From the Vault: Facts from the pages of presidential history

October 18, 2023

As Jeff Schmid joined the Bank as its tenth president, TEN reflected on facts about some of his predecessors.

In August, Jeff Schmid became only the 10th president in the 109-year history of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. Schmid also is the first native Nebraskan to lead the Bank. ([Learn more about Schmid’s life and career.](https://www.kansascityfed.org/ten/from-the-vault-facts-from-the-pages-of-presidential-history/)

As Schmid joined the Bank, TEN reflected on facts about some of his predecessors:

**Esther L. George** (Ninth), who retired in January 2023, is the only woman to serve as Bank president. One of George’s ancestors made saddles for the Pony Express.

**Thomas M. Hoenig** (Eighth) started in supervision and was the first to rise through the ranks of the organization.

**J. Roger Guffey** (Seventh) served three years with U.S. Army intelligence in Germany in the 1950s.

**George H. Clay** (Sixth), previously worked at Trans World Airlines, where he was largely responsible for developing New York City’s John F. Kennedy Airport and the expansion of what is now Kansas City International Airport. Clay sang professionally and continued to do so even after passing the Missouri bar. He said he stopped after being introduced as “an up-and-coming young singer” rather than an “up-and-coming young attorney.”

**Gavin Leedy** (Fifth), after graduating from the Kansas City School of Law, taught night classes at the school, where one of his students was future U.S. president—and, later, a Kansas City Fed tenant—Harry S. Truman.

**Jo Zach Miller**, considered the first “president” after switching from chairman to governor in 1916, called automobiles an “absolute unnecessary extravagance” and refused to own one.
Media

(Left to right) Incoming President Thomas M. Hoenig, J. Roger Guffey and George H. Clay at Guffey’s retirement dinner in 1991.