

Nell Snead

Newspaper Reporter and Editor
1885-1978

by Barbara Magerl

In 1918 Nell Snead, an English teacher in a small Nebraska town, applied for a summer job at *The Kansas City Star* on a whim. The adventurous interlude became a new career which made her a leading force in Kansas City social and civic life and brought her national awards.

In the male-dominated news industry, Miss Snead was one of only five women in the news room at the *Star*, working on the city desk, Sunday features, and Kansas Legislature items. Offered the job of woman's page editor, she seized the Opportunity, but insisted on a New York trip to learn more about fashions. As Fashion Editor she attended famous Paris designers' shows and covered major world events, including coronations of two English monarchs—King George VI in 1937 and Queen Elizabeth in 1953.

On lengthy European jaunts, Miss Snead expanded her focus to museums, cathedrals, and celebrities, captivating readers and colleagues. In 43 years at the newspaper she served as mentor to many young women writers.

Miss Snead was listed in *Who's Who of American Women*, was a charter member of the Fashion Group in New York, and was named one of the six most outstanding newspaper women in 1950 by the Women's National Press Club.

A leader in the Women's Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City, she was a founder of the Belles of the American Royal, the Women's Council of the University of Missouri-Kansas City (of which she was a charter member), and created the Nell Snead Scholarship in 1972. Much of her library on fashion, costumes, and famous women went to UMKC.

Those who worked at the *Star* and on civic affairs with Miss Snead, who died in 1978, praised her free spirit and her role as a champion of women's liberation before that phrase was even created.



Sources

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"Nell Snead's Warmth Created Bright, Colorful Woman's Page."
The Kansas City Star. 6 Jan. 1978.

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