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## **Local Minority Beekeeper and Pediatrician Honored as Missouri's Beekeeper of the Year**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (October 13, 2021) – Dr. Marion Pierson, co-founder of MO Hives KC, was named 2021 Beekeeper of the Year by the Missouri State Beekeepers Association, on Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at the organization's Fall State Conference.

MO Hives KC was established in 2019 to place and support urban apiaries (bee farms) in blighted urban areas, to pollinate urban food gardens, and to provide teaching and economic opportunities for the community.

"I'm floored that I was chosen as Missouri's beekeeper of the year," said Dr. Pierson. "I think the Missouri State Beekeepers Association liked the innovative approaches we, as an organization, are taking; Not just in terms of the urban locations of our hives, but also the infrared cameras and mobile apps technology we are using to monitor the health and productivity of our hives."

Dr. Pierson was inspired to create MO Hives KC after learning of Detroit Hives, an urban apiary organization that has operated for a few years. "I've always loved honey and the strong work ethic of bees, and that they'll do anything for their queen," says Dr. Pierson. "So, when I learned from Detroit Hives that vacant urban plots provide an ideal environment for bees, I knew I had to bring this effort back to Kansas City." Vacant urban land is usually teeming with vegetation and lacking the pesticides and lawn treatments that can harm bees or destroy what nourishes them.

With its urban honey bee farms, MO Hives KC:

- Provides new habitats for several species of bees, populations of which have dwindled over the last 20 years.
- Spurs awareness of BEE-Commerce, which includes honey production, other product and renting out these pollinators for commercial food production.
- Educates elementary, middle school and high school students on the science and commerce of beekeeping.
- Beautifies urban areas with robust community gardens that are supported by hardworking pollinators.
- Involves the community in pro-active self-help activities that yield more economic opportunity.

The primary MO Hives KC apiary is on six contiguous vacant plots of land in Kansas City, MO, on Wabash, between 50<sup>th</sup> Street and 51<sup>st</sup> Street. The organization also supports hive installations the nearby Blue Hills orchard, the Children's Mercy Hospital Community Garden, a community garden operated by Hope Faith Ministries, and atop a now vacant building at what was the Adam's Mark Hotel. "Our footprint keeps expanding," says Dr. Pierson. "We are eager for more volunteers and donors who want to support what we are doing."

Dr. Pierson says, "I'm thrilled that so many organizations and individuals are joining in our efforts to honor what bees do for us by providing them new habitats and training up a new generation of beekeepers, while bringing many needed benefits to the urban core. I invite others to join us. We have big plans, and the coronavirus has highlighted some key needs that MO Hives KC can address."

To learn more about the organization, to sign up for email updates, to donate or volunteer, please visit [MOHives.org](http://MOHives.org).