

Barbara Pendleton

Banker

1924-2004

By David Conrads

As a woman who chose to pursue a full-time career in business, Barbara Pendleton had to overcome innumerable obstacles to success. She persevered and rose to the level of upper management at a major bank during her long career. Her participation and leadership in many charitable, community, and governmental organizations made a substantial contribution to the lives of women and men in Kansas City and around the country.

Barbara Jean Pendleton was a lifelong resident of Kansas City where she was born August 14, 1924. She entered Central Missouri State University (now Central Missouri University) in Warrensburg, but her formal education was derailed when she contracted scarlet fever.

In 1942, at the age of 18, Pendleton began her banking career when she took a summer job as a messenger at City National Bank & Trust. Over a 50-year career, she rose to become the executive vice president of UMB and its parent holding company, United Missouri Bancshares.

As a career woman in the 1940s, Pendleton set an example for women who chose careers in business and banking. She attended or taught most of the classes offered by the American Institute of Banking. She was active in many professional organizations, as a member and officer, frequently as the first woman involved.

Pendleton devoted herself to many causes and organizations, in Kansas City and nationally. She was a founding director of the local Legal Aid and Defender Society and Kansas City Consensus. Among other organizations in which she was active, frequently as the first woman member, officer or president, were American Humanics, the Metropolitan YMCA, Sorooptimists, Avila College (now Avila University), the Learning Exchange, the Women's Chamber of Commerce, Girl Scouts, Campfire USA, Starlight Theatre, the American Royal, the Women's Center at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the First Step Fund, the Rehabilitation Institute, the



Economic Development Corporation and Junior Achievement.

Pendleton was also involved in governmental affairs. She was a member of the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). During her tenure, legislation was passed that removed restrictions on promotions and retirement policies for women military officers. It also allowed women to be promoted to the rank of general and admiral, removed barriers that resulted in premature retirements and removed inequalities in promotion opportunities.

Pendleton was active in Kansas City civic affairs and availed several Kansas City mayors of her experience and expertise. In 1999, Mayor Kay Barnes appointed her to work on a group charged with the revitalization of downtown Kansas City, including the development and construction of a new arena, and appointed her to the Board of Commissioners of the Tax Increment Financing Commission.

Pendleton died on July 8, 2004.

Sources

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