

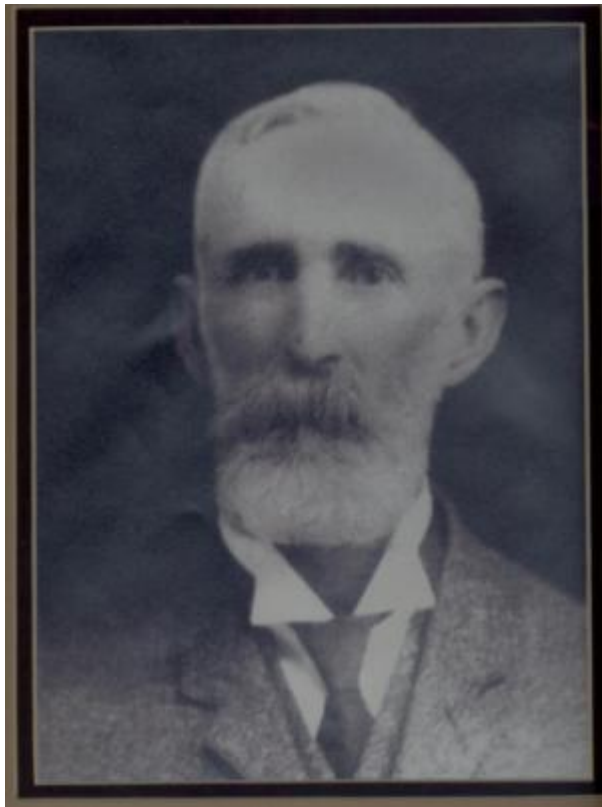
TREE PIONEERS OF SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS

The Sedgwick County Master Gardeners raise their shovels in gratitude to the “Pioneers of South Central Kansas”. These trailblazers searched the world for, and experimented with, landscape trees to determine which would withstand and thrive in the Kansas climate. Their efforts are reflected in their legacies --- shady home and commercial landscapes, tree lined streets, colorful parks and the greening of our communities. The quality of life of Kansas has been improved through the vision and actions of these horticultural pioneers.

The Tree Pioneer recognition is announced each spring at the Extension Master Gardener Tree Festival. A photo and biography of each Tree Pioneer is displayed in the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center.

2004 Tree Pioneers of Kansas

(John Walter Briggs 1850-1930 & Walter E. Bartlett 1870-1937)



John Walter Briggs
1850 - 1930

John Walter Riggs was born the son of a riverboat captain at Vevay, Indiana in the valley of the Ohio River. He grew to manhood in the forests of southern Indiana and became a school teacher by primary profession. He migrated to Kansas in 1885 and settled at Waterloo where he taught school and also worked for the United States Department of Agriculture as a plant explorer throughout the southwest. A commercial nursery was established in 1887 and he began introducing trees and other plants from sources and locations worldwide for dry plains experimentation. The USDA, through establishment of the nursery as a federal forestry experiment station in 1901, acknowledged these efforts. Many of the trees and shrubs in common usage across southern and southwest Kansas today were introduced and proven adaptable at the Waterloo Tree Station. A number of these original introductions yet survive in the Riggs Arboretum at Waterloo.

Walter E. Bartlett
1870 - 1937



Walter Bartlett was a physician, naturalist and civic leader in the small community of Belle Plaine, Kansas. In 1910 Dr. Bartlett purchased a 20-acre site on the outskirts of Belle Plaine that was a nearly treeless, indistinctive barren spot. However, this particular plot was selected because it appeared to have the favorable characteristics of terrain, soil and water flow, promising potential for eventually growing trees. As he lined drives, walks and fields with scores of many kinds of trees, the area became known as Bartlett Park, and finally in 1926 was changed to Bartlett Arboretum.

2006 Tree Pioneers of Kansas (Dr. John C. Pair 1937-1998)



Dr. John C. Pair 1937 - 1998

Dr. John C. Pair is in an elite class of nationally recognized horticulturists. After receiving his Bachelors Degree from New Mexico State University and his Master Degree from Kansas State University, he served as K-State's first horticulture county extension agent in Sedgwick County. Upon receiving his PhD from K- State in 1971 he became one of two researchers at the new Kansas State University horticultural research facility in Wichita. The facility underwent a number of name changes during its history. During his 27 year tenure as ornamentals researcher, he held the position as Director of the facility for a major portion of the time. The facility became one of the premiere applied horticulture research centers in the country.

For his efforts Dr. Pair was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award for Nursery Crops by the American Society for Horticultural Science in 1995.

John C. Pair became nationally renowned for his extensive research that resulted in the release of many cold-tolerant plants. His tree introductions included an Osage orange 'Wichita', a dogwood 'Ozark Spring', maples 'John C. Pair' and 'Autumn Splendor', and a lacebark elm 'Emerald Prairie'. He also did work with Shantung maples, crabapples, azaleas, crapemyrtles, and many other plants that greatly expanded the "plant palette for the Great Plains". He also introduced the grasses Midlawn and Midfield.

John visualized and promoted The Wichita Garden Show which is presently one of the ten best shows in the nation. He was one of the guiding forces in the initiation and development of our much-visited showcase, Botanica, The Wichita Gardens.

The Wichita Horticulture Research Center was renamed the John C. Pair Horticultural Research Center to honor him after his death. There are few people in South Central Kansas actively involved in horticulture who have not benefited from the efforts of this great gentleman and horticulturist.

**2007 Tree Pioneer of Kansas
(John G. Firsching 1912 – 1979)**



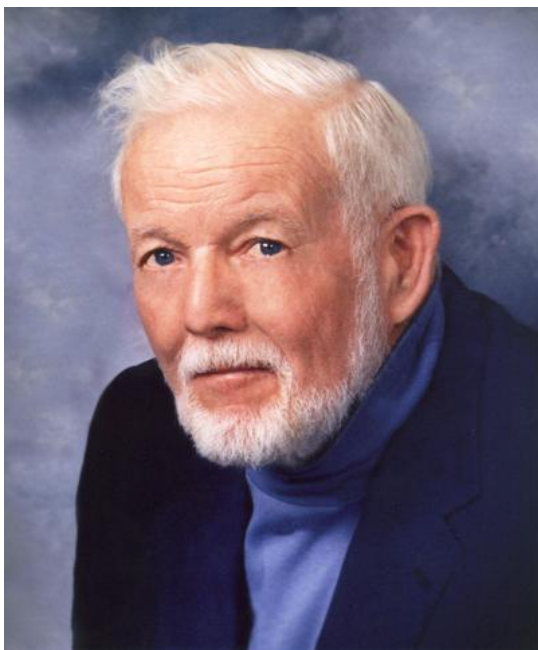
John G. Firsching 1912 - 1979

John Firsching was born in Staten Island, New York. He graduated from Brown University with graduate work at Columbia, Rutgers and Wagner. John worked for the New York City park system before coming to Wichita.

John was superintendent of Wichita's Landscape & Forestry Division from 1949 to 1979. He was a landscape architect and led the reforestation of Wichita's trees following the onslaught of Dutch Elm Disease by introducing a great diversity of trees in parks, public areas and along streets. He was instrumental in landscaping City Hall, Heritage square, Price Woodard and Linwood Parks. Of the more than 100 species of trees by 1979, some of his favorites were Pistache, Golden Rain and Callery Pear.

He started Campfire Arbor Day tree planting program now carried on by Project Beauty with 50 years celebrated in 2005. The Pinetum at Botanica, the Wichita Gardens, is dedicated in his memory.

**2008 Tree Pioneer of Kansas
(Joseph J. Brady 1925-2007)**



Joseph J. Brady 1925 - 2007

Joseph J. "Joe" Brady, a World War II Navy veteran, was a connoisseur of classical music, a Boy Scout leader, and a leader in the horticultural industry in Wichita. Mr. Brady was a past president of the KS Association of Nurserymen and for 25 years was host of the popular "Gard'N'Wise" Show, a local T.V. gardening show.

Joe and Catherine Brady founded Brady's Nursery in 1952 and were joined in the business by five of their children. They developed a 50-acre nursery containing over 150 varieties, including 30 varieties of crabapple trees. Joe introduced many tree selections to Sedgwick County, including: Japanese Tree Lilac, Lacebark Elm and American Yellowwood. Joe was the first nurseryman in the Wichita area to have a degree in horticulture from Kansas State University and was a lifelong member of the KSU Alumni Association. His tireless effort helped secure for Wichita the KSU-John C. Pair Horticulture Research Center. The many botanical accomplishments of Joe Brady remain a lasting legacy for all to enjoy.

2010 Tree Pioneer of Kansas (Timothy R. Martz)



Timothy R. Martz

Timothy R. Martz is a Kansas native born in Wichita, Kansas in 1954. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, and Forestry from Kansas State University in 1976. He joined the City of Wichita Park and Recreation Department in January of 1977, hired by then Landscape and Forestry Division Superintendent, John G. Firsching, Sr.

In Tim's 35-year tenure with the City of Wichita, he has worked as Gardener I, Gardener II, Gardening Supervisor I and II, Tree Maintenance Inspector, Superintendent of Landscape and Forestry Division, Superintendent of Park and Recreation and two stints as Acting Park and Recreation Director. He is retiring in September 2010. One of Tim's favorite trees is the Chinese Pistache whose glorious autumn colors can be seen along Southeast Boulevard and along 25th street and I-235 and in neighborhoods, parks and along roadways throughout the city.

As Superintendent of the Park and Recreation, Tim is responsible for grounds maintenance of all city parks, public facilities, and public open spaces: approximately 6000 acres. He is responsible for all public trees in parks, right-of-ways and waterways. Tim supervised the forestry section of the Division for 25 years and he takes great pride in the team of passionate, skilled and dedicated professionals which responds to clean-up and restoration efforts after severe storm events, aggressive growth in the reforestation program of tree planting and establishment, and lifetime care for over 150,000 public trees.

Martz belongs to the International Society of Arboriculture, Society of Municipal Arborists, the National Recreation and Park Association and is a member of the Sedgwick County Horticulture Advisory Committee, The John C. Pair Kansas State University Horticulture Research Center Advisory Board.

Martz says he has been surrounded and nurtured by talented, passionate professionals throughout his career with the City of Wichita, from his mentors and co-workers, to the city-wide nurserymen and women with whom he has worked. He promotes quality in selection of plantings not necessarily a large and increasing number of plantings, plus a three-year tree care establishment regimen including mulching, adequate watering, pruning and on-going lifetime care. The citizens of the City of Wichita have been fortunate to have this dedicated man and his talented fellow workers caring for public trees and landscapes.