Suiting Up
TAILORED MENSWEAR
IN KANSAS CITY,
1900–2017
ON VIEW OCT 21, 2017–FEB 24, 2018

Not very often does menswear get its due in museum exhibitions. If it wasn’t a military uniform or worn at a wedding, the garment generally didn’t get collected. That began to change in the 1960s and 1970s when fashion began to be scrutinized as part of the emerging “pop culture.”

Suiting Up: Tailored Menswear in Kansas City, 1900–2017 aims to celebrate men’s fashion with a wide range of tailored looks and accessories across a 100-year period. Also, the exhibition highlights some of Kansas City’s gentlemen of style throughout the last century—including men who were and are not only notably fashionable, but also influential and inspiring in what they have accomplished and how they have shaped Kansas City.

The Kansas City Museum’s fashion collection—historical clothing, textiles, and costumes—is the basis from which Suiting Up was created. Most items in this exhibition come from more than 70 years of collecting. The Museum’s collection is in large measure due to the work of the organization’s first auxiliary, the Women’s Division, who made it a priority to collect Kansas City’s fashion history. To that end, the Museum thanks the Maxine Frizzell Fund that existed to support the Museum’s fashion collection.

Suiting Up is enhanced by several pieces custom made by Paulini Garment Company. The Museum thanks Tom Paulini for serving as lead curator and for being up to the challenge of partnering to present this exhibition. Thanks also to the many donors over the years who gave their father’s and husband’s, brother’s and sons’ clothing to the Museum.

The items on display in the exhibition came from these generous donors:

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This exhibition was produced by the Kansas City Museum. All objects and archival material displayed are from the Kansas City Museum collection except where noted. Menswear fashion descriptions for the 1920s–1960s have been excerpted from www.vintagedancer.com, an online guide to recreating fashion styles of the 20th century. Graphic design of the exhibition is by Carrie Maitment of Print Media Design, with production by Custom Color. Fabrication is by Exhibit Associates.
From coat tails and cummerbunds, for the last one hundred years, little has changed in men’s formal wear.

The tuxedo has been “a la mode” at least since 1910, rising and falling in popularity with outside influences in American culture, until finally making one last climb to the top around 1950, and men haven’t looked back since.

Fashion in what became known as the Edwardian Era (1901–1910) saw many changes due in large part to the ability to mass produce clothing. There were many advances in material and design. Men’s fashion was dictated by the time of day and followed a general rule of morning coats till noon, lounge suits until 6:00 p.m., and then evening clothes depending on the occasion.

Men wore trousers that were shorter in length than in previous years. Trousers had cuffs and were creased in the front and back. They were tighter fitting and tailored unlike the pants of the Victorian era (1837–1901). Most dress shirts were very stiff and had shirt studs. The shirts buttoned up in the back, not the front. Shirt collars in 1900s fashion were tall and stiff. For formal wear, collars were turned over and resembled wings. White bow ties were worn for evening dress.

Comparing a tuxedo from the early part of the 20th century to a contemporary piece, one will see little difference. This is due, in part, to a phenomenon known as “insularization” in which formal dress retains characteristics of previous generations for symbolic reasons. It’s why court wear in the 19th century called for men to kneel breaches even though that fashion had fallen out by 1805. It’s why many contemporary wedding gowns have the full hoop skirt of a much earlier time, believed to be tradition or “something great-great-grandma would have worn.”

Stores like Michael’s Fine Clothes for Men and Tivol, both still in existence today, provided a high-quality and personalized experience for their clients. Opened in 1905 on the corner of 10th and Main in Kansas City, Michael’s was founded by Russian immigrant Michael Newor. Originally it was a pawn/men’s clothing store and slowly transitioned and expanded into a full men’s clothing boutique. In 1930, Russian immigrant Charles Tivol opened Tivol, a jewelry repair shop located in the Altman Building in downtown Kansas City. Tivol began crafting custom jewelry for his repair clients, including accessories such as diamond cuff links and diamond tie pins, several years later. Tivol became a full retail store, and today serves as a premier luxury jewelry store on the Country Club Plaza.

Gentlemen like R.A. Long would have been leaders not only in Kansas City business and philanthropy, but also in style. Born in Kentucky, Long (1850–1934) was a “self-made man.” He founded Long-Bell Lumber Company and grew his company to be the largest in the country. He built his family’s town home Corinthian Hall in 1910, a reflection of his status in the world at large and a statement of his style. His country estate Longview Farm was built three years later. In 1940, the Long residence became the Kansas City Museum, which serves as the City’s museum of history and cultural heritage.
Men’s style in the decade of the roaring twenties was more about details than substance.

Suits remained relatively unchanged from previous decades, but what took center stage were the accessories a man wore with his suit. Styling was precision and slicked back hair. Collars, cufflinks, hats, socks, ties, and walking sticks were just some of the tools of fashion that could procure at the haberdashery, a type of men’s accessory store.

Haberdasher’s became quite lucrative in Kansas City during the 1920s, prompting Harry Truman to go into partnership with military friend Eddie Jacobson to open Truman and Jacobson Haberdashery in 1919, located at 12th and Baltimore (104 W. 12th Street) across from the Muehlbach Hotel in downtown Kansas City. It quickly became a popular meeting place for Kansas City’s gentlemen of style. However, with the postwar recession, the business became a failure for the pair and shuttered by 1922, leaving them both in significant debt. Jacobson went on to become a traveling salesman of men’s clothing and later owner of Kansas City’s Westport Menswear. The haberdashery not only influenced Truman’s signature tailored style but also cemented him into the local Jackson County business culture, thus sending Truman down a new path that paved the way to the White House.

The essential part of a 1920s man’s wardrobe was a suit. For day, evening, office, or parties, a man always wore a suit. What sets 1920s men’s suits apart from other decades are the material and cut. Suits were mostly made of thick wool or a woof-tweed, and pants were made of wool-based flannel that made them lighter than the previous decades. Suit jackets were either single or double-breasted and featured three or four buttons up the front. The top button came to the center of the heart, giving way to notch lapels. The height of the gorge line (the short seam that joins the collar and lapels on a garment) is what really set 1920s suits apart from suits of other eras. The suit pant always matched the suit jacket. They had two single pleats at the top and a sharp crease down the front of the legs. The pants hung down to mid-ankle, exposing the socks, which were worn high up the leg cuff and secured with garters.

Unlike today’s two-piece suits, men’s 1920s fashion required a three-piece suit with matching vest. Vests, also called waistcoats, were high V-necks with full body coverage. It was a fashion faux pas to have a shirt exposed between the pants and vest. To help avoid this mistake, men’s pants were also very high above the waist, secured by suspenders or a thin leather belt.

Men’s suits remained neutral in color but that doesn’t mean men wore no color. Pocket squares also offered opportunities for color. The pocket square is a decoration-only handkerchief made of silk, folded into a triangle, and placed in the suit’s chest pocket. It coordinated with one color in a man’s tie or band of his hat.

Suit of navy, white embroidery. Jacket of wool broadcloth, two-button closure, pleats front pocket, and slim, colored wool, trousers striped with orange, and brown and white wool, buttons which are 10 inches wide from crease to crease, and button fly closure, label “Henry Fashions”, c. 1922-1930.


Button through “baize” hat, plain cloth. Made of Sadler, c. 1923.

Laced shoes of white leather, label “Charles Edson, c. 1930.”
Golf and leisure sports took off in the 1930s and so did men’s sports and leisure fashions.

Golf (and leisure sports in general) was no longer reserved for the wealthy. Sporting suits—garments that allowed for freedom of movement but still retained the polish of men’s wear—became popular attire for outings. Players could play an afternoon game before heading out on the town to one of Kansas City’s many nightclubs. Kansas City’s nightlife in the 1930s was vibrant with the help of Democratic political boss Tom Pendergast who kept the city “wide open” with nightclubs, gambling houses, and dance halls where the liquor was flowing. Known as the “Parth of the Plains,” Kansas City’s notorious 12th Street and 16th and Vine were jumping with jazz music and featured legends like Count Basie, 16th Lips Page, and Jay McShann’s band featuring saxophonist Charlie Parker.

The Country Club Plaza, the world’s first shopping center specifically designed for the automobile, was being built by J.C. Nichols. Men’s stores like Jack Henry became style outlets for Kansas City’s discerning man of fashion. In 1931, Jack Henry was primarily an accessories store but soon branched out into fine men’swear, suits, and nicer casual wear. Slavinsky and Sons, another Kansas City men’s tailor, was started in 1914, and moved downtown to Grand Blvd. in 1935, where they remain today, a tribute to the fine tradition of the well-dressed gentleman of Kansas City.

In the 1930s, the athletic physique of professional boxers and the comic Superman was the ideal men’s shape. Clothing reflected this with extra broad shoulders, narrow waists, and tapered legs. Trousers also spread farther up the waist, about three inches above the naval, and hung down in long columns like shapes. Pant legs were cuffed at the bottom for more casual wear and straight hemmed for more professional attire. A strong pressed plait down the center completed the look. Most 1930s trousers were quite wide compared to today’s slim-fitting trend.

Dress shirts in the thirties buttoned down with French cuffs and a straight pointed collar. Because suit lapels were wide, so were shirt collars. The polo shirt came into vogue during this time, and they haven’t left the fashion world since. Flat caps, also known as Ivy caps and novelty caps among other names, remained popular throughout the 1930s. Everyone from young boys to working class men and casually-dressed upper class men wore Ivy caps.

Silk socks in all sorts of colors and patterns emerged in the 1930s. Patterns of check and stripes were the most common, just like their suit counterparts. However, socks never had to match the suit. 1930s men’s shoes continued in the tradition of the 1920s with classic toe-cap and two-toned Oxfords, and wingtips with burgundy detail (tiny holes punched in the leather).

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**On model:**


**Cotton shirt.** Shirt by Louis Mosnerfahl. By Ray’s, $1.50, long-sleeved, and pointed, c. 1930.

**Black shoes.** Shoes by Revilpeel & Rives, 1925. Label: “Revilpeel Shoes.”

**Dark green tweed cap.** Cap by Harry Closer, lined with white wool. By Revilpeel & Rives, Kansas City, Mo., c. 1930.

**Brown, white, and gold-patterned tie.** By Zephyr Uniform, from World Distributors, c. 1930.

**Argyle socks.** Socks by Formal-Gonfrat Company.
A young Malcolm X described the zoot suit as: “a killer-diller coat with a drape shape, reet pleats and shoulders padded like a lunatics’ cell.”

Spotlighted by jazz musicians, dancers, and entertainers, the zoot suit became a status symbol in the 1940s worn predominately by African-American and Latino men in working-class neighborhoods, serving as a slap in the face to wartime austerity. The suit used much more fabric than conservative wartime cuts. Therefore, it is one of the few fashion statements and political garments that actually caused a riot, a clash in Los Angeles of young Latino men and white servicemen and civilians in 1943, who felt the extravagant use of the clothing was unpatriotic.

The zoot suit featured a high-waist pant with wide legs and a tight-cuffed hem, or peg leg, at the ankle (to stay out of the way of dancers). Jackets were long and double-breasted with wide, stiff shoulders. It was often left to the wearer or tailor to achieve the zoot-suit look by purchasing a suit a few sizes too big and creatively altering it. In Kansas City, Skidmore’s on Grand was the place to get a zoot suit made for you, according to Olive Gates, owner of Gates Bar B Q.

During WWII, the USA war board placed restrictions on men’s clothing just as they did for women. For instance, suit pockets could not have flaps, trouser cuffs could not be more than 19 inches around or be cuffed, and suits were sold without vests (waistcoats). However, the cuffed look was so popular that men quickly figured out you could purchase longer length pants and cuff them at home.

Wartime clothing continued to influence mens’ fashion after the war by copying or modifying uniforms into civilian clothes. Trench coats, bomber jackets, knit underwear, pea coats, chino pants, and aviation glasses all have roots in WWII military clothing. The improvement in machinery, textiles, and manufacturing of military clothing made post-war ready-to-wear civilian clothing a booming industry.

Ironically, the zoot suit that caused such turmoil during the war years influenced mens’ post-war clothing. Longer, looser jackets, double-plated pants, big hats, and even wider ties made their way into late forties mens’ fashions. Men were eager to put the war behind them and embrace the clothing they were previously forbidden to wear.

**Woolf Brothers**

set the style for men in Kansas City. Founded in 1896, the clothing store was started by brothers Alfred and Samuel, who moved their operation to Kansas City in 1879. It was considered by many to be the classiest and most successful mens’ clothier in the Midwest for most of the twentieth century. Alfred’s son Herbert Woolf (1880-1964) took over in 1915 and ran the business at the bottom and working his way up. Woolf (shareted) steered the company toward more diversified product lines and a further geographic reach, opening the flagship Woolf Brothers store at 11th and Walnut in Kansas City and establishing a first branch operation in Junction City, Kansas. Woolf was a man of many interests. He was a successful businessman not only in mens clothing but also in hotel ventures and movie theaters. He is the only Kansas Citian to take a horse to the Kentucky Derby and win in 1938.

THE MANUFACTURING

Custom made zoot suit by Pollen Garments, Emporia. Jacket is single-breasted, deep button, patch pockets, side buttoned back, and wide double pockets. Trousers are wide cuffed with buttoned side pockets, detailed top front pockets, and corner square buttons.
At the decade’s start, American men were suiting up once again by donning armed service uniforms for the Korean War.

Worldwide conflict during World War II called for a versatile uniform, and by 1943 it was clear that the military needed a basic, varied climate suit that could be adapted with ease for the multiple environments of global conflict.

A short, woolen jacket modeled off of British service jackets was developed that could be layered with and under the standard M-43 1943 field jacket. A prototype was sent to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commanding general of the European Theater, and he quickly adopted the style. The famous “ Ike” jacket was born and became incredibly influential on the post-war fashion scene for men as well as women. At his death in 1969, President Eisenhower was laid to rest in his World War II uniform, the Ike jacket included. The jacket was part of the standard issue uniform for soldiers until 1958.

Rail travel during the war at Kansas City’s Union Station peaked in 1945 with a staggering 678,163 passengers, many of them service members returning home from the war, and Union Station continued to transport servicemen in the 1950s. Uniforms such as these served as a visual reminder of the price of war and the welcome relief of victory for America and her allies.

Suits of the 1950s were loose and plain in shape and cut. They were made uniquely by the love of textured fabrics—wool, tweed, flannel, and corduroy as well as patterns including big checks and plaid. For most of the decade, pants were pleated with wide legs and a tapered ankle.

Sport coats were all the rage for men’s 1950s fashion. Mixed with light and dark pants, the combinations were endless. Solid colors were worn for most of the decade with some big patterns moving into the 1960s. Men’s dress pants featured a high waist, and textured fabrics were a big deal in the 1950s. Corduroy was common in fall and winter. Tweed, linen, nubby wool, and brushed cotton were also trendy.

Men’s ties in the 1950s gradually went for just over three inches wide to a skinny two inches. Solid bright colors were popular for any occasion. Towards the late fifties, patterns came back in plaids, dots, geometric mod art, and hand painted silk ties of tropical destinations. The thin knit tie with square end came back in fashion too.

In 1945, after returning from service in World War II, Harold Pener (pictured) joined his father Sam Pener’s retail legacy. Ten years later, he opened Harold Pener’s Man of Fashion at 10th and Vine Streets. Across from the Street Hotel, a gathering place for musicians, Harold Pener’s provided the latest in mens fashion and dressed some of Kansas City’s most fashionable men. In 1964, Pener and business partner Maurice Jerwick opened Todd’s Men’s Wear at 6th Street and Minnesota Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas, followed by J. Todd’s Boutique, which opened in 1966 at 39th Street and Broadway in Westport. In 1969, Pener and Jerwick parted ways, and Harold Pener’s Man of Fashion expanded nationally. Pener was known as a pioneer of urban retailing, a sharp businessman, a designer, and a visionary. Born in 1927, he died at the age of 76 in 2004. At the time of his death, 30 stores were spread across the country. Today, Harold Pener Men’swear exists in two locations in the greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area.
The American Royal is as synonymous with Kansas City as barbecue and jazz.

By the 1960s, events centered on the annual agricultural extravaganza included rodeos, horse shows, cattle shows, county concerts, and a debonair ball, the Belle of the American Royal. Started almost a century before, The American Royal led the way in agriculture business in Kansas City and helped the city move into 20th century prominence as a livestock powerhouse, becoming one of the biggest livestock shows in the United States.

Businessmen of the Stockyards would keep true to their agricultural roots while still keeping to the fashion of the day. Men were still dressing quite conservatively in the early sixties, certainly as far as business attire was concerned. Most men stayed with the classic American look, with a single-breasted sack jacket with narrow notch lapels, two buttons, and a single-vent in the back. Add cowboy boots and a signature dresser hat, and the look was complete, creating a modern businessman whose wardrobe harkened back to his cowboy ancestry.

With his signature cowboy hat, cowboy boots, and tailored suit, Jay R. Dillingham was more than a famed developer and civic leader in Kansas City, he was a southern gentleman of style. An icon of the Stockyards and leader in shaping the region’s highways and reservoirs, his clothing and character conveyed that he was proud to be from a “Cown town.” Born in Platte City, Missouri in 1910, Dillingham married Frances Thompson in 1933, daughter of a founder of The American Royal. He worked at the Stockyards for nearly 40 years and served as its president from 1948 to 1974. In 1948, Dillingham opened the Golden Ox Restaurant in the Livestock Exchange Building. Dillingham died at the age of 97 in 2007.

Other than cowboy hats, the demise of hats is often blamed on our 35th President John F. Kennedy as he didn’t wear a top hat for his inauguration ceremony. In truth, hat sales were already in decline before JFK’s inauguration speech. It was most likely a natural progression during what was a very progressive decade where non-conformity became more encouraged as the decade went on. Originating in the fifties, the Ivy League style remained popular through the mid-sixties. The typical look included an Oxford shirt under a Sharkskin sweater, a pair of chinos, penny loafer shoes, and all topped off with a sports jacket or long wool overcoat. The staid saw looks called “British Mod” and “Bratpack.” The turndecades got upgraded to acceptable business attire. By the end of the decade the hip hop movement ushered in bigger and longer fashion looks in hair, pants, collars, and far-out psychedelic patterns.

A true Kansas City business enterprise just like the Stockyards, the Garment District, located in downtown Kansas City, would help Kansas City blossom into the 20th century. Mainly a women’s coat and suit manufacturing district, there were a few men’s tailors in the area, perhaps the most prominent being the Kansas City Custom Garment Company. A favorite of former President Harry Truman, Kansas City Custom Garment Company, located downtown at 10th and Central, made between 600 and 700 suits a week, outfitting everyone from teachers, sales clerks, lawyers, and presidents. They made three tiers of custom suits, what Sol Stolowy, the owner called “cheaper, middle class, and real fine class.”

Stolowy, a Jewish immigrant from Poland, bought the Kansas City Custom Garment Company in 1952, having worked there since the 1920s. He would often make house calls to Truman’s home in Independence. However, it was Lorenzo Lopez, a Mexican immigrant from Jalisco, Mexico, who worked as a tailor for Stolowy and made the first suit Truman bought from the company. Truman liked the suit so much that he bought all of his suits from the Kansas City Custom Garment Company until he died in 1972.
Bigger, better, and bolder was a fitting motto for men’s fashion in the seventies.

As leading men in Kansas City were forging robust new developments—Kansas City International Airport, Kemper Arena, Royals Stadium, Arrowhead Stadium, Worlds of Fun, and the River Quay entertainment district—their clothing was equally adventurous. After years of rationing, and a style scene dominated by conservative suits and dark clothing, suddenly men’s wardrobes became far more colorful and luxurious in the 1970s.

This decade in menswear was all about expressive style. Color, texture, and pattern were playing an ever more important role. Lapels, cuffs, hems, shoes, and ties were all wide. Suits came in Technicolor polyester knits with funkadelic shirts pecking out from coat collars. “Kipper ties” or ties printed in bold patterns that could be an astounding five inches wide, were all the rage. Lapels had to keep up with the trend and became seemingly wider by the year. JF’s Boutique in Kansas City carried top-of-the-line casual men’s attire in 1970, including wide-leg bell-bottom jeans, NIK, NIK shirts, (shiny polyester button-down shirts with ornate designs and scenary, beloved for the disco) and aviator glasses.

Men’s shoe styles differed whether you are looking at early, mid- or late seventies. Oxford shoes, Birkenstockts, earth shoes, and cowboy boots were often seen. However, the platform boot was a mainstay throughout the era. Around 1975, American suit started to resemble the slimmer European suit. This new model, named the quasi-European suit, featured padded shoulders, higher arm holes, a smaller waist, open patch pockets, and a small flaps to the pants and jacket. In 1976, it became fashionable for men to wear velvet tuxedo jackets with more casual pants to formal events, and vests came back into vogue. It was this year that mens pants started to feature smaller flares or no flares at all. This continued into the 1980s.

Kansas City’s booming entertainment scene of the seventies was kicked off by the development of River Quay in 1972 by its fashionable and creative founder Marion A. Trozelo (1927–1992). After serving in World War II, Trozelo moved to Kansas City, eventually founding Laboratory Plasticwear Fabrication in 1957. Trozelo was a teacher, developer and inventor. He invented the “Happy Pan,” the first teflon-coated cast iron frying pan. Trozelo died at age 66 in 1992.

The seventies marked the decline of the Kansas City Garment District and downtown department stores and the rise of large indoor shopping malls including Sallite Mill, Metro North Mall, Independence Center, Crown Center, and Oak Park Mall. Suburban malls like The Landing at 63rd and Troost and the Blue Ridge Mall were renovated and enclosed in the 1970s.

**On the menu:**


- Long-sleeved dress shirt, **worn by Bill Horton Williams**. Made of white cotton towel, with five patch pockets, and folded-down white collar. **Estate at 44th**: 1973-83.

- Colorful, wool, pocketed jacket, **worn by Joe Crain**. Made for Fahlman’s. Glamorous. **Estate at 44th**: 1975-1983.

Cool, casual, and comfortable personified men’s fashion in the eighties and nineties.

1980 - 1989

With the national prosperity of the 1980s came an interesting variety in men’s apparel including the cool and casual as well as the power suit. For a look of casual affluence, silhouettes became larger and looser. Suits could be paired with rock-lose sneakers, jacket sleeves could be rolled up in a devil-may-care manner, and pants ruled the color palette. Hollywood stars on television and movies made this type of easy going style part of their persona, and American men wanted to be just as carefree.

The bigger is better mentality translated into large details on men’s wear, and what has come to be known as the “Wall Street power suit” with details like blocky double-breasted pinstriped jackets and pleated pants, padded shoulders, contrast collars and cuffs, and expensive accessories. Dressing up in suits came back into style, and with this, men like Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, and Gianni Versace became the in-demand menswear designers of the decade.

Men of all ages and walks of life also adopted the “preppy” look. This conservative style of dress, so popular in the station as Ivy League Dress, made a resurgence beginning in the late seventies and remained prevalent during the eighties. It consisted of items such as: button-down Oxford shirts and polo shirts (with the collars turned up), argyle sweaters (often tied loosely around the neck), sweater vests, peg-leg jeans, cuffed khakis, and penny loafers or bright white sneakers. Brand name clothing was an extremely popular trend in this decade. Izod, Gap, Guess, Benetton, Champion, and Polo Ralph Lauren all made a statement.

Stylists like Mister Guy, owned by Jerry Beckwith, was a must for men in the eighties looking for classic sportswear and a timeless look. Originally located in downtown Kansas City, Mister Guy had 15 locations in its heyday, including full “fishtail” brand stores, where Kansas City’s well-dressed gentlemen could get suits, hats, shoes, and socks—essentially combining the haberdashery experience with men’s tailoring and made-to-measure clothing. Mister Guy closed its doors in Kansas City in 1993.

In the 1980s, Alvin Brooks was a gentleman of style and substance in Kansas City, and he still is today. Brooks is a former Kansas City police detective, police commissioner, city councilman, and mayoral pro tem, and he remains a staunch advocate for anti-violence and civil rights. In the late seventies, Brooks founded the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime and in 1989, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the President’s National Drug Advisory Council and named one of America’s 1,000 Points of Light.

1990 - 1999

The 1990s took the casual idea of the 1980s and ran with it for the sake of comfort. Billowed shirts, ties with cartoon characters, pleated pants, and suit jackets paired with ties and loafers were widespread. Business casual became the norm for Kansas City’s gentleman of style Hector Barreto, Sr. But his wearing of a guayabera shirt also spoke to heritage.

An immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico, Barreto moved to Missouri in 1958. First a restaurant owner, then owner of an import company and construction firm, Barreto turned to a new endeavor in the 1970s. He began to work toward the advancement of Hispanic entrepreneurs. In 1979, he founded the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was originally based in Kansas City before being headquartered in Washington D.C. Barreto was named President of the organization in the 1980s and was an advisor to President George H.W. Bush. Barreto died at age 60 in 2004.

The guayabera is a man’s shirt typically distinguished by two vertical rows of closely set pleats that run the length of the front and back of the shirt. The shirt is typically worn untucked and is more popular in Latin American and Caribbean countries than the U.S. But Hispanic Americans have made the shirt their own. It was a perfect expression of business casual—or smart-casual—as it was known in the nineties.

At more formal events such as weddings or proms, men often wore boxy three or four button, single-breasted suits with a brightly colored tie, and an often-matching dress shirt. Another nineties trend was to wear black shirts, black ties, and black suits. Trench coats were also fashionable in the late 1990s.
Today’s man shows more confidence in his wardrobe than he has for decades and is eager to display his knowledge and sartorial perspective, especially in formal wear.

Men today have a wide range of options to choose from when selecting formal wear, mostly in finishes and fabrics. The overall silhouette has narrowed in the last 20 years, and silhouettes have become trimmer and more stylized. Luxury designers and clothiers, like Paulini Garment Company, experiment with colors, textures, stitches, and fasteners like never before. Dressing is very much an experience. For example, when ordering a custom suit from Paulini, each garment is completely custom-designed, working with 20 different measurements including ProKin Device readings to reflect posture, and crafted with just the right balance of classic style, design details, and custom fit. Clients have control over every aspect, sometimes spending hours at Paulini going over design options.

Today’s Kansas City gentleman can attend any number of black-tie affairs in anything from an easily accessible rented tuxedo or a made-to-measure custom piece. By adjusting the elements and accessories as the situation demands, men today have many choices: a more assertively designed fabric for a dinner jacket paired with velvety loafers for creative black tie; vibrant colors with a statement lapel pin for a modern,atty approach; or the always elegant classic single-breasted, one-button black tuxedo with peak lapels, tuxedo shirt with mother-of-pearl shirt studs, and patent leather lace-up shoes.

Whether it’s a special occasion or just another day at City Hall, City of Kansas City, Mo. Mayor Sly James is a noted gentleman of style who has a passion for the formality and flare of bow ties and a vibrant personality to enhance each one in his collection. Born and raised in Kansas City, Mayor James served his country as a military police officer for four years in California, the Philippines, and Japan during the Vietnam War. Thereafter, he enjoyed a successful legal career, which spanned almost three decades. In 2011, he became mayor of Kansas City. His second term ends in 2019.

Historian and icon of Kansas City’s Historic Garment District, Harvey Fried was born in 1927 in New York City and his family moved to Kansas City when he was three years old. After college and military service, Fried worked for his father’s company, Fried-Siegel Co., where he started at a very young age as a shipping clerk. Fried-Siegel made dresses and coats for junior’s. Some of their brands were: Styleline Junior, Jo Be Sportswear, Kent, 1st, Contessa Dresses, and one of the last lines was Quality Hill Accessories. In 2002, Fried and Ann Brownfield, a designer and veteran of the Garment District, opened the Historic Garment District Museum at 801 Broadway in the historic Pontieder Building.
Being a Gentleman is Always in Style

Tailored menswear is both temporal and timeless. Today men may follow trends and aspire to be fashion forward while also finding innovative ways to bring back or reinterpret looks and fit from the past. Also, the advent of social media has influenced men’s style heavily, making it a global interpretation of varying styles. The incorporation of a tie bar, bow tie, pocket square, or ascot, for example, can be more than an aesthetic choice; it can be a statement to signify confidence and character. Today many gentlemen choose tailored clothing because they prefer it, not because they have to abide by a prescribed dress code.

Currently there is a desire for bespoke suits and an exploration of what it means to be a gentleman in style and behavior. Men want to put their fingerprint on their own wardrobe and not be beholden to the staid and commonplace. As young men in Kansas City embrace tailored apparel and experiment with fashion, looking to the past is a perfect guide. Kansas City is filled with vibrant stories of pioneering gentlemen who have made history and continue to influence later generations of men and women.

As the Kansas City Museum enters a new era to become a premier 21st-century museum of history and cultural heritage, several of Kansas City’s most iconic men lead the charge by helping to develop the “Making A Museum KC!” (MakingAMuseumKC) fundraising initiative and capital campaign to support the Museum’s multi-year, expansive restoration and renovation project. These men include Mr. Bill Dunn, Sr., co-founder and chairman emeritus of J.E. Dunn Construction Co., Mr. Henry Bloch, co-founder and chairman emeritus of H&R Bloch; and Mr. Edward T. Matheny, Jr., author and retired partner at Husch Blackwell. They have been close friends and colleagues in Kansas City for more than 40 years, are WWII veterans, and have been dedicated to arts, history, culture, education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship in Kansas City.

Adding to the #MakingAMuseumKC honorary leadership, the City of Kansas City, Missouri Parks Department—which operates and manages the Kansas City Museum—has also enlisted the guidance and support of Mr. Ollie Gates, owner of Gates Bar B-Q and Mr. Carl J. DiCcapo, a restaurateur and community volunteer. From 1986 to 1991, Gates and DiCcapo served together as Parks Commissioners and were responsible for the revitalization of Starlight Theatre, the Kansas City Zoo, and the National World War I Museum and Memorial. Now, they will help to reintegrate another important Kansas City civic asset and cultural institution—the Kansas City Museum.