

# Bugle

SUMMER 2023

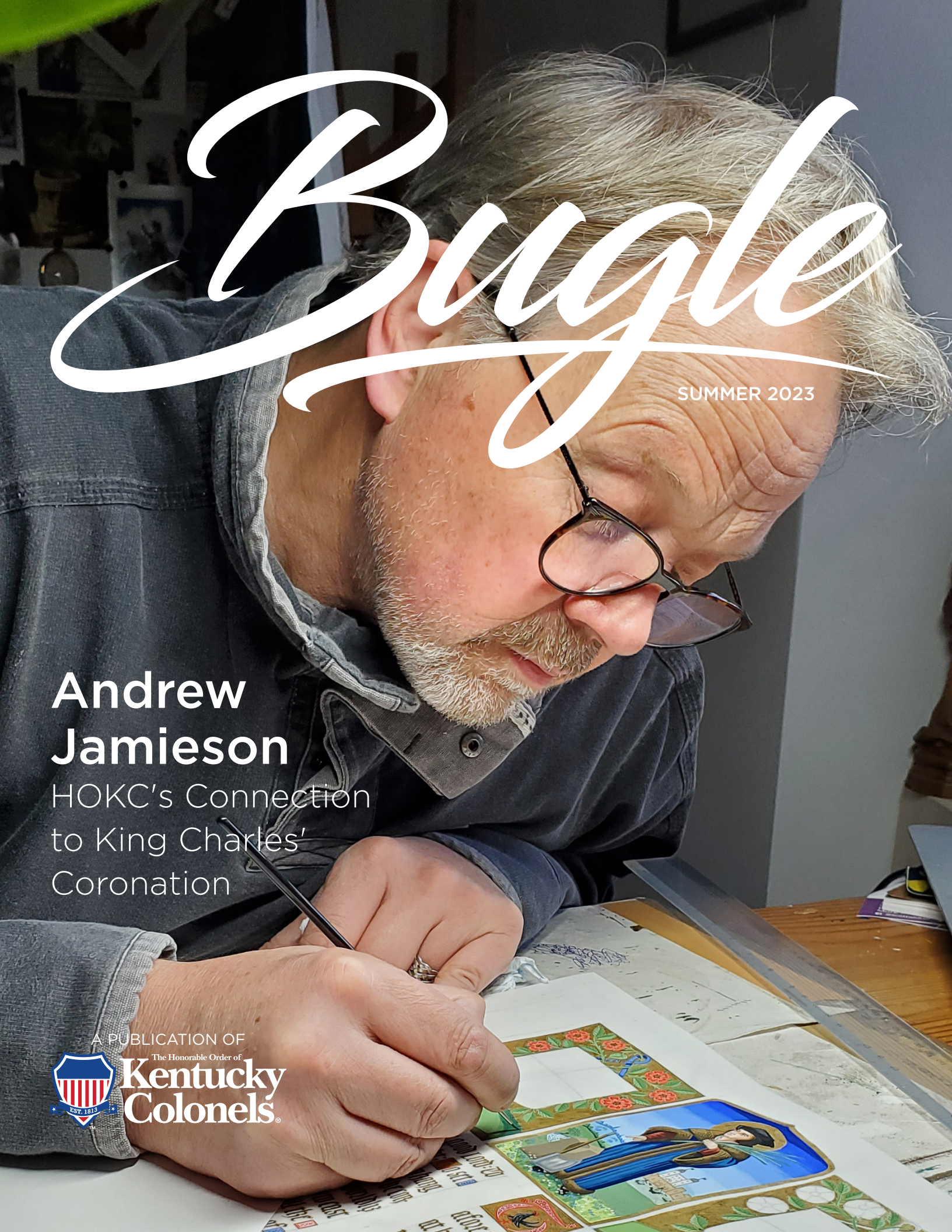
## Andrew Jamieson

HOKC's Connection  
to King Charles'  
Coronation



A PUBLICATION OF  
The Honorable Order of

**Kentucky  
Colonels®**





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## **From the Commanding General**

# *An openhearted outlook*

**F**rom halfway around the world to our own backyards, Kentucky Colonels enhance the lives of our fellow citizens.

Colonels Lester and Pauline Thomas have served their communities, whether it be in Lexington, Kentucky, or Rota, Spain. Colonel Hugh O'Brian created one of the world's most prominent youth organizations, helping over 375,000 high school students worldwide reach their leadership potential through a program with guiding principles that model the principles of Kentucky Colonels, and Colonel Andrew Jamieson designed the official invitation for the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

The HOKC takes its responsibility for being good stewards of your gifts seriously and, this year, invited Colonels to participate in the grant review process. You can learn more about that vetting process in this issue.

New Lease on Life and the Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia are two of the non-profits that have gone through the rigorous vetting process. The New Lease on Life program helps survivors of tornadoes in western Kentucky find housing in rehabilitated homes, and the Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia has a mission to enable young people from disadvantaged circumstances in eastern Kentucky to reach their full potential. Read more about these organizations in this issue of Bugle.

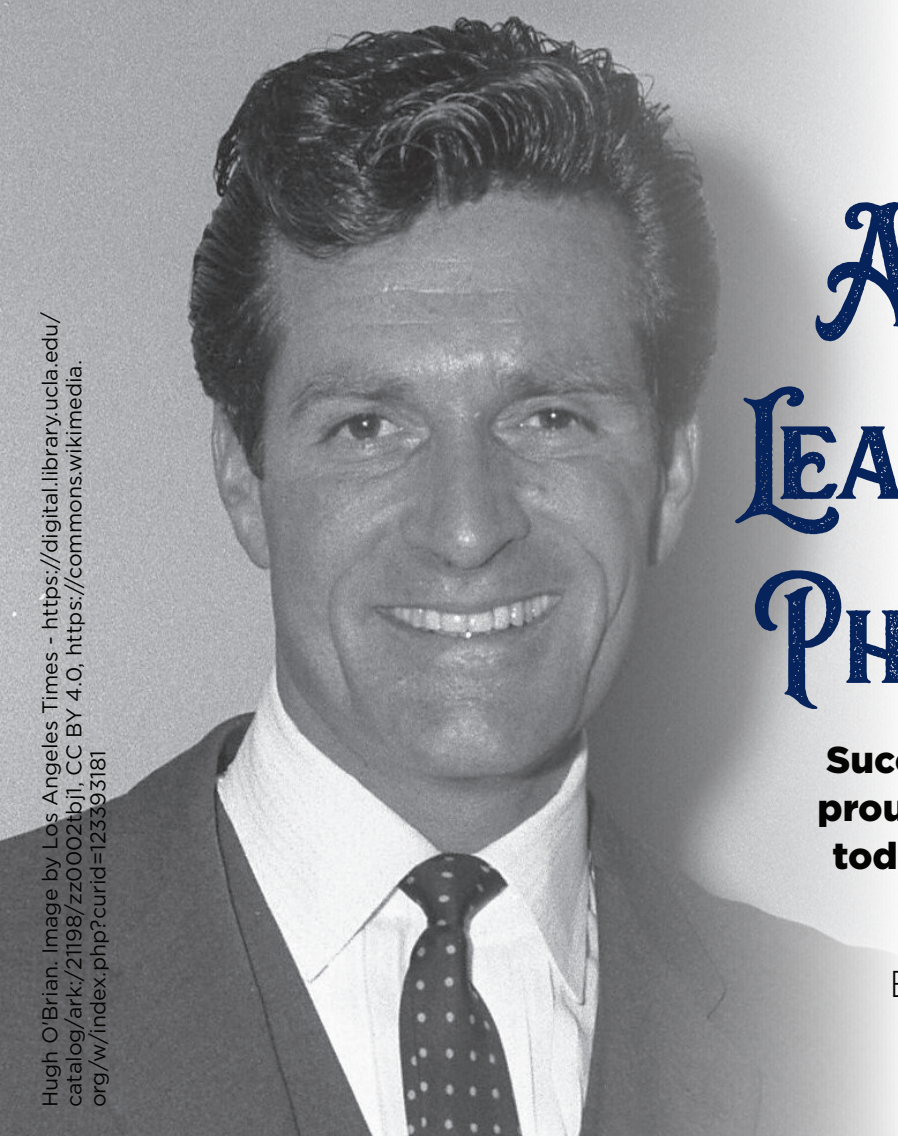
Colonel Hugh O'Brian believed in the potential of every human being. Because a Colonel Gave, because you gave, that full potential can be reached for the citizens of Kentucky.

Cordially,

*Gary W Boschert*

Gary Boschert  
Commanding General  
HOKC 





# A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY

**Successful actor Hugh O'Brian's proudest achievement continues today with more than 600,000 alumni worldwide.**

By Colonel Leslie Watkins,  
Director of Major Gifts

Colonel Hugh O'Brian was born Hugh Charles Krampe on April 19, 1925, in Rochester, New York, to Ohio-born parents Edith Lillian (Marks) and Hugh John Krampe.

O'Brian became a star athlete, lettering in football, basketball, wrestling, and track. Although he originally planned to become an attorney, he dropped out of the University of Cincinnati and enlisted in the Marine Corps.

As a recruit in Marine Corps boot camp at Camp Pendleton, California, he participated in a boxing match refereed by John Wayne, who was shooting a film there. (In 1976, O'Brien played the last character killed on-screen by Wayne in "The Shootist," which was John Wayne's

last film.) During his four years of service, O'Brian became the youngest drill instructor in the Marine Corps and received but declined an appointment to the Naval Academy.

Upon his discharge and with hopes of becoming a lawyer, he was scheduled to attend Yale University on the G.I. Bill in the fall of 1947. He spent the spring and summer in Los Angeles, working as an ice-cream-soda-bar-jerk at Schwab's Sunset Strip Drugstore to raise money for college. However, he had an unexpected change of plans (and the beginning of an acting career) because of an actress he was dating. At one of her rehearsals, he was pulled in to read a part when the leading man did not show up. O'Brian ended

up filling that role and joining a theater group in Los Angeles and a stock company in Santa Barbara, developing his acting talents. Eventually, a director discovered him and opened the door to his being signed by Universal Studios.



Mitzi Gaynor and Hugh O'Brian.

Image courtesy of  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/38305841@N03/6312811152>







O'Brian was known for his "gentlemanly ruggedness," but he rebelled against the handsome leading man image, thus losing those roles to Rock Hudson. He earned top status in the "B" action adventure "The Brass Legend," but it did little to advance his film career. He earned the starring role in "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp," which became a television hit a year later, making him an instant star, and he sang in variety shows and on Broadway. During the 60s and 70s, he appeared in dozens of movies. He later appeared in "Twins," with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito, and made guest appearances on television shows such as "Fantasy Island," "The Love Boat," "Murder, She Wrote," "L.A. Law," and his last on-camera appearance on the series "Call of the Wild" in 2000.

O'Brian was one of the first celebrities to visit the front line on tours of Vietnam at the request of the State Department and staged and directed a company of "Guys and Dolls," which toured Vietnam, Thailand, and Japan performing for the troops. He was also one of the founders of the Thaliens, a show-business charitable organization formed in 1955 to raise money for children with mental health problems.

O'Brian's proudest achievement was the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), which he founded in 1958 after spending considerable time with Dr. Albert Schweitzer at his African clinic. O'Brian, at age 33, spent nine days working as a volunteer at the hospital on the banks of the Ogooue River in Gabon during the summer of 1958. It was a life-changing experience for O'Brian. After dinner each evening, O'Brian and Schweitzer spent hours talking. O'Brian later recalled that, as he was about to depart downriver, Schweitzer took his hand and asked, "Hugh, what are

you going to do with this?" On his flight back to the United States, he reflected on Schweitzer's comment that "the most important part of education is teaching young people to think for themselves." Struck by the impassioned work being done by Schweitzer, O'Brian set up HOBY to help develop young people into future leaders and dedicated much of his life to this program. Recognized as one of the world's most prominent youth leadership organizations and founded to inspire and develop our global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service, and innovation, HOBY identifies the leadership abilities of high school students and helps them apply those skills to their communities and the world. More than 375,000 high school sophomores selected by their schools have gone through HOBY, which hosts numerous events that explore topics related to leadership, including community leadership workshops for freshmen, state leadership events for sophomores, and the World Leadership Conference for sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Much of the work at HOBY involves young people exploring and identifying their unique leadership skills. Students learn to mobilize their own unique traits and are exposed to guiding principles for students to incorporate into their lives. Those principles, which model the principles of Kentucky Colonels, include:

- Providing service to the community
- Showing generosity and honesty to others
- Demonstrating personal commitment
- Empowering others
- Working together

To attend seminars in the United States, a student must be chosen

by his or her high school out of all students in that school's sophomore class. At the seminars, students participate in programs designed to enhance their leadership and teamwork skills and interact with leaders in their community in fields such as volunteerism, media, education, philanthropy, and politics.

Today, more than 600,000 HOBY alumni worldwide take part in special programming, participate in service projects, and serve as mentors. HOBY's alumni network is substantial - over four million volunteer hours have been logged by Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership alumni.

In 1972, O'Brian was awarded one of the nation's highest honors, the Freedom Through Knowledge Award, for his space-oriented projects, including HOBY seminars at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Colonel O'Brian died in Beverly Hills, California, on September 5, 2016. Hugh's belief in the potential of every human being and his commitment to helping the youth of the world become major contributors to society is his legacy. Today more than 600,000 HOBY alumni worldwide are making a difference in the lives of others, thanks to his vision and passion. 🇺🇸



Hugh O'Brian. Image courtesy of <https://www.flickr.com/photos/38305841@N03/6312811152>



# Colonel Couple

**Lester & Pauline Thomas keep their relationship - and their community - together for the long haul.**

By Col.  
Leslie Watkins,  
Director of  
Major Gifts



Lester, Pauline, and Trinity.

Pauline and Lester Thomas have served their community – down the street and around the world. From purchasing winter coats for people in need in Lexington and the eastern Kentucky region to military service in Spain, they have left their mark on every community they have called home.

Lester Thomas, born in Madison, Wisconsin; and Pauline Thomas, born in Emporia, Kansas; met at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in North Chicago in December of 1964 while going through Electronics Technician School. They were married in July of 1965 in the small chapel at the training center – and began a life of adventure and service together.

Lester joined the Navy in 1960, spent 24 years as a

communications technician-operator, then worked in maintenance, and retired from the military in 1983. His first duty station was Sidi Yahia, Morocco. He was later assigned to Great Lakes, Illinois; Pensacola, Florida; Adak, Alaska; Skaggs Island, California; Rota, Spain; Keflavik, Iceland; Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico; and Washington, D.C., where he retired. His retirement flag flew over our nation's capitol and the USS Arizona. After retirement, Lester joined E-Systems, now a subsidiary of Raytheon, as a principal design engineer and retired from there in 1996.

Pauline joined the Navy in 1964, upon graduation from high school. In 1966, while the Thomases were stationed in Adak, Alaska, Pauline left the Navy pending the birth of their son. While their son was

growing up, Pauline took on many roles, including short-order cook, cake decorator, and childcare provider, in the areas where Lester was stationed.

While in Rota, Spain, she worked as an education advisor for three and one-half years with the Cleveland Institute of Electronics. She spent two years with LaSalle Extension University in the same capacity and two years as the advertising advisor for *Jack Tar*, the base newspaper. While stationed in Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico she was the curriculum advisor for Los Angeles Community Colleges Overseas, an on-base college.

After their move to the Washington, D.C. area in 1980, Pauline worked as an administrative assistant for R & D Associates, a government contractor, for







eight years. After twelve years with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), she retired as a graphics specialist manager, working on briefings and documents that went to government officials.

Because much of their work was classified, Pauline and Lester could not share details of their assignments with each other. When one particular project was reported in the news years later (after it was declassified), they both said, "I worked on that project," and neither had known the other had worked on it.

During the 22 years they lived in the D.C. area, their first love was sailing with their friends on the Chesapeake Bay, and they owned several sailboats. Their ultimate sail was a 10-day cruise from St. Thomas, USVI, to Solomon's Island in the Chesapeake Bay. Lester and Pauline were also very active with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the civilian component of the Coast Guard.

They were certified coxswains and participated in tall ship escorts, safety patrols on the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River, boater education, and

support for the Active-Duty Coast Guard. On 9/11, he was responsible for sending auxiliary vessels in and around the Potomac River in support of the United States Coast Guard in the D.C. area.

After 9/11, the Thomases moved to Grayson, Kentucky and lived on 120 acres, home to many types of wildlife indigenous to Kentucky. In 2007 their six weeks old granddaughter, Trinity, came to live with them. When she was six years old, they moved to Lexington. Trinity is now a fifteen-year-old high school student. The Thomases are, rightly so, proud of Trinity; she is a gifted student and does Taekwondo (Korean style martial arts), in which she has achieved a third dan black belt. She is also a demonstration team member and spends at least two nights a week training the lower belts at the dojang. Trinity also volunteers for the Honorable Order at Homecoming each year.

Before their move to Kentucky, Lester and Pauline visited numerous foreign countries, both in and out of the service, including Spain, Iceland, Puerto Rico, Morocco, and Germany. In 2001, after Pauline's retirement, they spent 45 days backpacking in Greece. With Trinity, they have continued their travels; Lester has visited over 40 different countries; Pauline has visited around 30, and Trinity has visited at least 20. An experienced chef and collector of cookbooks, Pauline loves to cook and frequently prepares dishes from various places they have lived.





Lester was nominated to be a Colonel in 2012 by a doctor who knew what they were doing to help eastern Kentucky communities. Lester and Pauline frequently do “good works” anonymously when they see a need, such as being a secret Santa in eastern Kentucky or buying presents for children in foster care or those they know whose families could not afford Christmas gifts. They also set up a fund with a local veterinarian to help people who could not pay for emergency care for their pets; there is now an annual fundraiser for this fund at the local county fair.

Lester nominated Pauline in 2014 in recognition of her work with the Grandparents Raising their Grandkids program in the five-county area of eastern Kentucky and her general support of the community. At one time, Pauline began purchasing winter coats at yard sales to donate to Grayson and Lexington,

Kentucky, schools. Upon learning what the Thomases were doing, others in the community began to donate coats. At times, the Thomases had over 50 coats in their home to distribute. They also assist the Youth Services Center by purchasing food for less fortunate students to take home during the school year.

With the Kentucky Colonels, Lester, Pauline, and Trinity participate in the Day of Service when they are able, attend grant presentations for the Good Works program (which they believe is the finest feature of the HOKC), and attend Homecoming; at the 2022 Homecoming, the Thomases participated in the

trophy presentation to the owner of the winning horse of the Colonel’s Race. Colonel Michael Dwyer of Florida nominated Jamieson to be a Kentucky Colonel in October of 2020, citing his support of the Marie Curie Cancer Research Foundation, the Knights of Columbus, the Versailles Ball, the Saint Andrew’s Society of the State of New York, and other local charities in Dorset, England as Jamieson’s philanthropic work. Jamieson is a member of the UK Brigade of Kentucky Colonels.

The Thomases represent the compassion toward others and service to their community that are hallmarks of HOKC and are instilling those traits in Trinity, who will certainly someday become a Kentucky Colonel. 🇺🇸







# A Coronation Connection

**Colonel Andrew Jamieson's illuminations bring sparkle to the Coronation.**

By Colonel Leslie Watkins,  
Director of Major Gifts

A Kentucky Colonel living in the United Kingdom has significant ties to the coronation of King Charles III; he designed the official invitation. Colonel Andrew Jamieson, after being one of eight artists nominated to submit a rough draft for the coronation invitation, was chosen to create the invitation.

Jamieson was born in southeast London but grew up in a rough area of east London, where some of his friends had single mothers and others had fathers in prison. As a ten-year-old, when his parents took him to the British Museum, Jamieson became interested in heraldry, the discipline relating to inherited coats of arms and other symbols to show personal identity and family lineage. He fell in love with the manuscripts illuminated with gold and beautiful borders.

During the summer of 1978, while working for his grandfather removing

armrests and foam rubber from seats in the Royal Opera House, Jamieson walked along the Thames and noticed a building with coats of arms displayed in the façade. That building was the College of Arms - the official heraldic authority for England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and much of the Commonwealth. In a chance meeting, Jamieson met a man connected with

the college who gave him a tour and introduced him to the painters. These painters encouraged him to apply to the Reigate School of Art.

Jamieson decided to take a foundation course at Salisbury College of Art first, where he learned drawing, sculpture, painting, and photography; he then applied to Reigate but was turned





down. After a year of working in a mental health hospital, he again applied and was accepted. While studying at these prestigious art schools, better-off classmates frequently bullied Jamieson. He recalled feeling, at times, that he was from the wrong side of the tracks.

He studied for three years at the Reigate School of Art and graduated with honors. After graduation, he painted coats of arms for the College of Arms as a freelance artist. He also began taking commissions from people worldwide, including Secretary of State / General Colin Powell.

Recognized by the Canadian Heraldic Authority as a Master of Heraldic Art, Jamieson is a Founding Craft Member and past Chairman of the Society of Heraldic Arts and is the author and illustrator of *The Pitkin Guide, Coats of Arms*, which was published in 1997. He is also a Brother of the Art Workers' Guild, of which King Charles III is an honorary member.

Jamieson designed the Royal Letters Patent and documents of state for King Charles III. After being invited to become a Queen's Scribe, he illuminated the Royal Letters Patent issued under the Great Seal of the Realm issuing Prince William his Duke of Cambridge title for his wedding day in 2011.

Forty years after graduating from Reigate, Jamieson now draws coats of arms for monarchs, celebrities, and some of the world's most powerful political figures, and, most recently, the royal family chose him to design the invitation to the coronation. Sworn to secrecy, Colonel Andrew Jamieson could not reveal that his sketch had been chosen and worked on the design for a month, keeping it secret even from his family.

In an interview with *The Times*, Colonel Jamieson said, "I came up with the concept of a wildflower



meadow, inspired by medieval books of hours and tapestries, and the motif of a "Green Man." Books of Hours were the most widespread prayer book in Western Europe in the late Middle Ages and had rich decoration and illustrations, shimmering with gold. The design is painted in watercolor and an opaque watercolor known as gouache, which has greater reflective qualities.

The "Green Man," an ancient figure from British folklore, symbolizes spring and rebirth and is used on the invitation to represent the beginning of a new reign. A lion, a unicorn, and a boar, which are found in the coats of arms of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, are surrounded by roses, wild strawberries, shamrock, daffodil, lily of the valley, cornflowers, bluebells, and rosemary, representing remembrance of Queen Elizabeth II. The wildflowers also signify King Charles III's love of nature and years of campaigning against climate change. The flowers appear in groupings of three, signifying the king becoming Charles III - the third monarch of his name.

Colonel Jamieson commented on his website, "To have been invited to play a small part in such a historic event in our nation's history has been an incredible honour and the opportunity of a lifetime. My hope is that those who see the invitation will get as much joy from it as I did creating it."

Colonel Michael Dwyer of Florida nominated Jamieson to be a Kentucky Colonel in October of 2020, citing his support of the Marie Curie Cancer Research Foundation, the Knights of Columbus, the Versailles Ball, the Saint Andrew's Society of the State of New York, and other local charities in Dorset, England as Jamieson's philanthropic work.

As an artist who broke down class barriers to reach the pinnacle of his career, Jamieson advises young artists to take being told "you are not good enough" as a challenge. He added, "To anyone out there who thinks they are not good enough, I say, 'You are - you must believe in yourself, push yourself, and stay motivated.'" 🇺🇸



# Vetting Grant Applications

**This year, 14 volunteers, trustees, and staff vetted 384 grant applications, ultimately approving \$3.1 million to 343 nonprofits.**

By Colonel Eric Patterson, Grants Administrator



The Good Works Program provides over \$3 million annually in grants to Kentucky nonprofits that help over 3.9 million individuals.

Because a Colonel gave, since 1951, the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels has granted \$60 million to more than 1,700 nonprofits. These grants depend entirely on the support of over 30,000 contributing Colonels throughout the world, who have chosen to continue their charitable efforts through contributions to help Kentuckians.

Grants given through the Good Works Program are focused on helping organizations that fall mainly within these categories:

- Community Enhancement
- Community Support
- Education
- Health, Rehabilitation, and Life Skills
- Historic Preservation
- Homeless, Low Income, and Those in Crisis
- Veterans Services and Military
- Youth Services

To be eligible for funding, nonprofit organizations must be exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and have traditionally existed for at least five years. HOKC team members traveled the state in 2022 on a “Listening Tour” to hear the needs of nonprofits and, with that new information, launched a small initiative in 2023 to help newer nonprofits, which have been in existence for fewer than five years, by opening the application process to them, with a limit on the amount they could request. Additionally, funding is limited to nonprofit organizations located within the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and nonprofits requiring a religious requirement to utilize their services are not eligible.

In 2023, HOKC received 384 grant applications (24 from newer nonprofits), totaling over \$4.3 million in requests. Thanks to the generosity of thousands of Colonels and The Angel Foundation, HOKC will again grant \$3.1 million to organizations serving Kentuckians. Requested items ranged from beds for foster children to repair work on the only painting done of Mary Todd Lincoln while in the White House,

food for weekend snack bags, and Seizure Detection Devices. The HOKC typically has one grant cycle annually, with the online process beginning in December. Submitted applications traditionally go through a multi-step review process, being reviewed first by the Grants Administrator, then the Grants Committee Chair, and then the Executive Director. This year the Grants Committee introduced another step in the review process and invited several Colonels to the Ralston Building at Headquarters to participate in the initial reviews of the applications. Fourteen Colonels volunteered their time over the course of six review sessions.

Participating Colonels collectively read over 370 grant applications. After this step, the Grants Committee reviews the applications; at this stage, some applications are denied if the submitting organization has stronger financials than other applicants. The remaining applications are then assigned to members of the Board of Trustees for review. The Trustees try to visit each applying organization in person and will review 350 grant applications over the next two months.



The HOKC takes the responsibility of distributing grants seriously. Colonels Colleen and Greg Dalga of Hebron, Kentucky, remarked that they had always considered the HOKC grant vetting process to be "top shelf" but said, "Reading the grants in person and learning more about the grant process further solidifies our trust in the process and in the great work that all of you do."

Colonels considered the following items when reviewing the grants:

- How many individuals did the organization help in the previous year? How many are low-income?
- Did the organization use a professional fundraiser to complete the grant application? How much was this person paid?
- Has the organization had any conflicts of interest?
- Do board members support the organization financially, and if not, why?
- Are the requested items eligible for funding? Does the organization have the required number of bids or an adequate explanation for fewer bids?
- Is the project needed?
- Does the organization have an endowment or investments? If so, how much is unrestricted?
- Has the organization received funding for similar requests in previous years?
- Is the organization financially healthy?

The Colonels also reviewed each organization's IRS Form 990 to confirm there were no issues about which we should ask more questions.

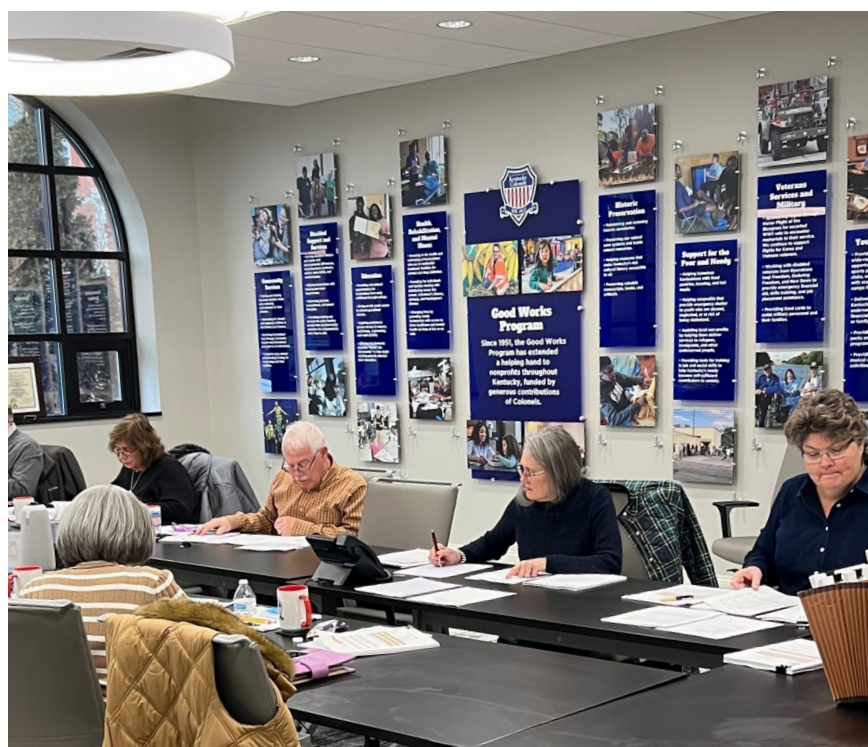
Although HOKC had not invited Colonels to participate in the grant review process until this year, Executive Director Sherry Crose believes that the addition to the process was a success. She said, "The volunteers did high-quality work, and their reviewing was thoughtful and deliberate."

And reviewing the grant applications was beneficial to Colonels also. Colonel Brian Glanz shared that the participants had a new appreciation of all the good work being performed by non-profits across the commonwealth and a new appreciation for the work the staff performs at Headquarters. Belinda Gates added that "Learning about the specific needs of an organization, how they align with our mission, and what limited resources they have to fulfill those needs enlightened me to the great work that the Honorable Order is doing across the

Commonwealth to fill gaps and serve thousands of people."

As an assurance to other Kentucky Colonels, Colonels Mike and Dawn Magdycz said of the grant review process, "It was enlightening to experience the rigor behind the grant review process firsthand. We appreciate that several Colonels review each grant request and that the Honorable Order's Trustees travel to many nonprofits to review grant requests in person. Colonels who donate to the Honorable Order can be confident they are entrusting their donation to an organization that distributes funds wisely."

The Honorable Order appreciates the time and thoughtful consideration these volunteers gave to the grant review process and looks forward to inviting Colonels to participate in the process in the future. If you are interested in participating in the initial review application process, please reach out to me at 502-266-6114, or [epatterson@KyColonels.org](mailto:epatterson@KyColonels.org).







# Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia

**The Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia gets a head start on summer fun.**

By Colonel Leslie Watkins,  
Director of Major Gifts

When the opioid epidemic swept over eastern Kentucky, Harlan County was no exception. As the community began dealing with the ramifications of rising prescription drug misuse and abuse, Tony and Tommie Saragas led a group of concerned citizens interested in creating a safe environment for youth after school and formed the Harlan County Youth Sports League. As one of the only afterschool programs in the area, the league quickly realized that the children of Harlan County needed much more than sports leagues; they needed skills to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens. They chartered as a National Boys & Girls Club of America in 2003. At the time, it was the only Boys & Girls Club in southeastern Kentucky. Now it serves over 2,500 youth each year.

The club's only site then, the Cawood Ledford Boys & Girls Club, named for Kentucky's legendary sports announcer — was located in a former school building. Eventually, the Club moved into a storefront facility and began raising funds for a new,

permanent facility. The new Cawood Ledford building, with a game room, arts and crafts room, thirteen-station computer lab, fitness room, education lab stocked with school supplies and resource materials, kitchen, and administrative offices, opened in 2007.

Because of growth in the program, the organization opened a second site at Union College in Barbourville in 2018. In 2020, they opened a third site — a 21st Century school-based site. Now there are five sites or clubs in the organization, now called the Boys & Girls Clubs of Appalachia. The sites or clubs are the Union College Boys & Girls Club, the Harlan Teen Club, the Black Mountain Boys & Girls Club, and the Cumberland Boys & Girls Club.

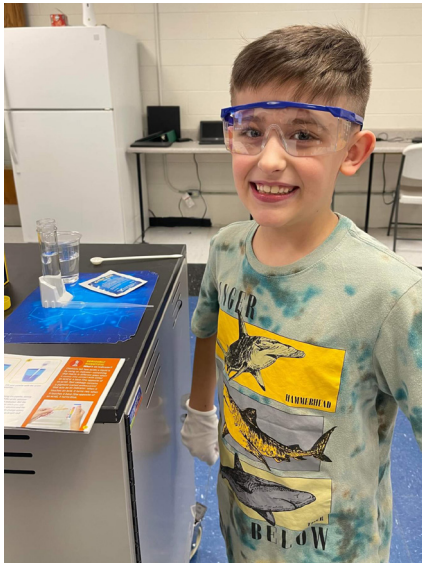
The program's mission is to combat the loss of hope experienced by many area youth by "inspiring and enabling all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens." Since opening its doors, the club has helped thousands of

children receive opportunities and skills necessary to succeed through afterschool programming, including services tailored to address the needs of youth living in a community where substance misuse is prevalent.

CEO Kateena Haynes says that over the years, she has seen a reduction in the misuse of prescription drugs among high school students; however, there is still a strong need to support children growing up within a family and community impacted







by the opioid epidemic. Eighty-two percent of youth reported having a trusted adult at the Club in whom they could confide, and all surveyed youth reported abstaining from vapor products, tobacco products, and marijuana in the prior 30 days. Teachers and school administrators alike also report seeing a decrease in negative behavior during school hours in youth who attend the club.

Membership is \$25 per school year; however, scholarships and payment plans are available, and no child is ever turned away for inability to pay. Children of military families and laid-off coal miners receive free membership.

On a typical day, students start their afternoon with Power Hour, an educational program that provides academic support, homework help, and fun educational activities, like math bingo. Later, youth participate in a myriad of enrichment programs. During the summer, students can participate in a full day of programming focusing on the great outdoors, science, and world culture. Youth hear from professionals, go on field trips, and have experiences that cannot be completed in a single afternoon.

The character and leadership development programs empower youth to support and influence their club and community through

meaningful relationships, a positive self-image, the democratic process, and respect for cultural identities. At the end of the year, students compete for the title of Youth of the Year (YOY). YOY winners receive a scholarship and a chance to compete in state, regional, and national competitions.

Workforce development is a crucial program at the Boys & Girls Club, with students participating in soft skills training, modeling and coaching, and technical skills training. These programs enable youth to become proficient in basic educational disciplines and technology and apply those skills to everyday situations.

Participating youth in the health and life skills program develop positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals, and live successfully as self-sufficient adults. The SMART Moves drug prevention program is the club's signature program.

To develop their creativity and cultural awareness, youth participate in visual arts, crafts, performing arts, creative writing instruction, competitions, and experiences across

the state. The Club runs a variety of sports leagues throughout the year, helping members develop fitness, positive use of leisure time, skills for stress management, and appreciation for the environment.

Although nearly every family in Harlan County has been affected by drug abuse, the club remains motivated to break the cycle of addiction looming over the community. Smart Moves is now offered during the school day, spreading the message about the dangers of substance abuse and providing guidance on strengthening decision-making skills and exercising responsible behavior. After thirteen club members lost parents to overdose deaths over one winter, the club adapted its programming to include services to help youth identify healthy ways to cope with the disruptive and traumatic effects of the opioid crisis.

Over the years, the Boys & Girls Club of Appalachia has received over \$77,000 in grants from HOKC, providing funding for game room and playground equipment, a new telephone system, cafeteria tables, a van, and materials and labor to enclose an existing porch to create a foyer. 🇺🇸





# NEW LEASE ON LIFE

**The unique partnership  
between HOKC and others  
provides housing for families  
who were renting before the  
2021 tornados.**

By Colonel Leslie Watkins,  
Director of Major Gifts



The Honorable Order recently partnered with the Community Foundation of West Kentucky, the Kentucky Thoroughbred Foundation, the James Graham Brown Foundation, and the Ray & Kay Eckstein Charitable Trust to provide over \$1.5 million in funding to support the New Lease on Life program (part of the Mayfield Graves County Long Term Recovery Group) in the rehabilitation of vacant homes throughout the Mayfield area. HOKC provided \$250,000 toward this project, the first time the Colonels have joined forces with other organizations on such a project.

Long Term Recovery Group Executive Director Ryan Drane said, "The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels has played an instrumental role in helping our community and our survivors recover through their support

of this program. It is amazing to see the generosity of such a wonderful organization come through, yet again, when we needed it the most."

The December 2021 tornados destroyed over 700 structures and left thousands homeless in western Kentucky, forever changing the landscape. New homes, built by volunteers from across the country, began to spring up. Funding for these homes frequently came with restrictions and guidelines. The Mayfield Graves County Long Term Recovery Group operates under very specific policies to ensure equitable recovery for survivors, protect partners' resources, and prevent a duplication of benefits; however, as recovery took place, there was a large gap forming that impacted a large group of survivors – renters - as no organization wanted to fund rental properties, and renters, comprising almost 70 percent of survivors, could not meet most restrictions and guidelines.

Over one year after the disaster, hundreds of previous renters are still living in small travel trailers and hotel rooms or are sleeping on floors and couches of friends and

family. Some have even moved back into structurally unsound houses, with holes in the roofs, broken windows, mold growing on the walls, and floors so warped and broken that they expose the ground below. Without a long-term housing option, these former renters are essentially homeless.

To place homeless renters into permanent housing, the LTRG knew they needed to think outside of traditional recovery methods and utilize existing vacant homes in the community; however, many rental homes in the Mayfield and Graves county communities were purchased during the recession as foreclosures, and property owners did not have them insured adequately. Through no fault of the renters, much of the remaining rental housing was in complete disrepair and uninhabitable. And that led to the creation of the New Lease on Life program, and, through their work, the first home was dedicated on February 27, 2023.

The LTRG / New Lease on Life program purchases vacant homes in the city of Mayfield and Graves County. It utilizes its partner







network, with volunteers such as the Community Fellowship Baptist Church, and donated items to fully renovate the homes with needed repairs and improvements. The group also partners with the Energy and Environment Cabinet and post-disaster architectural and engineering professionals to repair homes with the same resiliency measures used in new home builds. It will include energy-efficient appliances and heating/cooling units to lower the overall cost of home ownership. The repaired homes do not have to be in the tornado-damaged area.


The LTRG works with its disaster case managers to identify eligible survivors and match them with homes based on family size, location,

Survivors will be allowed to lease the property at a significant discount to the market rate. They are required to have adequate income to sustain a monthly payment equivalent to a 30-year mortgage plus taxes and insurance (replacement value homeowner's insurance) to the home to which they are matched. They must have been gainfully employed for the previous six months or have monthly retirement, social security, or equivalent consistent income to afford the proposed payment. If a couple is not married, they must both sign the agreements and qualify. Applicants must agree to make monthly payments on a timely basis, maintain the home and grounds to acceptable standards during the lease period, and allow the LTRG to inspect the premises with a

loan. The LTRG will sell the home to the survivor at purchase price plus the cost of any capital improvements not covered by partner agencies or donated materials. This allows a survivor to purchase a home at far below market value.

The property is then placed in a land trust which will control the amount of appreciation the survivor can realize annually over a multi-year period, allowing the survivor to build equity and not incentivize them to "cash out" as soon as they execute their purchase option.

According to Drane, a previous donation from the Honorable Order of \$100,000 allowed New Lease on Life to acquire a warehouse to store donated products and to act as a refuge for survivors needing assistance from case managers to help rebuild their lives. Drane said, "Both of these gifts have served as catalysts to projects that allowed us to raise additional funds, and we are so grateful for your continued support to ensure that our community and our survivors are not forgotten."

New Lease on Life has renovated three homes, with nine former renters now living in them. New Lease on Life is currently renovating ten additional homes and is ready to purchase and renovate at least twelve more. With additional funding from other sources, New Lease on Life can purchase and renovate at least twenty homes and construct fourteen new ones. 



**//This program has given me a home for my family and an opportunity for a fresh start. The tornado took away many things from me that night, but it didn't take away my hope and dreams for a better life.//**

—Survivor of December 2021 tornados

and financial sustainability. This "building back better" program uses the following priority levels in choosing survivors for the program:

**Priority #1** - Renters living in state campers, FEMA trailers, hotels, Camp Graves, Tiny Homes, or with family or friends.

**Priority #2** - Renters who were currently leasing with expired leases.

**Priority #3** - All other impacted tornado survivors.

24-hour notice. They must make timely payments on all utility bills during the lease period and agree to fix any damage they cause during the lease period. Additionally, they must agree to participate in home ownership and financial management classes. The selected family are the only ones allowed to reside at the home unless special accommodation is made with the LTRG.

After one year of leasing a home, the survivor will be allowed to execute a purchase option on the home at a significantly reduced rate. This option will be extended if they need additional time to acquire a home





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...from Ashland to Paducah, 3.8 million Kentuckians benefit from the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels' Good Works Program. Children, veterans, people with disabilities, the hungry, and the homeless all find help through the services of 343 nonprofits receiving grants from us this year. And we continued to fulfill our commitment of \$4.5 million to tornado and flood relief across the state.

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