

It is with great pleasure that I recently accepted the role of Twin Creeks Extension District Director and Community Vitality Agent serving Norton, Decatur, Sheridan, and Graham Counties with my main office based in Hoxie, but time spent in all of the offices across the district. Introductions at my age and season in life are often a bit more like telling a story and hoping no one falls asleep in the process, so I will do my best to keep this brief, entertaining, informative, and as snooze-free as possible.

My journey to northwest Kansas started in Barber County, Kansas, about as close to Oklahoma as we now are to Nebraska. I grew up on a ranch southwest of Medicine Lodge where my love of all things agriculture and rural America first started as the 6th generation on my family's row crop and cattle operation. A member of the Gyp Hill Pioneers 4-H Club, holding every office from President to Reporter and taking every project from Apple Butter to Zoology, very early on I developed a hunger for personal growth, leadership development, and the pursuit of excellence in everything that I put my hand to. The finger prints of 4-H programming and a personal Mount Rushmore of several Extension Agents still grace my life today with a constant drive "To Make the Best Better."

Early on in my educational journey, I wanted to change the world one child at a time through the K-12 Public School System. I obtained my Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from Newman University in 2008 and accepted my first teaching job at Northern Valley in Long Island, Kansas, in 2010. Along the way I added several endorsements, taught a wide variety of subject matter areas, completed a Master's of Science in Curriculum and Instructional Leadership from Emporia State University, and ultimately came to learn that not all classrooms have four walls.

In 2016, my family's ranch in Barber County was caught in the crosshairs of the Anderson Creek Wildfire where they burned out over 9,000 acres of land and well over 100 miles of fence. Ironically, at the same time, I found myself teaching High School English and metaphorically burned out as well. Through my involvement on several state committees with the Kansas Farm Bureau organization, I had the opportunity to be boots on the ground during this tragedy and was awakened to the realm of public service, policy, and advocacy. My life was forever changed as a result of this experience.

In the spring of 2017, I left public education to pursue the opportunity of the Kansas Ag and Rural Leadership Program (KARL) Class XIV. About that time, I began non-profit work with Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas in their Part-C Kid Link program serving children with developmental delays. I am a recent graduate of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Series for Excellence in Public Service and incredibly passionate about women's leadership and building strong families.

My husband, Troy, and I currently farm and ranch in rural Phillips and Norton County where we have a small cow-calf and row crop operation. He greatly enjoys the cattle and is a part of a family custom silage hauling business. We are recent empty nesters and greatly enjoy traveling. Our oldest, Stuart, completed a welding certificate program through NCK Tech at Hays in 2022. He took a gap year in 2023 and will be a junior at K-State this fall majoring in Ag-Econ and Animal Science. Our youngest, Savannah, was accepted to nursing school right out of high school in the spring of 2022 and just passed her state boards to become an LPN at the age 19. She was accepted to an RN program that starts in August where she will continue her education this fall. In my free time, I greatly enjoy my horses, playing the piano, spending time with my family, hauling to regional and national barrel racing competitions, and anything that involves increasing capacity in others. I have a Cowboy Church ministry at local and regional horse events in Kansas and Nebraska where I share my faith and encourage others to take the next step in their own faith journey.