

Office of the Mayor

PROCLAMATION

~In Recognition Of~

Mayor Michelle Distler Day



***WHEREAS,** Mayor Distler has a passion for Shawnee that started in her 3rd grade class at Nieman Elementary when her teacher Mrs. Bennett taught about local history and took the class to Old Shawnee Town for a field trip and since then has always been a staunch supporter of preserving and teaching our history, including the creation of a trivia game; and*

***WHEREAS,** Mayor Distler is a lifelong Shawnee resident and was sworn into office as a Councilmember for Ward 4 in 2006; and*

***WHEREAS,** When she was elected the 23rd Mayor in 2015, she became the first woman to hold that office, pushing Shawnee towards progress and change; and*

***WHEREAS,** She leads with thought and care and actively works to give back to the Shawnee community through lifelong volunteering with several local organizations as well as the city, and used the office of mayor to give back through initiatives like being recognized as the highest fundraiser three years in a row for the Heroe's Pull in which a new Crusader Award for the highest fundraiser was created because of her, and with the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund she designed an annual theme for shirts and ornaments and raising the most funds on record to date, and breaking her own record year after year; and*

***WHEREAS,** Mayor Distler felt it a priority to recognize and encourage good in the community she created several programs such as the Neighbor with Heart Award, Mayor's recognition coin, You've Been Spotted by the Mayor cards, in which she handed out all over the city from restaurant wait staff to random shoppers in local stores recognizing them for the difference they were making in the service and kindness she witnessed, and many other programs; and*

***WHEREAS,** Mayor Distler served as a team leader who helped staff creatively fundraise through events, donation opportunities at City events, and social media addresses. She has created a Shawnee dog lover t-shirt and even championed a fun social media contest where residents can show off their pets while raising money for the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund. This "Top Dog Contest" culminated in a pet parade in Downtown Shawnee; and*

***WHEREAS,** Mayor Distler has supported our youth by visiting various clubs, scout troops, and schools, and loved accepting invitations to be the guest speaker at many Eagle Scout ceremonies, and she also created programs like Guest Councilmember for 3rd through 7th graders and Mayor for a Day contest for seventh graders; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler would love to share with anyone that wanted to know the fun facts about the city of Shawnee being the same size as Disney World, her birthday being the same day as Mickey Mouse, Disney World's fire station is the same as Shawnee's 71, and Disney was founded in '23, and she is the 23rd mayor, the M-I-C and D-I-S, and anything else Shawnee has in common with Disney; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler would try to bring the community together with different initiatives like Shawnee KS Rocks!, Chalk your Walk, and other fun activities for families; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler was always out within the community visiting churches, HOAs, retirement villages, neighborhood block parties, and hundreds of local businesses logging over 1700 hours in just her first year as Mayor; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler prioritized the personal touch in every interaction she had and personally welcomed thousands of new businesses by handwriting them letters welcoming them to our city, and she would insist on hand signing everything including thousands of thank you letters and volunteer certificates; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler initiated Good News Starts Here and would love to surprise residents with handwritten cards, or make personal visits, to resident's who were celebrating an accomplishment or award, a milestone birthday or anniversary, or any other joyful occasion, but she would also be present to support those at the times of loss and sorrow as well; and*

WHEREAS, *If there is one thing that Mayor Distler loves, it is interacting with the community, always responding to every email and phone call, and learning why others choose to call Shawnee home; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler has served on several Boards and Committees including the Community Engagement Task Force, Public Arts Task Force, Shawnee Downtown Partnership, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Visit Shawnee Advisory Committee, and Shawnee Economic Development Executive Committee, Faith City Partnership, created a partnership with Hidden Heroes to help support our military families, along with many others, she was also a founding member of the CPAAA and CERT Team; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler has been a devoted supporter of the Sister Cities program and Shawnee's efforts to build relationships around the world; and*

WHEREAS, *many significant public projects have been completed during her tenure as Mayor including: the new chapel at Shawnee Town 1929, new Fire Station 74 build and 71, 73 remodel, historical building utility boxes & historical tours, new parks, B&B Theaters, Mid America Sports Complex, and Downtown Redevelopment are just a few examples; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler wanted to understand and share with the community the amazing work that city staff does every day she made it her mission to visit and work in every department from multiple activities with the police department, visiting every shift at every station of the fire department, and working multiple projects with the public works department such as mowing, working a backhoe to remove a storm drain in the rain, riding in a bucket in the highest point of the city during wind and sleet to clean an opti-con, and painting the stripes on Lackman just to name a few; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler, worked with a self-initiated group from the Shawnee faith community and in turn, these ministers have undertaken numerous meaningful projects that have provided life-changing assistance to people of the Shawnee community; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler promoted and participated in Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and Adopt a spot, just to name a few!; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler promoted creative ways to interact with the community including Third Thursday Coffee with the Mayor, Quarterly Q&As, being present at all the city events to "Talk Shawnee", as well as opening the State of the City event up to the public; and*

WHEREAS, *using accurate and timely information and not using Government terms, she wanted the citizens of Shawnee to understand and be engaged in all aspects of decision making by promoting an open, approachable, transparent, and reachable presence; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler also championed the City's rebranding project to help develop a new Shawnee brand "Hometown With Heart" that will represent the City for many years to come; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler truly embodies Shawnee's "Hometown With Heart" and plans to stay here forever and continue to serve her community; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler designed her key with the symbolism of infinite hearts in a lucky clover representing her infinite love for Shawnee and the three teeth representing Shawnee's past, present, and future; and*

WHEREAS, *Because of the active role she plays in our community, both staff and residents alike feel the strong love Mayor Distler has for the city of Shawnee because of her personal acknowledgement of them and their achievements accomplished and additionally with staff, her recognition and appreciation for them every year with "your mayor loves you" valentine's; and*

WHEREAS, *As a lifelong resident, it was never about political aspirations for her, just a passion for the city and mama bear approach to preserving the history and beauty of her hometown with a quiet humbleness that most didn't know all that she was doing for others; and*

WHEREAS, *Mayor Distler always had a collaborative vision for Shawnee's future and prioritized being transparent and approachable, she believed she was not here to tell people what they want, but instead to ask them what they want and always said, "We need to not think alike, but think together"*

NOW, THEREFORE, *I, Mickey Sandifer, Mayor of the City of Shawnee, Kansas do hereby proclaim December 13, 2023, as "Mayor Michelle Distler Day" in the City of Shawnee, and do hereby pay tribute to her 18 years of selfless service and thank her for all that she has done to make Shawnee a better place for everyone to call their "Hometown With Heart".*