

A history buff at heart, Muriel Esposito loves giving tours of Katy Heritage Park and showing children how others lived during Katy's early days

*Super Volunteer*

**Muriel Esposito**

Bringing history to life at Katy Heritage Park

*Written by Cherri Northcutt*

Photo by Lara Massey, Sassy Massey Photography

Anyone who has ever visited Katy Heritage Park knows how the magic and history of Katy's early days can come alive with an enthusiastic docent as their guide. As Katy Heritage Society volunteers, docents are passionate about passing on the stories and flair of bygone eras to new generations. Leading them all is super volunteer Muriel Esposito, who serves as docent coordinator. "She goes above and beyond," says Heritage Society President Steve Pierson. "I wouldn't even want to tackle what she's tackling. She has a good rapport with people and loves working with volunteers." He adds, "Muriel is priceless."

### *A Heart for History*

Esposito and her husband moved to Katy five years ago to be near their grandchildren and now enjoy living in Heritage Grand, a senior living community. Even though Katy has grown a lot over the years, Esposito loves the community's hometown feeling. "It's like a small town where we can see people we know and wave," she shares. "I wish I had grown up here; it would have been my hometown."

Esposito joined the Heritage Society in 2009 after driving by Katy Heritage Park. "I noticed this little town," she recalls. "I got involved, because I've always been interested in looking at the past." A history buff at heart, Esposito has always been intrigued by homes from the 1800s and early 1900s. "It's nostalgic for me," she says.

At Katy Heritage Park, she enjoys giving tours to both young and older visitors. "It's exciting showing children how people lived in those days," Esposito shares. "They have no idea, especially in this technological age." With older guests, she enjoys reminiscing about the good old days. "You see a lot of things that you remember from your childhood," she explains.

### *Sharing Stories from the Past*

During her years as a volunteer with the Katy Heritage Society, Esposito has learned every unique nugget of information possible about the historic homes she helps show to others. The Wright House, built in 1898, is set up as a museum. It houses a variety of historical artifacts and exhibits, including original fixtures from the Stewart and Wright drugstore, an old permanent wave machine, and a display of toys ranging from the turn of the century to the

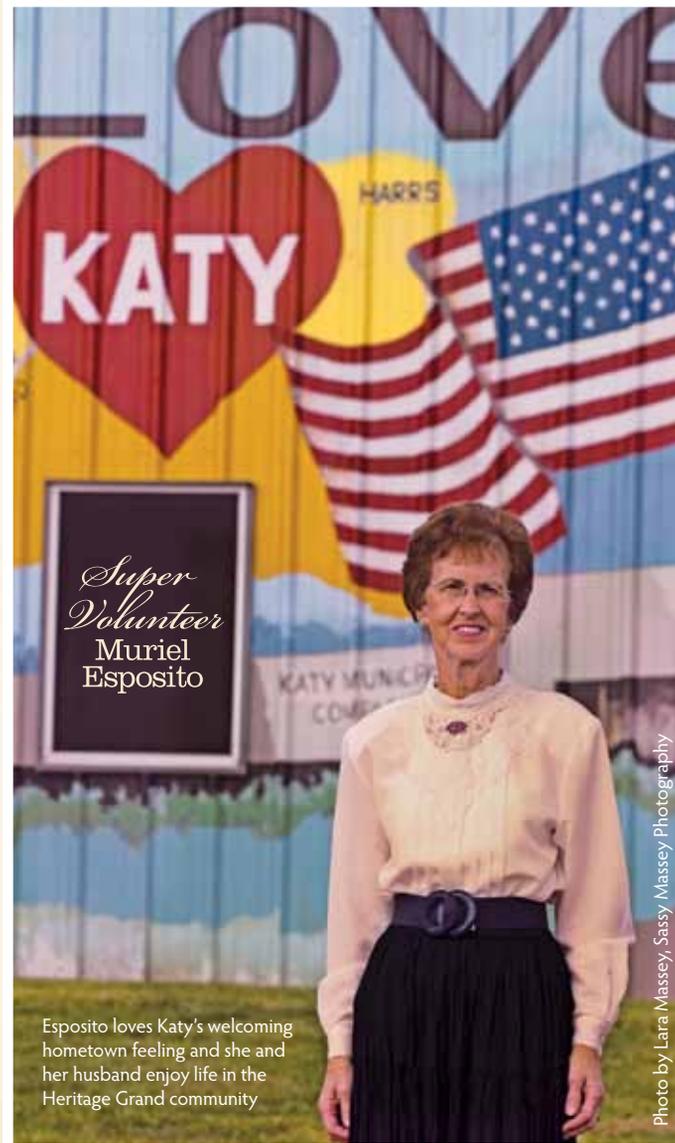
1960s. "As we tour, I do show and tell with the kids," Esposito explains. "We have all kinds of things [that] they don't know what they are."

The Featherston House was built in the 1890s and in 1910 it became part of the Cobb Hotel. For tours, the home has been restored and furnished as if it were occupied by a 1920s era family. Esposito enjoys showing visitors the stereoscope, an early version of the View-Master, and the antique Victrola.

During tours, visitors will learn some fascinating stories about the history of Katy. Esposito especially likes to tell the story of the immigrant boxcars. Around the turn of the century, many families moved to the Katy area by train, and many times, one family could load all of their possessions

into a single boxcar. One person would ride in the boxcar with their belongings, while the rest of the family members were passengers on the train. Once they arrived in Katy, the boxcar was taken off the track and moved to the family's land. The family often lived in the boxcar until they could build a home on their land. Esposito shares, "I've lived all over the U.S., and I've never heard about that anywhere else." **KM**

*CHERRI NORTHCUTT spends her time writing, scrapbooking, and volunteering. She lives and works in Katy with her husband and two daughters.*



Esposito loves Katy's welcoming hometown feeling and she and her husband enjoy life in the Heritage Grand community

Photo by Lara Massey, Sassy Massey Photography

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Katy Heritage Park is home to many historic buildings, like the Stockdick and Featherston houses



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