



## 2008 Alumni Honor Roll | Reasons to Believe



Role models who give us *Reasons to Believe* in the power of education

**Wendell E. Maddox, Jr.**

**Sumner High School, 1965**

Wendell Maddox has built his career around serving others. His nonprofit career positions have included five years as executive director of Turner House, and 20 years as regional director of the Humane Society of the United States. Today, he is President and CEO of the United Way of Wyandotte County, helping to provide resources and support to local agencies that serve the community.

"I like giving to others and trying to make a difference in my community," he said.

Growing up in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, music was Maddox's passion. During high school at Sumner, he played drums in the jazz band, marching band and pep band. He credits Robert Clark, his band teacher, for giving him reasons to believe in himself. Clark saw talent in him and pushed him to reach his potential.



A job with the parks and recreation department during high school gave Maddox a taste of serving others and steered him toward his career in nonprofit work. But music remained with him as well. He was a nonprofit administrator by day and a musician by night for 25 years. He worked with many local greats including Carmel Jones, Frank Smith, Claude "Fiddler" Williams and traveled briefly with the nationally renowned Ink Spots.

Maddox served his country during the Vietnam War in the Navy before being transferred to the Marine Corp. He earned his associates degree in psychology from Miracosta College, in Oceanside, California in 1973. He also spent one year studying music and African studies at Palomar College in San Marcos, California. In 1999, he attended classes at Johns Hopkins University studying business and education.

He serves on the Boards of the KCK Chamber of Commerce, the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County and Donnelly College, among others.

Maddox wants today's students to take all relationships seriously "because you never know how different individuals will impact your life in the future."