Compliment L.W. Clapp.

A man who serves his city, his friends and neighbors and frequently does not get the acclaim of a man who serves his state or nation but he often leaves a heritage of more lasting value.

Nothing more permanent than our cities. Many fall, but they rise again on former sites. Cities are hand made, whether they are physically bad or good is our responsibility.

The roads we lay out and our cities go on forever.

Appian Way in Rome is still used, after 20 centuries.

Many highways in Wichita may also serve for 2,000 years.

Your parks, playgrounds, and open spaces may be here as long as our civilization endures.

Wichita has great potentialities.

Strategically located in our country’s great march westward.

Productive lands extend in every direction – no forbidding mountains; barren deserts; or ocean spaces are carved from your trade territory.

Your soil is rich for the growing of crops as well as the cultivation of beautiful trees, shrubbery, and flowers.

You have an interested, daring, and progressive citizenry with ideals and aspirations.

You have here a remarkable combination of elements bidding fair for continued and gratifying growth.

Wichita fortunately from the standpoint of city planning is not as yet a large city. It is still plastic and its frame is not too hardened to permit redirecting along the most efficient, as well as the most orderly and beautiful lines.

As an industrial and financial capital of a great section it has the right to be ambitious for its future.

When agriculture again comes into its own – and it will rise again – and when the world again demands the great and varied raw products of this region, this section will support a much larger community– a much greater city.
What of your city plan? Is it in keeping with your civic ambition?
Is it well related to your trade territory and natural resources?
Does it really express the aspirations of the citizens of your time?
Are you bending your efforts through the years to stabilizing property values?
Improving living conditions? And, making your city more efficient? Economical and practical? Better planned, more beautiful and orderly? Greater cultural opportunity?
What of the entrances to your city? Are they unsightly eyesores? Do you have hideous outlying shopping centers composed of ugly groups of poorly designed structures and screaming billboards?
You might as well bring your guest into your home through a coal chute as the manner in which we bring our visitors into many of our cities.
What of your suburban belt? Is it a heterogeneous mass of property devoted to conflicting uses? Or, does it invite a pleasing growth of your city into the open spaces beyond?
What of your street plan? The skeleton of your city. Traffic increases with the square of your population. When Wichita is twice its present size its traffic will be at least four times as great as it is today.
Have you a standardized street plan? Streets of the same width and lots and blocks of the same size? Or, is it adapted to the functions to be served?
There is no greater curse in city planning than the blind adherence to a checkerboard, standardized street plan that gives no recognition of the topography of your city; and creates no interesting street vistas, or gives no axial approach to your more important buildings; rendering dreary and monotonous the physical aspects of your city.
Street widths, paving and sidewalk widths should vary as greatly as the size of the water mains and sewer mains that serve your city.
Every street that is dedicated; every plat that is filed, should have the most careful consideration of its future needs.
Narrow throats of traffic resulting from poorly designed street layouts may cost your city millions in the movement of trade.
Frequently in our cities we find the street that carries 100 times as much traffic as minor streets, the same in width in paving and sidewalks.
In most of our cities our blocks are practically all the same length regardless of the general circulatory needs of the section.
Certainly blocks in purely residential areas may be 2 or 3 times the length of blocks in the congested business section.
The automobile has annihilated distance and an immense amount of money can be saved by the abandonment of an unnecessary number of side streets.
Are you providing circumferential or diagonal highways to serve the growing burden of traffic as Wichita grows?
All of these things vitally affect the business and industry of your city.
Is your city one of universal appeal to every visitor that enters its gates?
Does it leave an indelible memory of respect and affection bringing the visitor to you again and again?
Does it grip the hearts of its citizens to make them unwilling to linger long away from home?
Do your business streets present an orderly, masterful impression, or are they littered with projecting advertising signs of incongruous color, varying sizes and at different heights from the street level?
Do you permit roof signs to destroy the appearance of your city from ground or air?
Is your vacant property free of rubbish; trash or tall grown weeds?
Are you carefully observing the provisions of a building code? Or, are you permitting the construction of homes and apartments of such flimsy character that the life savings of the owner will be invested in rapidly deteriorating structures?
Does ugliness in any quarter confront the visitor to your city?
Ugliness is conducive to crime, immorality and a daily uninspired grind of existence.
Do you find that your street furnishings of your city; your fireplugs; your lampposts; your wires; your street signs, etc., present an attractive appearance? Or, do they present a conflicting mass of varying colors and designs and a general messing up of the street in every direction?
Have you ample and proper distribution of parks, play grounds and open spaces so essential in city building? These provide lungs for your city, giving ample air for your people to breathe.
Is your city properly zoned as to height, bulk, and use of buildings? And are you giving proper public support to your splendid zoning board?
Do you permit property values to be damaged by the unnecessary encroachment of property being used for injurious purposes?
Do you permit the absolutely necessary and God given right of air and sunshine to be stolen from the small workman’s cottage by a large apartment or business building?
Have you any blighted residential areas? Or, abandoned residential sections?
All of these things and more will be largely protected by the rigid enforcement of your zoning laws.
Always remember that preventive costs are very much less than corrective costs. Are your public buildings conveniently and effectively located?
Have you convinced the people of your city that in a civic center, the cumulative effect of the good appearance of a number of related public buildings is far greater than the effect of the sum of these units scattered throughout the city?

Are all of these structures located in an impressive manner? And with appropriate dignity to your city?

Such a civic center becomes a rallying place of public life and crystallizes a spirit and love for a city of indomitable force in building patriotism for your town.

An open square around a public building; a handsome structure placed on an axis of a broad approaching street; a stately monument; a beautiful fountain or colonnade gives distinction and civic magnetism.

Are we building cities monotonously alike throughout America? Or, are we accentuating their particular features and preserving their objects of natural beauty and historical interest, giving them that peculiar personality, appeal and lure of the orderly and lovely city which is so great a factor in a city’s growth and race for commercial supremacy.

Are you creating a civic order and beauty that will grapple the hearts and love of your citizenry and make them respond to every civic call?

Are you properly safeguarding and protecting the character of your residential areas?

Are you creating a residential atmosphere, and a residential morale which is just as important as morale in the army in time of war?

Are you simply accepting conditions as they are? Or, are you willing, and have you the daring to always strive for greater ends?

Every residential street should have a peculiar atmosphere of its own; designed to discourage through traffic, dangerous to the lives of children; bringing out the best potentialities and appropriately designed houses to give variety and interest to the whole neighborhood.

Yes, our thoughts should always be city-wide; suburban-wide; and trade territory-wide in directing the growth of our cities.

Our civic structure is really an organic machine and every part should be properly related to each other part as in the structure of the human body or a well-organized industry.

Poor living conditions in any city should bring shame to every citizen.

If our city lacks personality or charm; if our city fails to appeal immediately to the man of commerce and the man of culture; if our city fails to hold its citizens after they have acquired wealth; if factories pass our door and locate in other communities; the leaders of the cities of that time should admit their failure in rising to their responsibility and opportunity.

The needs of tomorrow must not be forgotten in the rush of today. Expediency of the hour and the selfish interests of the individual must not be allowed to hamstring the
human happiness yet to come. No repercussion of human misery must be thrown on to the future.

The moral, social, and cultural problems of our city must be solved by sane and wise city building.

The city practical; the city orderly; the city of economy; the city of efficiency; the city of wealth; the city of wise planning.

Yes, the city of beauty and the city of culture – and I offer no apology to any man – is the one that will stand the competition of time; it the one that will win its race for commercial supremacy and hand down to coming generations a heritage of unconquerable spirit of imperishable human values; of undying influence for better living among its citizenry, and record such achievements that placed Athens and Rome in control of much of the destiny of the world.

A wise city plan is not a visionary scheme of idealism for civic embellishment; it is not the festooning of vines on street lamps or planting flowers on every vacant industry and every individual in your city. It is the insistent demand of business and human instinct for building a city according to carefully prepared plans. It is hard, practical sense. It will avoid much of the future enormous tax burden of our cities.

It will preserve the traditions of Wichita; the peculiar spirit of the place; its distinct flavor and individuality. It will build up the civic personality of which you are so justly proud.

No owner should be permitted to use his ground just as he pleases. There is a greater public interest at stake.

The humble cottage of the workman should be protected as well as the palatial estate.

It is a goal for decent living conditions and suggests the natural segregation of industry.

It looks beyond immediate needs and avoids the excessive costs of belated acquirement of lands for public buildings, parks and playgrounds. “Too late” are the saddest words in City Planning.

It creates good fellowship among the people of your town.

In all this picture the building of a gallery to house objects of art plays a most important part. The frenzy of many cities to be big has impinged a great burden on their citizens. Swollen magnitude alone should be no proud goal. Size alone should be of no more passing interest than the fat lady in the circus; the muscles of the strong man, or the largest elephant in captivity.

The city may be teeming with life and yet be choking and strangling the best interest of its people.

There is beauty in crowds massed in order – beauty in people moving together in rhythm – but when the rows or the rhythm ceases, then the crowd becomes a mob and is seized by terror.
The most beautiful and the rarest thing in the world is a happy, useful human life with intelligent purpose and uninterrupted accomplishment; with all talent devoted to the highest uses. Perhaps no greater influence can be introduced into any city than the inspiration that comes from a great collection of art.

Here we record in concrete, examples of the best handiwork of man of all times.

The great work of the Wichita Art Assn. is full of meaning. Every nation after winning its struggle for existence has turned to art. Wichita today is giving evidence of its advancement to greater cultural appreciation.

The generations just before you conquered a wilderness of prairie and plain – now art comes.

May your people assert themselves, from this day forward to higher aspirations; to loftier ideals and a nobler conception of things worthwhile. In your gallery you will fulfill an obligation to all the surrounding towns and rural areas. You answer the challenge for leadership for every man, woman and child in this broad area.

You are truly an American community. Your people are vibrant with driving energy that should express itself in creative activity. The venturesome spirit of your pioneers will be well recorded in your imperishable museum.

Yes, the crudities of the west are rapidly disappearing. Many feel that the hope of American democracy lies in the west where human imagination knows no bounds or barriers; where the prowess of your people is not retarded by tradition; where pioneer courage will carry on to richer opportunities for your people.

Your gallery could not come at a more opportune time.

Perhaps the struggle of the next decade will be in the human heart rather in the marts of trade or in conquest to extend frontiers.

Upon the walls of your gallery will be hung thrilling pictures and exquisite tapestries; fascinating sculptures; colorful potteries and bronze, porcelains and glass; delicate fabrics and lace; wood carvings, iron work, furniture, costume and jewelry which the ages have given to us. All these will sing with meaning, bringing a new courage to the hearts of your people; new joy to their souls. These mute messengers from the past will sweep aside any doubt as to the permanency of your civilization.

All those who design the things made in your workshops will come to your gallery to get new inspiration to make their products more pleasing to the eye, contributing to a better taste; helping to make ugliness unknown in this part of the country. It has dollars and cents value to industry itself.

Art is not a fancy or a fad. It is a vital force in the lives of us all. Art is never sterile. Always rugged, it surges through every activity from education to commerce, yet it is as tender as the smile on a baby’s face.

No man need be ashamed because he feels a tug at his heart strings and a tear glistens in his eye as he stands before objects of art which grip his soul. Every object in your galleries will be a product of human thought, surpassing the rank and file of its time.
Every lovely curve, every exacting proportion, the product of a hand driven by a high desire to create a better standard.

You will here establish new contacts with the most worth while things in life; you will be quickened to see the beauties in nature and in life that formerly have gone unnoted all around you.

You will make your collection a constant influence in your lives; your people will tarry long when they come to the gallery. They will rest in the beautiful building. There will be a new adventure there – adventure in finer living. They will drink from a fount of inspiration that never runs dry. As you study some great masterpiece, may recollections of the past be vividly flashed again across your memory; may your great works of art help you to recall the harmony of friendships long since gone and carry you on wings of fancy into the divine realms of new happiness.

In your gallery, will be welcome, for all, regardless of the clothes a man may wear, his wealth or position. Everyone will feel that it belongs to him.

Your gallery will present a wonderful opportunity to house gifts from men and women whose devotion to fine things will inspire them to build your collection to high peak of perfection.

We must think of our children and our children’s children. Nothing should inspire us more than the thought that our boys and girls will feel a new ennobling influence in the formative period of their lives.

Your institution and its treasures will appeal to all who instinctively love the natural beauties of the west and respond to movements which seek to benefit mankind. There will be no limit to the growth, influence, and universal benefit of your new adventure.

Today is but the beginning; tomorrow a new opportunity dawns. In perpetuity shall your gallery live and its valued treasures grow in number.

The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and Atkins Museum of Fine Art has already become a vital, enduring, and dominant factor in the lives of the people of the Middle West. Poets tell us that all you can take with you when you die is the things which you have given away. Mr. Nelson and his family left this region with full hands.

A new romance will be borne in Wichita.

You will be searching all corners of the Earth for things of artistic design.

You will be delving into the lines of the mysterious Hittites, Sumerians and Canaanites and Scythians from the very dawn of history.

The pyramids and graves of Egypt will yield their riches.

You will be delving into the glories of the Grecians and the Grandeur of Rome.

You will have displayed the early magnitude and splendor of that strange and mysterious Mayan race of Mound Builders that occupied Central America before the birth of Christ.

The Incas and the Aztecs will become well known to you.
The seven superseding civilizations down through New Mexico and Arizona will be portrayed on your walls.

You are the natural gateway to this most interesting part of North America.

Early American Period Rooms with beautiful American furniture, glassware, fabrics, pottery and other household objects will become better known to all of you.

Perhaps you may excite a greater interest in American Indian Art, of which, I am sorry to say probably the greatest collection in the World is now in Paris, France.

You will trace from the very beginning, artistic inspiration as the Ape in the forest and jungle descended to the ground to begin to combat his foes with clubs and stones, or ornamental character.

After which he began to decorate his weapons of warfare with artistic designs.

In every type of civilization, you will notice the artistic decoration of their weapons of warfare.

In the days of the walled cities of medieval Europe, you will find their gateways soon became decorated in artistic designs.

Columns, courts, wellheads, public baths began to give play for the schooled artist of that time.

Harems were made beautiful with decorations.

Women began to dress artistically to appeal to men.

Chieftains adorned themselves with gay headdresses.

Walls, robes, symbols of religion became the subject of artistic achievement.

Religion through its symbols, vestments, and statues gave the opportunity for artistic achievement.

All the past wartime symbols, patriotic themes, interior decorations, all gradually took on an artistic form.

Many countries, such as China, Persia and Asia Minor where the burying of living humans with their rulers in elaborate tombs with vases and other decorative objects filled with food to carry them on after death, offer immense opportunities for searching for objects of art and supplying missing links in history itself.

Only through objects of art do we know of the early lives of the Chinese people who comprise one fifth of the population of the entire globe.

We know the flowers that grew in their gardens, the equipment of the household, the design and architecture of their homes. Their method of religious worship.

We get a concrete story of their crusades and wars ebbing back and forth like waves of the sea.

Here is the educational, historical, archaeological, religious, political, ethnological association of the fine arts.

Here is a fountain of inspiration that will never run dry.
It is the message of the millions that have gone before.
It is thrilled with action.
It will loosen your heartstrings.
It creates an intellectual ambition for knowledge, whether it is a beautiful work of
the great Italians, Titian Veronese and Tintoretto.
Or the mood or personality of the portraits of the great Rembrandt, Reubens, and
Halls.
Or the fine British landscape scenes of Turner and Gainsborough, or the beautiful
portraits by Ronney.
Or whether it be the spiritual uplift of an Elgreco.
The deep feeling of Valesquez.
Or the action of a Goya, it is worth living.
When you study a picture, you will stop and reflect, is it morning? Or an Evening
Scene? Spring or Fall?
French or American Landscape?
Does it denote sadness or happiness?
What are the real characters of the faces of the people in the picture?
Are they patriotically driven or by a religious fervor?
Good or bad morals of the people?
What is the driving force of the people of that period?
Is it the stirring thrill of the discovery of a new World?
Birth of a new religion?
Or are they venturing into the field of the machine age?
Was it in the time of the great wars?
In time of peace and plenty.
Does it portray friendliness or enmity?
Would the man whom you see be a real friend?
Could he step out of the picture, talk, play, or work with you?
Does the portrait recall the character of your Father or Mother, long since gone?
Does it portray the period of witchcraft and Puritanical denial?
Or does it depict the chivalry of the South.
Read over the lives of the great American Painters, such as Benjamin, West,
Copley, Peal, and Stewart.
West took his inspiration from the crude pigment used by the Indians in painting their bodies.

Charles Wilson Peale was a harness maker, a manufacturer of artificial teeth and yet became known as a great painter of his time.

Fuller was a farmer. It was the failure of his crops that forced him to paint for a meager living and he became known as one of the great Painters of the early American period.

Does his painting seem merely a photographic picture and or does it depict personality, mood, and a character.

Study the great portrayals of mountains, lake, and plain and the real grandeur of American Scenery.

Are you able to feel the warm glow of the sunlight in an Innes?
Are you able to almost scent the mist in the air in a Whistler.

LaForge, the great worker in art glass first analyzed light and the atmospheric effects from the use of the prism.

Blakelock went to live with the Indians to get his inspiration.

Chester Harding was a house painter before he put his masterpieces on canvass.

Whistler painted spirit. In his pictures you find actualities.

He has given us his heritage by the inspiration shown of his Mother. He gave us the heart feelings of friends long since gone.

You can also feel the vapor in the air.

The great statues by Belini and Donatello will give you an irresistible desire to gently rub your hand over the finely chiseled features.

Botticella will even make you desire to go to church the next Sunday.

Leonard De Vinci will make you feel that the centuries can roll by and war and depressions cannot injure our American Democracy.

A great Lohan figure from China will make you feel the insignificance of one little life.

Yes, if you enjoy your objects of art in your great Gallery to come, you will begin to comprehend the greatness of the centuries and the incomprehensiveness of infinity.

The Persian tapestries and the Chinese porcelain with their delicate texture will unfold colors almost unknown to you.

We have a great Grecian lion in the Nelson Gallery, 2500 Years old, which is one of the most powerful masterpieces of stone carved into thrilling action that I have ever seen.

You can almost hear the sweet music played by the instruments in one of our little groups of Chinese musicians.
The microscope is necessary to study the fine textures of some of the Far East fabrics.

The Chinese bronzes with the soil action land upon them give colors unknown today.

The beautiful miniatures from Hindu books 300 or 400 years old are as exquisite in design and beautiful in color that they almost seem unreal.

I hope you will have many period rooms, authentic and true in their respective periods.

May your Gallery always stand for accuracy and authenticity and never label an object of art unless you are sure of your application.

You must have a good art librarian so that those who visit your Gallery will have an opportunity to know the wonderful story associated with each object of art.

Your Gallery should become a laboratory for better designing for the factories of Wichita.

It should increase your manufacturing commodities.

It should some day be of a fine influence of spreading the fame of your manufacturing products as the excellent designing has carried objects from Paris around the world.

Your public exhibitions should inspire many private collections in your community that ultimately will be bequeathed to your good city.

Did you ever stop to think why many men after achieving fame and accumulating a fortune turn to the collection of objects of art, nothing is more satisfying, nothing is more engaging or uplifting, not only for the collector, but for all those who see and enjoy these relics of the past.

I hope your Gallery will not become a morgue. No sleepwalkers should be welcome to your Museum.

It should be full of action.

Your loan exhibit rooms should be changed frequently.

We are having more than 2000 school children per week go through our Gallery in Kansas City.

We set up an educational department to help them get the story and the thrill of our collection.

We are trying to arouse interest in every group, every race, and every creed in our City.

Try and give your Gallery a home like atmosphere.

Prevent museum fatigue by varying the colors on the walls, varying the textures on your floors, and have your rooms of different sizes. Plan surprises in your building. Make it inviting to all.
It should have a friendly feeling, big easy chairs, a good smoking room.

Make it a great living room for pleasure and enjoyment of all of Wichita and the surrounding country.

Gather here the most hardheaded businessmen in your community and make them for the first time in their lives see a new horizon of joy.

The building of a gallery and the gathering of a collection is not the work of women’s clubs and art societies alone – it is the job and noble task of every man, and woman in your region.

It is not only a great business undertaking but it is the opportunity of the greatest achievement in the history of your City.

It is the flag to which everyone can rally and support the Wichita Art Association. Both financially and in personal effort. Do not leave it all for some one else to do.

No greater honor can be bestowed upon any leader than those in this cause.

Do not select your Board of Directors for their name alone.

Men and women who love their city, who will work and who have the daring and boldness to set and maintain a high standard of which you can always be proud.

Your halls will become a rallying place for high ideals and aspirations; they will crystallize a greater love for beauty, a fresh enthusiasm for living, and your halls will be a happy, democratic meeting place for all groups; all men who call the middle west their home.

You have been well organized in Wichita to promote trade and commerce; to lunch and sing and rotate together. Now you will have the opportunity in your new gallery to think deeply; to get a new grasp on the real purposes of life; to set new ideals and standards for better living.

The influence will be reflected in the architectural design of the homes and commercial structures in your city; in the garden side as well as the street side of your lawns; in the interiors; hangings, paintings and furniture, and in every phase of the lives of your people.

Children will become interested; they will develop art appreciation in a broad sense; they will become conscious of the beauties of the great world around them; they will find greater beauty in the sunsets; in the distant haze covered plains. They will get a greater enjoyment of the colorful beauties of your trees in the springtime; they will be thrilled by the singing of the birds in the early morn; and in the flowers surrounding their homes. They will get an understanding of the miracle of the opening flower in the joyous springtime. They will learn to appreciate the value of good design in every physical object. They will appreciate color harmony in your homes, public buildings, and schools. Their eyes will be lifted beyond the more sordid things, and they will begin to dream dreams of beauty and loveliness. They will grasp the full meaning of the words of Daniel Burnham when he said: “Make no little plans for your city. Small plans die and are soon forgotten. Big plans grip the souls of men; stir the blood of the people, and once diagrammed for the future of the city, recur again and again throughout the community’s

Planning for Permanence: the Speeches of J.C. Nichols
growth and guide its future destiny and become the beacon light for beauty and order throughout every part of the city.” To all of you who love Wichita; to all of you who strive for better things, enroll yourselves, heart and soul in promoting, building and carrying to the highest achievement, the establishment of this gallery and the collecting, through the years, of rare objects of art from every corner of the globe; the work of the master’s hand, not only of artists of the past, but make ample provision for the work of contemporary artists – and most of all let me beseech you here in Wichita in your gallery, give full opportunity for expression and display of the artists of the west; of the artists of Wichita, now here and yet to come in this beautiful and splendid city of yours.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN028

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911- ), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols’ private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.