



Esther George, former Kansas City Fed president, starts a new chapter

by: Jennifer Wilding

February 10, 2023

At 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 31, employees of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City milled around the long hallway stretching from the elevators to the employee exit. By 3:45 p.m., hundreds of employees stood shoulder-to-shoulder, some holding posters wishing Esther George a happy retirement. George had recently celebrated her 40th year with the Kansas City Fed, the last eleven as president. Fed policy says that presidents must retire when they turn 65.

In the weeks leading up to this moment, there were interviews with media outlets big and small, including [KCUR](#), the local National Public Radio station, and [News-Press](#) in St. Joseph, near George's hometown of Faucett, Missouri. There was a tribute event and reception. And now she was leaving the building for the very last time as president. The elevator landed. The doors opened. George stepped out to a wave of cheers and applause that followed her out of the Kansas City Fed and into her new life.

To learn more about Esther George and her impact on the Kansas City Fed, see the [biography](#) in the winter issue of [TEN](#) magazine, by Tim Todd. It starts with her childhood in tiny Faucett, on the farm her ancestors had first plowed in the late 1830s:

"In the 1970s, it was where Esther, like every other farm kid in America, worked for the family enterprise— "I made my 25 cents an hour cutting weeds out of soybeans and doing chores"—while they dreamed about being somewhere else.

"Eventually, that somewhere else would be the President's Office of the Federal Reserve Bank in downtown Kansas City. In 2011 she became only the ninth president in what was at that time the Bank's nearly century of service to the Tenth Federal Reserve District."

George served much of her career in the Bank's Division of Supervision and Risk Management, serving for 10 years as the Tenth District's chief financial institution supervisor, which included oversight of the region's state-chartered member banks and nearly 1,000 bank and financial holding companies, as well as the Bank's discount window and risk-management functions. She was directly involved in the Tenth District's banking supervision and discount window lending activities during the banking crisis of the 1980s and post-9/11.

She provided leadership for the Federal Reserve's efforts to develop [FedNowSM](#), an instant payments system, and she hosted the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's international [Economic Policy Symposium](#) in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The search for George's successor is under way, led by those Kansas City Fed board members who are not affiliated with the banking industry. The search committee chair is [Maria Griego-Raby](#), president and principal of Contract Associates, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Other members include:

- [Ruben Alonso III](#), chief executive officer, AltCap, Kansas City, Missouri
 - [Patrick A. Dujakovich](#), president, Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO, Kansas City, Missouri
 - Board Chair - [Edmond Johnson](#), president and chief executive officer, Premier Manufacturing, Inc. and ENFusion, Frederick, Colorado
-

Author



Jennifer Wilding

Community Engagement Advisor

Jennifer Wilding, community engagement advisor for the Kansas City Fed, uses writing and public engagement skills on special projects for the community development department.

WritingIn 2026, the Kansas City Fed released Wilding's "[The Byways Report: The Scenic Route to Rural Prosperity](#)," examining how small towns have used route-based tourism as a strategy for economic development. Along with expert interviews and technical resources, the report includes stories from several byways, with a focus on Route 66 in Oklahoma. Her [three-part series on Investment Connection](#), the Kansas City Fed's signature program, appears on the [national website](#) about the Fed's work in communities. Wilding co-authored [Disconnected: Seven lessons on fixing the digital divide](#), a layperson's guide to putting broadband, devices and training within reach of a community. In addition to special projects, Wilding edits the Kansas City Fed's [community development newsletter](#). [Subscribe here](#). **Engagement** Wilding served as project director for community-engaged research in a neighborhood where broadband subscriptions were very low. The engagement [built understanding](#) of barriers to connection. She also led [focus groups with unemployed individuals](#) and with people from nonprofits that serve them, held in Chicago, Detroit, Denver and Kansas City. Before joining the Kansas City Fed in 2018, Wilding was executive director of Consensus KC, a nonprofit consulting firm specializing in public policy and civic engagement. She holds a B.A. in urban affairs from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her hobby is letterpress printing, using a 1,500-pound cast-iron press from the late 1800s. **About the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City** The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, along with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up our nation's central bank. We work in the public's interest by supporting economic and financial stability. The Kansas City Fed's territory includes Colorado, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, northern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Our headquarters is in Kansas City, with branch offices in Denver, Omaha and Oklahoma City. The Kansas City Fed Community Development Department promotes economic development and public understanding that leads to progress for lower-income individuals and communities. Our focus areas include community development investments, digital inclusion, small business / entrepreneurship, and workforce development.