskc.org* *or any member of the Consensus board.*

Carol Marinovich, former mayor, Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County

Nominated by Susan Keim and Pat Brune

When Carol Marinovich became active in her Strawberry Hill neighborhood association, she

saw a need that was being ignored by the city. Her single goal was making things better in her

neighborhood. Carol engaged her neighbors and they rallied together to address neighborhood

needs. Soon, her neighbors encouraged Carol to run for Kansas City, Kansas City Council and

defeat the old boy network and political machine. To her amazement, she won the election and

became the first woman city councilmember in Kansas City, Kansas.

This began a new career for the KCK school teacher. As Councilwoman and then Mayor,

Carol Marinovich was no ordinary politician. She practiced civility, did her homework, engaged

unusual voices, respected others, and kept her word. Her open style brought community

success which led to a renaissance for Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County. Perhaps

Carol was the only person who believed it was possible.

Problem. In 1995, it was clear that KCK and Wyandotte County were dying. Three people

per day were leaving the county. The city was in an economic tailspin. With the problem

identified, Carol went about looking for solutions for the community. When the concept of citycounty

consolidation was presented as an opportunity, she did her homework. Her research

indicated that consolidation would provide expenditure savings and economic development

growth. She was in, even though it meant that if consolidation passed, Carol would have to run

again for mayor within six months under the new form of government. No matter the personal

costs, Carol knew that consolidation was best for the city and county.

Process. The process of a successful city-county consolidation campaign meant finding

common ground by building coalitions, using the vast neighborhood network for local support,

engaging those outside the county for metropolitan support, and, as a Democrat, working with

Republicans at the state level for statewide support. To engage these coalitions in an inclusive

manner was the only way to win and save Wyandotte County. Carol was on the frontline

energizing volunteers, raising funds, and governing the city all at the same time. With a well-run

campaign involving the community, voters approved city-county consolidation in Kansas City,

Kansas, and Wyandotte County in 1997 in a landslide election.

People. Consolidation opened the door for opportunity, but Carol had to prove herself once

again wooing the International Speedway Corporation to KCK and beginning the economic

revival of the county. Difficult negotiations at the state level to approve STAR bonds, once

again spearheaded by Republicans, and painful eminent domain decisions locally could have

been barriers to progress. Instead, with Carol’s leadership forging the relationships she built

with the community and the county commissioners, the Speedway was approved in a 9-0

commission vote. Once again, with the help of the Republican led Kansas Senate and Carol’s

tenacity, STAR bonds were approved at the state which opened the door for unprecedented

economic development in Wyandotte County. The respect Carol Marinovich earned and the

integrity she displayed throughout the process created the environment for community success.

With the Speedway under construction, Carol was able to lead the way for a 400 acre

Legends shopping area adjacent to the Speedway. This was the tipping point for the county.

Economic development boomed, population stabilized, new housing was built, and Wyandotte

County’s popularity soared in the metropolitan area all because of a woman who wanted to help

her neighborhood. Carol Marinovich’s legacy of common good following years of machine

politics can be seen today in every corner of the county. Because of Carol, Wyandotte County

is the place people want to be to live, work and raise a family.

Greg Graves, CEO of Burns & McDonnell

Nominated by Michael Copeland, Mayor of the City of Olathe

It is my pleasure to nominate, Greg Graves, CEO of Burns and McDonnell, for the inaugural Consensus Civility Awards. Serving as the 2011 Chairman of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Greg had a simple but “big” idea—to identify five things that our region needs to be a better place to work, live and grow a business. To do this, he put into motion a process that would engage community members from both sides of the state line, making no distinction between the urban and suburban parts of our community. He pledged the efforts of the Greater Kansas City Chamber to make sure the ideas would come to fruition with the help of a ‘champion’ behind each. Having the foresight and leadership to bring people together on a grand scale for such a noble cause, I believe, demonstrates the values embraced by your organization and the Consensus Civility Awards.

As Chamber President and CEO James A. Heeter describes it, “Greg pushed the ‘send’ button on an email in early 2011 that started the journey to the Big 5.” He asked a small group of friends to convene a “no bad ideas” meeting to talk about goals for the region. It resulted in seven months of meetings and discussions with people from all over the KC region, including with myself and other area mayors, business leaders, civic volunteers, and regional stakeholders. Greg and the Chamber solicited more ideas through television appearances, radio interviews, newspaper editorials and the Chamber website. An initial list of 182 big ideas was reduced down to five—“5 Big Ideas” to help make our community what we want it to be.

1. Hosting the World Symposium on Animal Health, an event to solidify the Kansas City Health Corridor has the center of the world animal health industry. (Championed by Gary Forsee)
2. Making Kansas City “America’s Most Entrepreneurial City” by leveraging the resources of the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s Bloch School of Management and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to help spur job creation by local start-up and small businesses. (Championed by Peter deSilva, chairman and CEO of UMB Bank)
3. Growing Kansas City’s medical research, from discovery to cure through a bi-state effort to make Kansas City a nationally-recognized center for translational research. (Championed by Dr. Patrick James, chairman of the Kansas City Area Life Science Institute)
4. Moving the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance to Downtown Kansas City to provide new and improved facilities while leveraging synergies with the Kauffman Performing Arts Center and the Crossroads Arts District. (Championed by Leo Morton, UMKC Chancellor)
5. Adopting the Urban Neighborhood Initiative to target a geographic area of the urban core for revitalization, including providing programs and services to address public safety, education, transportation, job opportunities, youth recreation programs, health care and food access. (Championed by Terry Dunn, president and CEO of JE Dunn Construction)

A year after the Chamber announced the Big 5 Ideas, the community has already made substantial progress toward each. For example, a newly created non-profit organization, Urban Neighborhood Initiative, has raised $200,000 toward revitalizing the area from Troost Avenues to U.S. Highway 71, between 22nd and 52nd streets. Also, fundraising efforts have begun for relocating the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance and planning is underway for Kansas City to host an animal health symposium in September 2014. The leadership of Greg and the champions are helping to make these massive undertakings into reality.

As a fellow member of the Kansas City Union Station Board of Directors, I can personally attest to Greg’s commitment and success in bringing people together to better the region. He views his public service as a duty in return for all he and his family have received from the Greater Kansas City community. In addition to his service with the Union Station Board of Directors and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Greg is a member of the Civic Council of Greater Kansas City and serves on the board of directors for MRIGlobal (formerly the Midwest Research Institute), The University of Kansas Hospital, and Starlight Theater. In 2009, Greg and his wife, Deanna, were named Kansas City’s Philanthropists of the Year. And in 2011, Burns and McDonnell (under Greg’s leadership as CEO) sponsored the first ever Battle of the Brains—a competition to have elementary and high school student groups design the next great exhibit for Science City at Union Station. Olathe North High School won the event over 455 other teams, receiving a $50,000 prize from the Burns & McDonnell Foundation to support science technology, math, and engineering education. In addition, the Foundation increased its previously announced gift of $1 million to Science City to $1.25 million because of the excellence of the proposals and the excitement this great process created.

Airick Leonard West, president, Kansas City Public Schools Board of Directors

Nominated by Robyne Stevenson

Airick Leonard West is the president of the Kansas City Public Schools Board of Directors and has been elected twice as an at-large member of the school board. In his capacity as Board leader he has personified the criteria for this award. Mr. West would prefer not to be nominated alone for this award, but to have the entire School Board nominated. In this letter of nomination I will speak to his qualities that have generated a civil and effective school board. Perhaps there is no greater example of incivility than the past history of the KCPS District and its problem in functioning effectively as a government management body, an elected body, and as a community partner. Today, that reputation has done a 180 degree turn and has done so under the leadership of Mr. West as Board President.

In his role as Board President, Mr. West creates an open dialogue with board members as well as the community who attends Board meetings. The School District is a contentious public environment yet it has established a set of guidelines for discussion, platforms for people to be heard, and a place where board members are respected and invited to participate in honest dialogue. Mr. West has kept his word to create a place for open and fair communications, policy consideration, and transparent decision making between board members and between the board and the community. The implementation of policy governance by the Board is perhaps the single greatest contribution that Mr. West has made. It completely changed the role of the Board from micro-managers to governing via established policy. Keeping this on track has made an enormous difference in the public operations of the District. The use of policy governance has enabled the Board to reach a stasis of balanced annual budgets without dipping into reserves for general operating. This has made more money available for directing additional funding towards instructional support leading to improved student achievement over the last 2 years. Without a process to enable the Board to generate these decisions, the achievement support would not be in place.

Another important aspect of Mr. West and the Board’s commitment to an open process is dialogue with the community. Numerous sessions have been held over the last 5 years inviting the community to come and talk in facilitated sessions with school board members about serious issues and future plans for the district. This type of constituency engagement is rare because it is crafted to actually engage people in constructive conversation, not just have a gripe session. Making the genuine effort to engage the community in honest dialogue is a feat that results in greater social capital with the community to get through tough issues. Having board members lead small discussion groups and engage constituents is an even greater accomplishment because it gives public officials a meaningful way to listen and a constructive way for people to engage, especially when the issues are volatile. This has been done in budget preparation as well as issues about strategic planning for the District’s future.

Mr. West works tirelessly with other board members to speak publicly for the District from community meetings, media interviews, and testifying in Jefferson City. He has forged partnerships with community groups, civic leaders, the KCMO Mayor, School Boards from around the metro, and across the nation to create meaningful collaboration to advance the District. This has created a greater degree of communication between the District and civic community that is demonstrated today in wide support for provisional accreditation as well as the advancement of Early Childhood Education through a Blue Ribbon Commission.

Perhaps the most apparent evidence of civility has been the manner in which Mr. West has handled the external challenges to the District. Never confrontational or battling, bringing objective information and effective dialogue, the District has made a stand for local control and provisional accreditation with civility and constructive dialogue. The Board also put into place the policy for repurposing closed school buildings. This requires strong community participation and approval in a process that is built on conversation and cooperative engagement.

Finally, Mr. West has engaged in two invigorating elements of civility. One is School Board School which has encouraged, trained, and created a new vigor for election of candidates to the Board. In the last set of elections all seats were contested. This demonstrates a new era of civic discourse. And two is Community360, a program he facilitates for metro area high schools and colleges that focuses on personal leadership around social issues with training in peer mediation and restorative justice as techniques to resolve differences and disagreements before they escalate into conflict within school buildings.

I can think of no better honoree for this award than Mr. Airick Leonard West.

Grandview Park Presbyterian Church

Nominated by Kate Corwin, Green Works

Grandview Park Presbyterian Church is nestled in the Prescott Neighborhood near downtown

Kansas City, KS, right off 18th Street and Central Avenue. For over 126 years the church has

been calling the corner of South 17th and Wilson home. The church is led by Pastor Rick

Behrens.

In the 1960’s the neighborhood began to change. White, middle-class families moved to the

suburbs and many homes were left for rent. In the mid-1990’s new immigrants including Latino

families moved into the neighborhood. While many churches chose to deal with changing

demographics by relocating, Grandview Park stood its ground, opened the doors wide and

committed to serving the new neighbors. Nearly twenty years ago Grandview Park was the

catalyst for starting the Prescott Neighborhood Group, working with their neighbors to address

increasing crime and violence.

Today Grandview Park serves an urban neighborhood that is bordered by Interstate 70, Central

Avenue and 10th -18th streets. The average household income is just $25,022. Racial diversity of

the neighborhood is 63% Latino, 23% White, 10% African American and 4% Asian in addition to

the new Burmese refugee families calling the neighborhood home.

The congregation of Grandview Park reflects the surrounding neighborhood and half the

members are Latino. In response, the church service is bilingual, one of only 16 churches in the

metro offering bilingual services. The music is provided by a band that includes electric guitars,

a keyboard, various percussions and drums with verses sung in alternating Spanish and

English. Band members range in age from 14 – 55 and include Latin American, African

American and North American. In addition to serving a diverse community in their own services,

the church also opens their sanctuary for services for a Congolese congregation.

*"A friend recently invited me to a service at Grandview Presbyterian Church. I appreciated*

*seeing white, Hispanic, African American, young and old, all worshipping together - there*

*was a true feeling that everyone was welcome and considered of value. It is a small, but*

*committed group of diverse individuals seeking to bring the entire community together in*

*service. For the first time in many, many years, I am looking forward to going back to this*

*congregation that demonstrates a high sense of civility and respect for all individuals." Terri*

*Mueller*

The programming at Grandview Park is as diverse as the community. Church members prepare

food baskets, take yoga classes together, and provide summer and after-school youth

programming, specifically designed to serve the childcare needs of young Latino families in the

neighborhood. After church service, everyone stays for a meal prepared by members of the

church. Along with fellowship, the eclectic food choices provide a perfect opportunity for

members to share their cultural heritage. A community garden at the church encourage healthy

habits, as well as provides a social activity that spans generations and cultures. The La Paz

House after school program provides much needed homework help, tutoring and even bike

repair workshops.

*I attended Grandview Park church recently at the invitation of a friend. I was struck at how*

*tightly woven this church is with the surrounding community. We were warmly greeted and*

*shown to the basement where we saw how the church gives back to the community in*

*collaboration with Harvesters. People were coming in and getting food for their families and*

*staying to visit. What a wonderful experience! – Julia Thomas*

Grandview Park does more than just embrace diversity – the church members are actively

involved in immigrant rights. Grandview Park partners with AIRR (Advocates for Immigrant

Rights and Reconciliation) and the Consulate in Kansas City, Missouri to conduct DACA

(Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) informational clinics, citizenship clinics, and educational

forums with films and panel discussions. Grandview Park hosts bi-monthly meetings and

coordinates actions with local officials regarding current immigration issues. And Grandview

Park church members regularly participate in peaceful protests. AIRR Walks for Solidarity

began in January 2016. Since then the church members have been participating in monthly,

multi-faith, one mile walks taking place on the 11th of every month to signify the 11 million

undocumented immigrants in the US.

Grandview Park was recently featured in KCPT’s Beyond Belief series. The program highlights

the story of three metro churches that embody faith in action. The segment on Grandview Park

begins at minute 10 on the video link in the middle of this page:

http://airmedia.org/story-week-exploring-faith-kansas-city/

When you join Grandview Park Presbyterian Church for worship or a community event, you

can’t help but feel the love and community. They welcome all. The “peace” time during the

service lasts at least 5 minutes as everyone gets up from their seat to great every other person

in the sanctuary. It’s hard not to come away from this church feeling like this is the way the

world is meant to be.

In this day and age where it is so easy for people to use social media to broadcast non-stop

about their view on creating an inclusive world, it’s refreshing to find a group of people so

dedicated to actually doing the hard work. It is an honor to nominate such a deserving group of

individuals for this prestigious award.

The Kansas City Royals

Nominated by RespectWorks

The Kansas City Royals have been amazing role models in the Kansas City

Community, not just because of their baseball skills, but because of the culture of

character that has been instilled in them by their General Manager, Dayton

Moore. Dr. Tim Elmore, founder and president of Growing Leaders, a non-profit

organization based in Atlanta, has been observing the Kansas City Royals baseball

team since 2008 and writing about them.

In 2010, he quoted Dayton Moore as saying “We have a simple rule with our

baseball club. We want to hire managers, and recruit players that we would want our

sons to look up to and play under some day.” Elmore wrote that Moore was

transforming the culture in the Royals organization and indeed, that commitment led

to the team competing in the World Series in 2014 and winning it in 2015.

In 2015 when the Royals became the baseball champions, Elmore wrote another

article about the Royals who made no excuses for not having a bigger city to play in

or a bigger budget to play with. The mantra of the Royals has been – what we lack

in cash, we will make up for in culture. Character is a core value of the entire

organization. Management respects the value of work/life balance for their players

and family is considered a top priority. Players treat each other with respect, even

when errors are made. Players and management are held in such

extraordinary admiration and respect.

On and off the field the Royals players have been an inspiration to Kansas City.

They represent inclusiveness, diversity in race and ethnicity, and demonstrate how

people of varied backgrounds can work together so effectively. Even language

differences are no obstacle to the “we never give up” spirit.

This is a team that believes in giving back to the community that cherishes them. In

2015, the Royals have partnered with the City and Major League Baseball to

develop the KC MLB Urban Youth Academy. Some players donated directly,

including Alex Gordon ($750,000) and Salvador Perez (one million dollars). The

Royals organization supports many community projects (see their website for

details. www.royals.com ) and created Royals charities in 2001. Dayton Moore has

also been an active supporter of the City Union Mission.

The focus is on the team and celebrating team success, not individual success. The

team brought out the best in all of us in this community when the Royals were

honored during the 2015 World Series celebration at Union Station. Members of the

team constantly expressed gratitude and praise for their fans. The behavior of the

team throughout the season was reflected in the behavior of those fans. The

community set an awesome standard for sports celebrations. A photograph of the

event in the Kansas City Star entitled “a city united” (see attached for a portion of the

photo), led to an estimate of 800,000 people in attendance. Daryl Forte, Chief of

Police, reported that there were only three minor arrests and all three of the

offenders were from out of town. By their ongoing example of character, they have

inspired a common ground of respect and integrity in the community. We did indeed

for that day become a city united.

The Kansas City Royals are truly deserving of receiving the 2016 Consensus Civility

Award.

Debbie Wilson, vice president and chief nursing officer, Saint Luke’s Hospital

Nominated by Jason Purcell, Saint Luke’s Hospital

Debbie Wilson, MSN, MBA, RN, NEA-BC is the Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Saint Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City. As a passionate nurse leader, Debbie has on numerous occasions had to address issues of incivility in the workplace. In her tenure, with a focus on nurses, where lateral violence is a common trend in the United States. Her many years of experience in dealing with this prevalent issue have made it a top priority for her as a leader in healthcare.

As a leader in the healthcare and nursing arena, Debbie was selected as a Nurse Executive Fellow through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. As part of her fellowship work as a Nurse Executive Fellow, Debbie worked with a group of peers from across the nation on developing a Civility Toolkit that is evidence-based and applicable to all settings, even those outside of healthcare. The group that she worked with appropriately adopted the name “PACERS” – **P**assionate **A**bout **C**reating **E**nvironments of **R**espect and civilitie**S**. The topic of civility was chosen after completion of a literature review of current needs and trends in healthcare. It was evident that leaders across the nation have been in need of an “pre-packaged” set of interventions to address various issues of incivility.

In the healthcare arena, emotions often run high due to the acuity of hospitalized patients; this state can also be compounded by the compassionate nature of healthcare workers dedicated to the greatest outcome for those whom they care. In high acuity situations, emotional control can often be lost alongside a loss of control of patients’ physical processes. This emotional state can be expressed by patients, their family members, and also staff members exhausting all resources to treat them. These high emotion situations lead to frustrations that are frequently dealt with in an uncivil manner. The toolkit was developed to address this as well as other issues related to civility in the healthcare workplace and beyond. It includes a highly inclusive set of tools to address varying issues of incivility and disrespect to accommodate specific workplace needs.

Through the ground breaking work of this group, anyone who has access to the internet has access to their toolkit. It has been well received in the healthcare community and beyond. The toolkit that was developed includes not only tools, but personal stories and the background of this epidemic in our society. Debbie championed this toolkit within her group as a member to ensure that *respect* was a common theme interwoven into each aspect of the toolkit. Through her work to intertwine this culture of respect, *integrity* can be developed and sustained in the organizations that utilize it effectively.

To ensure that the toolkit was made available to all who could potentially benefit from it, Debbie’s team developed a website, making the toolkit publicly available. Through engagement and inclusiveness, the toolkit that she helped developed has been well received. Debbie has been invited to speak locally, at the state level and nationally on the topic of Building Cultures of Civility and Respect (presentations have been provided to all Saint Luke’s Health System Chief Nursing Officers, North Kansas City Hospital, Children’s Mercy Hospital, The Missouri Organization for Nurse Leaders, American Association of Operating Room Nurses and the American Nurses Credentialing Center National Magnet Conference to name a few), presenting to audiences of 1,500+ participants. Through this work and her passion, Debbie is making a difference not only at the local level in the organization for which she serves, but throughout the nation, in an attempt to truly turn the tide and change the culture of our society to one of greater civility.

In addition to the work that went into developing the toolkit, Debbie has also worked tirelessly to ensure that her own workplace is bully-free as possible. Not stopping at urging leaders across the organization to utilize the developed toolkit, Debbie has been pivotal in the development of *specific* education that walks not only leaders, but all employees through building a Culture of Respect and Civility. Paired with this education was the development of a specific policy that calls out bullying and emphasizes the importance of reporting and dealing with it in the same way that one would deal with sexual harassment – absolutely unacceptable. The elevation of realizing what unacceptable behaviors are brings light to the problems that are embedded, and often times tolerated at organizations.

I would encourage the reviewers of this nomination to take the time to review the toolkit that is online to see how much work has truly been done by Debbie to take on this issue all the while making it available to all who might need it: [www.stopbullyingtoolkit.org](http://www.stopbullyingtoolkit.org)