

# In memoriam of Marie Boyd

**By Ron Wilson**  
Director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University

She never sought the limelight, but she always rose to the occasion. That's one way of describing the rich life and many contributions of Marie Boyd, who passed away on October 9 in Phillipsburg at age 97.

Marie Boyd might be called the "First Lady" of Rural Kansas, with all due respect to past occupants of Cedar Crest.

For the past half-century, she and her husband Huck strongly supported the State of Kansas and rural America.

Through her long married life with Huck, she was always supportive of his work as publisher of the weekly Phillips County Review and as Republican National Committeeman. Huck was constantly working for policies to benefit rural Kansas.

After he passed away in 1987, the Huck Boyd Foundation was established in his honor and strives to honor his legacy of service. The Foundation is based in their hometown of Phillipsburg, population 2,602 people. Now, that's rural.

Today, the Huck Boyd Foundation supports three primary projects:

- 1) the McDill "Huck" Boyd Community Center, a beautiful 21,000 square-foot facility with a 500-seat auditorium, state-of-the-art teleconference facility; and model railroad museum in Phillipsburg;
- 2) the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media in the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications at Kansas State University; and
- 3) the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at K-State.

Marie was instrumental in putting together the plans for each of these.

After the Foundation was first organized, leaders of the foundation board wanted to reach out to maximize the benefit to rural Kansas. Thanks to Marie and other outstanding board members of the Huck Boyd Foundation, a new partnership was forged to establish the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development under the visionary leadership of K-State President Jon Wefald, Sen. Sam Brownback, and others.

I remember working with Marie on various plans in those early days. As always, she did not seek the limelight, but she always rose to the occasion.

When the Huck Boyd Institute was announced, she was there. When the Institute's first Rural Policy Agenda was created through a visioning session in Phillipsburg, she was there.

When the groundbreaking of the Huck Boyd Community Center and later its dedication was held, she was there. And in spring 2006, when the Discover Phillips County project was launched at a community meeting, she was there — at age 97!

Another special memory was when Gloria Freeland, Director of the K-State journalism school's Huck Boyd Center, initiated the Huck Boyd Lecture series in Community Media. The very first lecture in this prestigious series was to be given by Senator Bob Dole. Gloria asked Marie Boyd to introduce the senator at the lecture. Marie was reluctant at first, protesting that Huck had always been the public speaker, not her. But Huck was gone and Marie was a longtime friend of Senator Dole's while also being very supportive of the center's work, so she again rose to the occasion.

The day of the lecture came. Marie, a spry 90-years-old at the time, introduced the senator to a near-capacity crowd in McCain Auditorium with grace and aplomb. And the senator's loudest applause of the day came when he paid tribute back to Marie.

Marie Boyd was a true lady. In her gentle and consistent way, she helped assure that we all remained true to Huck's legacy. She also endured heartache, especially when her daughter Marcia died suddenly from acute leukemia and then her son-in-law perished in a tragic farm accident.

Through it all, I found Marie to be steady and stalwart. She met every challenge with grit and grace.

Now her heritage continues on. In 2005, Huck and Marie's granddaughter Anne Brockhoff was elected as Chair of the Huck Boyd Institute Board of Directors, so the legacy of leadership and service continues.

On Oct. 26, 2006, Marie would have celebrated her 98th birthday.

Alas, that milestone was not to be. But we can celebrate 97 years of a life well lived, in service to her family and to rural America.

Thanks, Marie, for all these years of making a difference.

The mission of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development is to enhance rural development by helping rural people help themselves.

The Kansas Profile radio series and columns are produced with assistance from the K-State Research and Extension Department of Communications News Unit. Audio and text files of Kansas Profiles are available at <http://www.kansasprofile.com>. For more information about the Huck Boyd Institute, interested persons can visit <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/huckboyd/>

# Study: Discrimination persists for Hispanic candidates

GARDEN CITY (AP) — Congress has more Hispanic members than at any other time in history, but a new survey of top elected officials says many Latino candidates still face discrimination as they try to ascend the political ladder.

Democrat Tim Cruz, a former mayor of this burgeoning meatpacking city who is running for an open seat on the Kansas Board of Education, has had some experience with this.

The last time he campaigned in his sprawling southwest Kansas district, his Republican challenger publicly accused the third-generation Kansan of being an illegal immigrant.

Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., said he faced similar unfounded claims, too, when he first ran to be the state's attorney general.

"You just have to put it behind you and focus on the issues," said Cruz, as he took a break from his campaign on a recent afternoon. "Sometimes I feel like I'm stereotyped and that I'm seen as only running for Hispanic kids. I'm running because I believe we should be trying to help all members of the community."

Especially in states where the Latino population is relatively small, Hispanic candidates can face a unique set of barriers to holding office, said Rosalind Gold, senior policy director at the Los Angeles-based National Association of Latino Elected Officials. Gold is co-author of the study released this month in which 190 Hispanic Republican and Democratic officials in federal, state and local government were surveyed about their challenges on the campaign trail.

**“ Sometimes I feel like I’m stereotyped and that I’m seen as only running for Hispanic kids.”**  
Tim Cruz, Garden City

More than one-third of respondents reported facing discriminatory campaign activities, while over half said they had experienced or observed discrimination while running for or holding public office, NALEO said.

The responses detailed race-based appeals during elections and attempts to harass Hispanic candidates' campaign workers by asking for their "papers."

In Cruz's district, Hispanics make up more than 40 percent of the population in its three biggest towns, Garden City, Dodge City and Liberal, according to U.S. census figures.

Should he win election to the board, he would be one of the few Hispanics elected to statewide office in Kansas, said Delia Ortiz, one of the state's four Hispanic legislators.

"Right now, an easy way to undermine a Latino candidate in a non-majority Latino district is to imply they'll be soft on immigration," said Louis DeSipio, an associate professor of political science and Chicano/Latino studies at the

University of California, Irvine. "You imply that there is something inherent in the candidate's ethnicity or gender that would make them dangerous on hot button issues."

As the immigration debate seeps into local races, such charges are being leveled at candidates of all ethnic backgrounds and party affiliations, said John Trasvina, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Earlier this month, a national Hispanic advocacy group said it was upset about a Web site criticizing Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan for her voting record on illegal immigration. The site, [muchasgraciasdebbie.com](http://muchasgraciasdebbie.com), was posted by the National Republican Senatorial Committee. It depicts the candidate in a sombrero and features a recording of "Mexican Hat Dance."

Hispanic groups also have criticized the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee for placing Web ads depicting Latino illegal immigrants as terrorists.

Although Hispanic politicians have won elected or appointed positions in 42 states, Gold said that doesn't necessarily mean the Latino community is well integrated into party politics or can define local political agendas.

That can take generations, said Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, R-Fla.

"In the 1980s we still had a long way to go in terms of acquiring power within the Florida Legislature, and now you see the speaker who's Hispanic," said Diaz-Balart, who is from Miami. "Now in terms of the Hispanic reality, it's a majority reality."

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