

U.S. House of Representatives
Rep. Sharice L. Davids
Kansas Third District

September 3, 2024

Dr. Jill Biden
First Lady of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington Dc 20500

Dear Dr. Biden,

I forward you a letter my office received from one of my constituents, Wendy Clay, on September 3, 2024. Ms. Clay requests consideration for a volunteer position decorating the White House ahead of the holiday season. I respectfully request you provide full and fair consideration to her request.

Sincerely,



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

ENC: Original Correspondence from Ms. Wendy Clay

Dear Representative Sharice Davids,

Thank you for your service as our Representative for Kansas's Third Congressional District. You have done an outstanding job for our community, district and state. We appreciate your Kansas voice in Washington!

My name is Wendy Clay. I have requested a favor. It has always been a dream of mine to be part of the White House Holiday Décor Team. Thank you for your willingness to sponsor me and write a letter to Dr. Jill Biden on my behalf. A letter from you and your office would greatly increase my chances of being selected. I would love to represent the State of Kansas in the White House.

My enclosed letter to Dr Jill Biden highlights a few of my business and volunteer accomplishments. A list of references is also enclosed.

Today it is my honor to meet with one of your representatives to discuss a sponsorship.

Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully,

Wendy Clay
913-515-2964
wclay615@gmail.com

Dear First Lady Dr. Jill Biden,

My name is Wendy Clay. I am writing to offer myself as a volunteer for the 2024 White House Holiday Décor Team. Please allow me to briefly introduce myself and the reasons I desire to be a part of this select group.

I am a native Kansan, wife, mother, small business owner and passionate volunteer. Service to my community has been a hallmark of my life from volunteering with my church over 35 years in varied capacities, serving as a youth mentor on mission trips, working in our local soup kitchen, and giving almost 5,000 hours through the Kansas State Research and Extension as a Master Gardener. I am moved by volunteer participation and find it empowering to help and teach others.

My lifelong commitment to artistic endeavors and love of horticulture led me to open my small business, Clay Pots, in 2003, which began as a creative container floral business and has evolved to include full scale landscape design and installation, creation of tablescapes, and indoor / outdoor seasonal displays. My business and Master Gardener accomplishments allowed me additional opportunities for community service, including co-chairing the Decorating Committee for the International Master Gardener Conference, held June of 2023, in Kansas City. I put my heart and soul into every project, and thoroughly enjoy it! (Please see additional in-depth personal achievements page).

The opportunity to serve on the White House Décor Team would be a true honor. If I were selected, it would be a highlight of my professional and volunteer career, and the achievement of a long-held dream. I would love to use my business acumen, artistic skills, and volunteer spirit to represent my community, the state of Kansas, and the American people.

Thank you for your consideration, Dr. Biden, and thank you for all your continuing good work as an educator, family matriarch and First Lady of the United States.

Respectfully,

Wendy Clay

Wendy Clay, Personal Achievements

Clay Pots

My business, named Clay Pots, was established in 2003. In the beginning I planted pots for clients; hundreds of pots, then my business developed into landscape plans and installations. I also decorate the inside of client's homes for holidays and special events, including tablescape. In addition, I do and lots of "walk and talks" for garden owners. Walk and talks involve talking to homeowners about their landscape, making plant suggestions, and giving advice on everything landscape related.

Johnson County Extension Master Gardener (EMG)

Johnson County Extension Master Gardener 2001 to present

Volunteered almost 5,000 volunteer hours for the program

My garden was chosen for the biennial garden tour in 2008, (over 2,000 attended)

Garden tour captain for garden tours in 2010 and 2012. Overall Co-chair for the garden tour 2012

Executive Board member (elected by peers), and Board Secretary 2007-2008

Co-chair for one of our 11 Johnson County demonstration gardens called Garden Gallery, 2020 to present

International Master Gardener Conference imgc2023.com

June 18-22, 2023, the Johnson County Extension Master Gardeners hosted an International Master Gardener Conference at the Overland Park Convention Center in Kansas City. We were at capacity with over 1,110 registrants representing 44 states, Canada, and England. The conference featured 12 bus tours, 11 interactive workshops, 5 keynote speakers, 3 evening speakers, 50 concurrent sessions, and a trade show. I co-chaired the Decorating Committee. We were responsible for 120 table centerpieces in the ballroom, fresh floral arrangements for 10 bathrooms, and decorating the speaker's stage and podium. We were able to secure donations for all the plant material (except fresh florals), from local nurseries.

Lenexa United Methodist Church, Lenexa, KS

Sunday school teacher, elementary through high school

Accompanied & participated with the high school youth group on mission trips

Work St. Mary's soup kitchen on a regular basis

Property Management Committee, 2016 to present.

In 2018, I created a landscape plan, raised money for the project, and with volunteer help, landscaped the east side of the church including water source, lighting, trees, shrubs and groundcover.

Lead the congregation through a \$362,000 kitchen remodel project in 2021. Interviewed and picked a contractor, helped raise money for the project, chose appliances and all design finishes including tile and paint. Wrote bi-monthly articles for our church newsletter to keep the congregation up to date on the project.

Milburn Country Club, Overland Park, KS

Together with the Golf Course Superintendent, Steve Wilson, we purchased 47 pots for the clubhouse, golf course, pool and tennis complex. Made design decisions on all of the plant

material for the pots plus 15 hanging baskets and several planting beds. I also advised Steve on shrubs to purchase around the course, and tree replacements for the clubhouse entrance; 2020 to present.

Other

PTA Lifetime achievement award, Sunflower Elementary school, Lenexa, KS 1994-2005

Girl Scouts grade school-high school, many varied volunteer experiences

Featured on the cover of Her Life magazine March 2013

President Women's Golf Association of Greater Kansas City 2017, President Milburn Ladies 18 Hole Group

Building Manager for our family's state and nationally registered historic building in downtown Lawrence, KS

Married 41 years to my husband Scott. Together we have an amazing family; Madison, and her husband Jay, and Morgan, and his wife Bethany

Family Members, Military and Political Affiliations

George William Francis, dad, National Guard First Lieutenant, Company H, 137th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, 35th Division. He loved his years of service and would have continued his military career but his advancement paperwork was lost and his father needed help running the family business.

Carol Buhler Francis, mom, ran as a Democrat for the 45th District of Kansas for House of Representatives in 1976. Campaign slogan; “Carol Cares, Francis for the 45th”. Although she lost to her opponent, I won a deeper understanding and appreciation of the political process.

David Clay, Brother-in-law
US Marines 1969-1974, Reserve Unit MATCU (Mobile Air Traffic Control Unit)

The Honorable William (Bill) Ossmann, Cousin
3rd Judicial District Court of Kansas in Shawnee

Carl Gerhardt Ossmann, Uncle
WWII Gunnery Officer with the Navy
Kansas House of Representatives 1966-1972

Glee Sidney Smith, Uncle
WWII First Lieutenant Aerial Navigator, Army Air Corps
Kansas State Senator 1957-1973, last 8 years as President of the Senate

Victor Bernhard Buhler, Uncle
WWII Navy Veteran

Everett Eugene Buhler, Uncle
WWII Patrol Plan Commander on long-range bombers, flew PB4Y1s

David Hanst, Uncle
WWII First Lieutenant 91st Bomb Group, flew ‘Hikin’ For Home’, famous B-17 bomber

Charles Edwin Paxton, Cousin
d. March 14, 1945, Battle of the Bulge

Contact Information

Wendy Clay
9110 Oak Valley Drive
De Soto, KS 66018

913-515-2964
wclay615@gmail.com

References

Tara Markley, County Director, Johnson County K-State Research and Extension
Tara.Markley@jocogov.org
C (816) 560-5760
W (913) 715-7000

Steve Wilson, Golf Course Superintendent, Milburn Country Club
steve@milburn.org
C (913) 207-4038
W (913) 432-0490

Lisa Freeman, Lenexa United Methodist Church, former youth group leader
soaringhogslcf@gmail.com
C (913) 205-6078

Susan Herwig, lifelong friend and Clay Pots business client
sgherwig@gmail.com
C (816) 225-5242

Kathy Fitzpatrick, lifelong friend and Clay Pots business client
kubifitz15@netscape.net
C (913) 908-8457