Since Kansas State College for Agriculture and Applied Science (KSAC) was founded in 1863, there have been 13 presidents and first ladies.

The gallery highlights the lives of the first ladies. Although they had unique qualities and backgrounds, each first lady possesses many of the same admirable characteristics: they represented the university with dignity and were leaders in many campus and community organizations.

The idea of the gallery was proposed by former K-State President Jon Wefald to acknowledge the important role and impact these women have had at K-State. A space was identified on the second floor of Hale Library to display portraits and biographical information about these women.

**Frances (Osborne) Dennis Denison**

Frances Ann Osborne-Dennis was the widow of a Methodist missionary when she met Reverent Joseph Denison. She then became a pastor’s wife, the president’s wife at both Kansas State agricultural College and Baker University, mother and stepmother to eleven siblings, and a grandmother raising grandchildren when a daughter died.

A believer in suffrage for women and African-Americans, she farmed, provided room, board, and clothing for students, and donated money to the struggling new college. She was recognized as a true pioneer of the prairie, a tireless volunteer, and the first, First Lady of KSAC.
Ann "Nannie" Taylor (Foote) Anderson

Anne Taylor Foote, orphaned at age four, was raised by her maternal aunt. She and her childhood friend, Presbyterian minister, Reverend John Anderson, were married in 1864. As a young bride she nursed Civil War soldiers in New York before coming to KSAC. While on campus she offered her kitchen as a lab for women majoring in Domestic Science. Her example was followed by Mrs. Fairchild who organized campus and community women offering their kitchens in the Domestic Science Club.

Mrs. Anderson’s tact and graciousness also aided reorganization efforts at the college. She later served as a Congressional spouse, living in Washington D.C. and raising three sons.

Charlotte Pearl (Halsted) Fairchild

Charlotte Pearl Halsted boarded in President Fairchild's home while attending Oberlin College in Ohio. It was there that she met his youngest son, George Thompson Fairchild. The couple married in 1863 and then moved to Lansing where she became a faculty wife at Michigan Agricultural College. In 1879 Charlotte became the first college graduate to be first lady of KSAC.

She is recognized as one of the founders of the Domestic Science Club, which recruited local women to open their homes for students to practice their skills until the college had sufficient facilities for the students.

Mrs. Fairchild was the mother of five children and following their time at KSAC the couple moved to Berea College in Kentucky.
Frances (Osborne) Dennis Denison

Frances Ann Osborne-Dennis was the widow of a Methodist missionary when she met Reverent Joseph Denison. She then became a pastor’s wife, the president’s wife at both Kansas State Agricultural College and Baker University, mother and stepmother to eleven siblings, and a grandmother raising grandchildren when a daughter died.

A believer in suffrage for women and African-Americans, she farmed, provided room, board, and clothing for students, and donated money to the struggling new college. She was recognized as a true pioneer of the prairie, a tireless volunteer, and the first, First Lady of KSAC.

Marguerite (Rae) Nichols

Marguerite Rae, a teacher, met Ernest Nichols while both attended Iowa Normal, today the University of Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls. They married and moved to Manhattan in 1890.

Mrs. Nichols was a faculty wife, mother, volunteer teacher, member of the Domestic Science Club, the State Federation of Kansas Women’s Clubs, and First Lady of KSAC for ten years. She hosted a reception for the senior women each year in addition to one for the entire graduating class. The couple, who often rode a tandem bicycle around town, eventually retired to Chicago where they managed a teacher’s agency.
Effie Lane (Nebecker) Jardine

Effie Lane Nebekermet William Jardine when they were students at Utah State. The couple had three children. They came to campus when Jardine was hired as an agronomy professor who rose to Dean of Agriculture and then President of KSAC. They influenced the design and were the first to live in the president’s residence in 1923. Mrs. Jardine was the First Lady at both KSAC and Wichita State. In Manhattan she became president of Social Club and initiated a student loan fund. The club then raised money with a reading by visiting poet, Carl Sandburg. Dr. Jardine was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Coolidge. After her duties as a cabinet member’s wife, she hosted dignitaries in Cairo when her husband was appointed as Minister to Egypt. Thus she served campus, community, state, and nation during her lifetime.

Margaret Ward (Watson) Waters

Margaret Ward Watson met Henry Waters, Dean of Agriculture at the University of Missouri, at a social in Columbia where she resided. She had one son and as a faculty wife was active in community preservation. Upon their move to KSAC she began Social Club to facilitate faculty interaction. The club celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011. She also endeared herself to students by getting the ban against dancing on campus lifted.

Upon their departure from Manhattan, the couple lived on the Plaza in Kansas City where Dr. Waters wrote for the Kansas City Star. She spent her last days back in Columbia running the family newspaper which she had been instrumental in purchasing.

Margaret Ward (Watson) Waters

Margaret Ward Watson met Henry Waters, Dean of Agriculture at the University of Missouri, at a social in Columbia where she resided. She had one son and as a faculty wife was active in community preservation. Upon their move to KSAC she began Social Club to facilitate faculty interaction. The club celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011. She also endeared herself to students by getting the ban against dancing on campus lifted.

Upon their departure from Manhattan, the couple lived on the Plaza in Kansas City where Dr. Waters wrote for the Kansas City Star. She spent her last days back in Columbia running the family newspaper which she had been instrumental in purchasing.

Effie Lane (Nebecker) Jardine

Effie Lane Nebekermet William Jardine when they were students at Utah State. The couple had three children. They came to campus when Jardine was hired as an agronomy professor who rose to Dean of Agriculture and then President of KSAC. They influenced the design and were the first to live in the president’s residence in 1923. Mrs. Jardine was the First Lady at both KSAC and Wichita State. In Manhattan she became president of Social Club and initiated a student loan fund. The club then raised money with a reading by visiting poet, Carl Sandburg. Dr. Jardine was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Coolidge. After her duties as a cabinet member’s wife, she hosted dignitaries in Cairo when her husband was appointed as Minister to Egypt. Thus she served campus, community, state, and nation during her lifetime.
Mildred (Jenson) Farrell

Mildred Leona Jenson met Francis David Farrell in Utah, where she was attending preparatory school and he was attending Utah State College. The couple married and moved to Manhattan when Francis became the Dean of Agriculture at KSAC. He became president in 1925. The couple had two children; Mrs. Farrell was the only first lady to have a baby during her tenure. She was an avid gardener, active in the Social Club, Domestic Science Club, AAUW, and Pi Beta Phi. She contributed to the Girl Scouts Little House, purchased reading and recreational material for Fort Riley soldiers, and started a group for faculty mothers. She served as First Lady for nearly two decades during the difficult Depression years and the beginning of World War II. After her husband retired in 1943, they remained in Manhattan.

Helen Elsie (Eakin) Eisenhower

Helen Elsie Eakin, a Manhattan native, met Milton Eisenhower while both attended Kansas State University. They married shortly after, and moved back to Manhattan when Milton became president of K-State in 1943. As First Lady, Mrs. Eisenhower was honorary president of the Social Club and concentrated on making a home for her family; she made all of the sweaters worn by Milton and her two children, and embroidered a K-State flag, which hung in Anderson Hall for many years. John Scheepers also developed a tulip after Helen, called the “Miss Helen Eakin” tulip, which won the Calvin Coolidge Gold Medal at the National Flower Show in 1947. After K-State, she followed her husband to Pennsylvania, where she served as First Lady at Pennsylvania State University and was active in planning an All-Faiths Chapel, which was named for her following her death.
Janet McLean (Henry) McCain

Janet McLean Henry, a dancer, met James McCain, an instructor, when she attended Colorado A&M. They married and moved to California and then to Washington D.C., where their only child Stella was born, for James’s work. Mrs. McCain was First Lady of Montana State before James accepted the presidency at Kansas State College in 1950. Mrs. McCain remained First Lady of KSC for 25 years and was an excellent hostess to speakers and researchers such as Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Truman Capote. As a member of the Social Club she began the tradition of a Spring luncheon for new and retiring board members. She was also a member of P.E.O. and instrumental in founding a local chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta. The couple eventually retired to Topeka where James was appointed to Commissioner of Labor for the State of Kansas.

Shirley (Hansen) Acker

Shirley Hansen, a 4-H member, met Duane Acker at a county fair. After marrying, Shirley had two daughters and served as the wife of a graduate student, faculty member, and administrator on five campuses before assuming her role as First Lady. She helped refurbish the president’s residence, named the street which leads to it, and housed students there in addition to again entertaining large groups of students, faculty, and visitors. Besides the traditional memberships in Domestic Science and Social Club, she was active in 4-H, P.E.O., Civic Theatre, Arts Council, League of Women Voters, the Manhattan Book Club, and both hospitals. Although already an accomplished china painter, Shirley also took art classes. Upon leaving Kansas, she worked as a White House volunteer during the Reagan and Bush administrations before retiring to farm in Iowa.
Ruth Ann (Joynt) Wefald

Ruth Ann Joynt met Jon Wefald at the University of Michigan where both were graduate students. The couple married, had two sons, and settled in Minnesota. Mrs. Wefald was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Economic Security’s Community Service Division for her efforts on behalf of rural women. She also served as first lady at Southwest State University.

Mrs. Wefald began fundraising for the future Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art and continued with dance, the girls’ row team, and the Foreign Student Center. She was active in the Domestic Science, Social, and Manhattan Book Clubs, P.E.O., the Flint Hills Bread Basket, and the Christian Science Reading Room. In 1997 she was named Citizen of the Year, and in 2002 she was elected president of the National Association of State Universities’ and Land Grant Colleges’ Council of Presidents’ and Chancellors’ Spouses.

Noel (Nunnally) Schulz

Noel Schulz became First Lady in 2009 when Kirk H. Schulz was selected as president of Kansas State University. She became associate dean for research and graduate programs in the College of Engineering in 2012 and is the director of the Electrical Power Affiliates Program and the LeRoy C. and Aileen H. Paslay professor of electrical and computer engineering.

Dr. Schulz has been actively involved in recruiting and retaining women in engineering, faculty development and encouraging international experiences in education. She has also advanced faculty development activities and is working to advance the graduate student program in the College of Engineering. She has received a number of awards and is a member of Eta Kappa Nu, Tau Beta Pi, the American Society for Engineering Education, the Society of Women Engineers, and the National Society of Black Engineers. She has two sons, Timothy and Andrew.