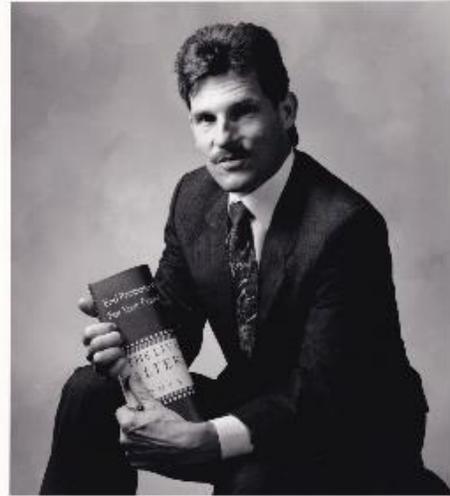


Lou Austin (1947 – 2019)

Lou Austin was a long-time advocate for the trails in the south Kansas City, MO area. He insured that the trails were marked and signed properly, walking trails were established along the corridor of the trail as new development occurred and was heavily involved with the local and state governments to ensure that all remnants of the trail were preserved for future generations.

Known by all as Lou Austin, Louis Edward Schumacher JR was born in Peoria, Illinois December 30, 1947 to Louis E. Schumacher and Sara N. Price Schumacher. He died peacefully at home August 29, 2019. The family moved to South Kansas City in 1958. Lou graduated from Ruskin High School in 1965, obtained a bachelor's degree from University of Missouri, and Law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1974. He served in the Kansas Army National Guard from 1969-1976. He founded the Austin Law firm in 1981 on Blue Ridge Blvd that became the "Austin Living Trust Law Firm" at 5904 E. Bannister Road, specializing in Trust Law until he retired in 2011. Lou was active in many civic and community efforts including founding director and Chairman of the 3-Trails Village Community Improvement District from its inception in 2002 until it terminated in 2015. He had many interests and passions including playing the banjo and bee keeping in his youth, to history, community planning, and a general love of music and the arts. He was fascinated with actor James Dean researching his life and befriending Dean's High School drama teacher Adaline Nall. And who can think of Lou without seeing the image of him bringing fresh eggs from his beloved chickens, referred to as "Lou's Happy Hens". However, his main love was history and with many others, making south Kansas City a better place. Through his love for history and the neighborhood, Lou championed the historical trails in south KCMO and with the assistance of many others and various historic trails organizations, and collaboration with the U. S. National Park Service, the fruits of their labors can be seen in a variety of projects, from trails at Avila University, to the recent National Park Service Certification of Palestine Cemetery at 93rd and Old Santa Fe Road where he brought together students from Ruskin High School, researchers and students from University of Missouri-Kansas City and scientists from the U. S. Geological Survey. Lou was involved with the National Park Service and Mid-America Regional Council retracement corridor project of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails from Sugar Creek Missouri to Gardner Kansas with a particular emphasis on South Kansas City. Along the way his efforts were acknowledged by many with the Award of Merit from The Santa Fe Trail Association, the Alvin Brooks Lifetime Service Award, and many others. Lou was instrumental in creating the Kansas City Missouri, Trails KC plan and the 6th District Pedestrian Intermodal Transportation Connector Trail plan in 2010. The Intermodal plan provided for the "future shared-use trail development and corridor preservation" in the 6th Council District. These trails started at the Wieduwilt Swales at 85th and Manchester and ended at New Santa Fe Cemetery at State Line Road. Many locations and projects in between bear the mark of Lou, such as: Pedestrians trails and larger than life historical silhouettes at Santa Fe Elementary school; trail sections along 93rd street and Schumacher Park; and through Lou's efforts, funding by the Community Improvement District the City of Kansas City and Missouri Department of Transportation was secured for construction of the Powder Mill Pedestrian bridge over I-435 at Bannister Road eliminating a major trail barrier in South Kansas City. His interest in bridge construction caused him to spend nearly every night on site where he met and befriended most of the construction crew. The trail continued to Hart Grove Campground at Marion Park, where Lou was instrumental in getting the shared



use pedestrian bridge over I-49 that terminated in 89th Street and provided access to Scott Park and Grandview Road. The trail continued along Grandview road crossing through Brichwood subdivision, Gambriel Park and Alex George Lake to Minor Park and Red Bridge, then onto Avila University where Lou was heavily involved in trails sections there and the adjoining area. Lou also was instrumental in the development of the 3-Trails corridor website highlighting historic trails from Wayne City Landing in Independence to Garner Kansas and the KC ATA Bus station on Blue Ridge. Here his passion and energy combined with the community-minded thinking of the KC ATA resulted in a transit facility at 9449 Blue Ridge being named the "3-Trails Station" that memorializes three women, Biddy Mason, Clara Brown and Emily Fisher, who came out of slavery in the 1800s to become prominent citizens in their respective communities. In addition to historical trails, Lou tirelessly supported south Kansas City as founding director/chairman of the 3 Trails Community Improvement District, he represented the 6th district on the Kansas City Public Improvement Advisory Committee (PIAC), served on the steering committees for the Hickman Mills area plan and Trails KC plan, co-chaired the Hickman Mills School District bond committee, board member of the KC Transit Alliance, supported the KC street car initiative, and participated in the KC Regional Rapid Rail effort as Chair of the Education Committee. He knew no stranger and was a friend to all whom he met and often would arrive carrying farm fresh eggs from his beloved chickens. His ashes were scatted at Schumacher Park at dusk on September 27, 2019.

Submitted by Larry Short