

**Opening Flag Ceremony
ESA Kansas State Convention
Great Bend, Kansas
April 30, 2011
By Charlotte Combs – Lamplighter President**

Madame President, sisters and guests, welcome. We are here this weekend to celebrate another year in ESA and to renew the special friendships that we cherish and share with one another. This year our President, Kim Kummer's theme "ESA.... Let Your Life Speak" has encouraged us to reach out and show our love through all of life's challenges. She encouraged us to help those who are less fortunate, and to "let our lives speak." Kim, we thank you.

Will the Lamplighter honor guard please take your place? The Lamplighter honor guard is lead by Joan Bourn and Coleen Cape both of whom are past Kansas State Council Presidents and past International Council Presidents. Other members of the honor guard are Marilyn Herren, Susan White, Donna Dawson, Karen Knorp-Brown, Mary Hill and Shelah Goyer.

This morning we remember our founding fathers who dared to dream "that all men are created equal, that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Please rise as we honor the **flag of the United States of America** being carried by Pat Josey and escorted by Linda Schmidt. I am the flag of the United States of America. I was born on June 14, 1877, in Philadelphia. There the Congress adopted my stars and stripes as the nation's flag. My thirteen stripes, alternating red and white, with a union of thirteen white stars in a field of blue, represented a new nation dedicated to the personal and religious liberty of mankind.

Today fifty stars shine from my union, one for each of the fifty sovereign states in the greatest republic the world has ever known. My colors symbolize the patriotic ideals and spiritual qualities of the citizens of my country. My red stripes proclaim the fearless courage and integrity of American men and boys and the self-sacrifice and devotion of American mothers and daughters. My white stripes stand for liberty and equality for all. My blue is for loyalty and faith. I represent these eternal principles: liberty, justice, and humanity. I embody American freedom: freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the press, and the sanctity of the home. I typify the spirit of determination brought to my land by Christopher Columbus and by all my forefathers. I am as old as my nation. I am a living symbol of my nation's law: The Constitution of the United State and the Bill of Rights. I voice Abraham Lincoln's philosophy: "A government of the people, by the people, for the people." I am displayed in every school throughout my nation, the seed bed of good citizenship and true patriotism. Americans, I am the sacred emblem of your country. I symbolize your birthright, your heritage of liberty purchased with blood, sacrifice and sorrow. I am your title deed of freedom, which is yours to enjoy. Eternal vigilance is your price of freedom. As you see me silhouetted against the peaceful skies of my country, remind yourself that I am the flag of your country, that I stand for what you are. Guard me well, lest your freedom perish. Dedicate your lives to those principles for which I stand: "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." God grant that I may spend eternity in my "land of the free and the home of the brave" and that I shall ever be known as "Old Glory".

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance:

“I pledge allegiance, to the flag, of the United State of America, and to the republic, for which it stands, one nation, under god, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Pat, please post the flag. Audience and honor guard you may be seated.

The official **flag of Kansas** is being carried by Denise Masterson and escorted by Karen Lowery. Our lovely state is located in America’s Heartland. Kansas entered the Union on January 29, 1861 as a free state. Our state flag is represented by a dark-blue, silk rectangle arranged horizontally with the state seal aligned in the center. The state seal centered on the flag tells the history of Kansas and its figures represent pioneer life. The seal contains: A landscape with a rising sun – A river and steamboat for commerce – A settler’s cabin and a man plowing a field for agriculture – A Wagon train heading west for American expansion – Indians hunting American Bison and a cluster of 34th stars to identify Kansas as the 34th state to be accepted into the Union. The state motto also appears on the flag “Ad Astra per Aspera” – Latin for “To the Stars through Difficulties”. How lucky we are to live in this great state with sunflowers, wheat fields, corn fields, oil wells, beautiful lakes, metropolitan cities, and rural communities. Kansas also has a diverse group of individuals from all over the world residing in her state, which brings many cultural opportunities to her people and some of the friendliest people we know. As Dorothy said in *The Wizard of Oz*, “there’s no place like home; there’s no place like home.” Denise, please post the flag.

Our guest this weekend is Vicky Jones, our IC Treasurer; she is being escorted by Susan Winters. Vicky is proudly carrying **the Flag of the State of Kentucky**. A few years after the original thirteen colonies, Kentucky achieved statehood and its

seal in 1792. Kentucky, like other Union states during the Civil War, had a blue flag with its seal in the center.

The name "Kentucky" is derived from a Cherokee name for the area south of the Ohio River. The meaning of the Cherokee name is disputed by historians, but it is believed to mean "meadowland." The state's official nickname is the "Bluegrass State."

As a slaveholding state with a considerable abolitionist population, Kentucky was caught in the middle during the Civil War, supplying both Union and Confederate forces with thousands of troops.

Two important cities emerged from what was once heavily rural Kentucky. Louisville is the largest city in the state. As the growth of commerce was facilitated by steamboats and the construction of railroads, Louisville became the commercial center of the state. It is also the home of the famous Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby.

Lexington is in the center of the Bluegrass Region, an agricultural area featuring production of the nation's best tobacco, as well as the breeding and training of some of the world's finest race horses.

Kentucky also prides itself in agricultural production of corn, soybeans, wheat, and dairy products.

Major industries include coal mining and hardwood production ranked third in the nation in both.

As you can see, from horse racing and Bourbon Country, from agriculture and industry, from Civil War significance and Abraham Lincoln; Kentucky is a state enriched with deep traditions, important history and authentic heritage. Thank you, Vicky for bringing a little bit of Kentucky to Kansas this weekend. Vicky you may post your flag.

The All Faith's flag will be carried by Cindy Rodman, and escorted by Charlene Hansen. This flag is symbolic of the brotherhood of mankind. It is representative of all our faiths, without regard to denomination, creed or sect. The green represents the spiritual growth in our lives, while the white dove of peace serves as a reminder to keep within our hearts, a prayer for peace and love throughout the world. The International circle denotes all ESA members who have joined hands across the seas, working together in harmony and friendship. We thank God for wrapping his loving arms around us, guiding us daily and keeping us safe from harm. We thank God for guiding our brave troops overseas who have shown the world that no matter your religious beliefs, all people deserve freedom. We thank God for that freedom. Cindy you may post your flag.

The ESA flag is carried by Maureen Wells and escorted by Shirley Campbell. The ESA flag symbolizes opportunity and hope. As a premier leadership and service organization, Epsilon Sigma Alpha offers our members the personal assistance and supportive programming needed to develop confidence and competence to go forth and impact the world in a positive way. Unlocking the personal challenge that resides within is the key to success, and ESA gives our members the background and assistance to do just that. Whether your aspirations are career oriented, volunteer driven or socially motivated, ESA helps you achieve your

goals. Our single purpose is to inspire leadership and service by bringing good people together to pursue programs and projects that make a positive difference in local, national, and global communities. In ESA, we touch the lives of others while changing our own. Maureen you may post the flag.

The ESA Foundation flag is carried by its creator, Verneene Forssberg, and escorted by Pam McElvain. Founded in 1970, this arm of our organization is available to support our membership with knowledge and educational opportunities to enrich our lives. The ESA Foundation is a non-profit/tax exempt organization pledged to develop philanthropic activities of volunteers, provide assistance to established programs that serve human needs, and produce new programs to improve the quality of life. This is a public foundation for all persons who share its goals.

Equally as important are the scholarships presented annually to deserving youth and adults. The recipients of these scholarships are our future leaders, and ESA members are proud to be a part of the formation of their personal and professional lives. We salute those visionary ladies who helped form the ESA Foundation, and pay tribute to its flag whose motto is "Serving the World Community ...Because We Care." Verneene you may post the flag.

Madame President, the Lamplighters of the Kansas State Council are pleased to have posted the flags at our 66th annual Kansas State Convention.