



## 2009 Alumni Honor Roll | Reasons to Believe



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

### Natalie Dubin Nearenberg

Wyandotte High School, 1955

Natalie Nearenberg keeps the words of her high school drama teacher, Dr. Knapp, near to her heart. In her yearbook, he wrote "Natalie, make us proud." Today, she has accomplished that and more.

Her mother, the first woman registered pharmacist holding a college degree in Kansas City, Kansas, and her father, a grocery store owner on Quindaro Boulevard, were her inspiration. At the end of World War II, they opened a pharmacy at 32nd and State Avenue. Growing up during this time period, Nearenberg realized the importance of respecting and encouraging all to live up to their potential.

After completing her bachelor of science at the University of Missouri — Kansas City, Nearenberg started her teaching career at Welborn and then Eugene Ware elementary schools. While pursuing her master's degree in social work, she directed a youth program at the Jewish Community Center in Kansas City, Missouri serving over a thousand youth.

In 1963, she married Martin Nearenberg, focusing her attention on their children, Myra and Steven, and volunteering in community activities.

In 1973, she opened "Fashions at Large," now known as "Natalie M." It has become a premier shopping destination with sports and formal wear for all sizes. Her husband joined the business in 1974.

Nearenberg has used her career and connections in the clothing design realm to help others in the community. In 2004, she became involved in The Ali Kemp Educational (TAKE) Foundation. She garnered sponsors for a prom show which has become the largest in the country. In 2009, she helped raise \$50,000 for the foundation. Recently, she has sponsored fashion shows for the Blue Valley Educational Foundation.

Her dedication to youth and the community is inspiring. She has encouraged students to become involved in community projects and to believe in themselves and their worth to the community.

