

Outgoing Speech-2024

Good afternoon to our guests and members of convention. It has been a whirlwind the past five years, as I represented all of you on the Kansas State Chapter executive board. This past year, I feel that we have worked hard to move our members forward in technology, sustaining and increasing growth, as well as trying to use our funds carefully to make them last a long time. As members of Kansas State Chapter, you have accomplished a lot this year and I want to share some great information with you.

In the president's letters and on our Facebook page, it was fun to read about all the activities, fundraisers, socials and accomplishments of each chapter. What was even more exciting, was to realize how much each sister continues to express loving kindness while being together and developing deeper friendships. I also noticed how many chapters loved and used the theme with jewels in describing their programs, activities and their sisters. You all continue to sparkle.

Our goals for 2023-2024 were to develop leaders, strengthen chapter vitality and promote philanthropic giving. Let's see how you did.

We had two chapters report that they used the leadership material from the International website as programs for their chapters. Chapter EY, Wamego and JJ, Lawrence used the leadership goal and focused on introducing their members to the "*Leadership Development and Resources*" and how to use it. What a way to teach your members.

Our membership numbers were fantastic. We had 322 initiations, 47 transfers into Kansas, 71 reinstatements, 431 inactives and 149 active members entered chapter eternal. An interesting fact is the number of non-initiating chapters has declined significantly. In 2021 it was 153 chapters, in 2022 it was 140, in 2023 it was 99 and in 2024 only 86 chapters did not initiate. This indicates that our state is improving in inviting women to join P.E.O. But, the second part of that is to do post initiation counseling to educate new members. I read that Chapter BM, Belleville actively works on mentoring and has this as a goal to retain their new and existing members. I challenge all of you to do this.

Our philanthropic goal was to increase your giving to International and Kansas projects by 5%. We are excited to share that 108 chapters completed this challenge. It is important for all of us to know the Philanthropic Circle, Learn about the projects, Give to the projects, Sponsor a candidate and Initiate the candidates you sponsor. Also, if we don't give we will not have the funds to support our projects.

What do you share with people when they ask you what P.E.O. means? I recently had that opportunity at a coffee shop in a nearby community where I live. A man came up to the table where I was having coffee with friends and asked whose car is that one, pointing to mine? I answered it is mine. He then asked me, "what does your tag holder mean?" I answered, it is about "*P.E.O. - Where women motivate, educate and celebrate women.*" I then shared more about providing scholarships, loans and grants for women. He was very interested and I directed him to the website. Everyday, we have the opportunity to help others by sharing what we do. Be ready to do that.

Let me tell you my story. I was born into a family of four girls. My parents both worked hard and were a middle class family. I was the second child and was not really encouraged to attend college. Funding was probably the reason. I then decided to work and not go to school, married my high school sweetheart and have been married 46 years. When I was pregnant with our first child, I wanted to be a mom and that is what I did. We have three wonderful kids, who were 'brainwashed' from the time they were little that they were going to college and of course they did. All three graduated and have had outstanding opportunities. Phil and I never attended college and we wanted to give our children every opportunity they could have. But most of all, we told them to do what you love and love what you do, but also what you can do to support yourself doing it. Is that right for everyone, maybe not and that is okay. We turned out to be very successful and both had our own businesses. It wasn't always easy, but we did it. I am sharing this with you so you can understand why I think P.E.O. is so important. To provide opportunities for young women to reach for their dreams. Our granddaughter Lila is here today, she is one of those young women who will reach for her dream. This is one of the reasons why P.E.O. is important to me. The second reason is the relationships you form in your own chapters that are beyond special. They sparkle with joy and love for each other.

In closing, I have to thank so many people. My husband Phil who will now have the dining room table back, my children and grandchildren who have been well educated about P.E.O. To my wonderful Chapter AY sisters who supported me all of the time. To the 'Girls who just want to have fun' Ann, Teresa and Laura better known as the EOC's and all seventeen Hostess chapters who worked so hard to organize this sparkly convention. Our leadership team continues to be strong and I thank each of you for saying yes to being on your committees. The executive assistants are invaluable, thank you Lezlee and Kasey for your continued work with Kansas State Chapter P.E.O. What would we do without Allison, she is our registrar and does so much. I had no idea what

was involved with her job and she does it so well. A big thank you to Jennifer Mitchell for her guidance in getting all of the material for convention done correctly.

Most of all, what would I do without these wonderful board sisters, Aidan, Jan, Mary and Carie. Being a board member is one of the most rewarding jobs I will ever do. We love our sisters and try to do the best we can to help all of you. It has been an amazing five years filled with so many sparkling memories. P.E.O. truly does sparkle like a jewel in the sun. Thank you all for your support and love.