

## Meet **Connie Brown Collins** from Kansas City, Kansas KABC board member since 2020



"I became involved with KABC from experiences I had with long-term care with my husband. Due to his Parkinson's and dementia, he was in assisted living, then skilled nursing and I found that I had to not only be there a good portion of the time, but help with his care. The many challenges faced with staffing, his dietary needs and medications left me no choice but to intervene as I deemed necessary. His instability and risk of falling were of ongoing concern to me and the facilities' ingrained philosophy, 'allow them the dignity to fall,' was unconscionable in my estimation. Further, the facility refused to use any type of alarm (purchased by me) to alert them that my husband was trying to get up. I ultimately brought him back home on hospice. After he passed away, I wanted to find a way to try to address some of the problems and challenges that I had experienced with long term care facilities. I happened to read an article that quoted KABC in the newspaper, in which the director stated concern and commitment to providing resources to ensure the well-being of older adults. It sounded like a place in which I could make a difference.

I'd like to see KABC grow and become the go-to organization for information, intervention and resources for older individuals. Working both locally and at the statehouse, word needs to get out broadly about our offerings and advocacy. **Quality long term-care in Kansas should be available and accessible to everyone who needs it**, regardless of financial status. We'll all be there some day. It's imperative to reform the long-term care system so elder individuals can rest assured that their needs will be addressed, and their care will be exceptional."

*Connie Brown Collins is the Founder/Executive Director of the nonprofit organization, Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. The mission of Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County is to give voice to people of color and others traditionally underrepresented, through providing education, information and tools to navigate and participate in the voting, civic engagement in legislative processes that impact their lives.*

*Connie's immediate background was as a nationwide organizational consultant and facilitator in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion, anti-harassment and EEO investigations. She also worked at a nonprofit agency where she diversified and trained nonprofit boards of directors. She previously lived in Los Angeles, CA for many years, ending her tenure there on the staff of State Senator Tom Hayden where she organized African American community members to weigh-in and testify on relevant legislation.*

*Connie holds Master of Arts degrees in Speech Pathology from the University of Kansas, and in Journalism from the University of Southern California.*