

## Jill Mason – Confetti & Cashmere

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Let's go to Los Angeles, for the VIP after-party for the Emmy Awards. It's a big event, and lots of celebrities are showing up. Who do you suppose was a key planner for this event? Would you believe, a young woman from rural Kansas? It's today's Kansas Profile.

Jill Mason is the owner of Confetti & Cashmere Party Boutique in Manhattan, Kansas. Jill grew up on a farm in Dickinson County. As a high school student, she rode a bus 30 miles to Chapman, where she was active in FFA and other school and community activities.

Jill went on to K-State where she majored in Hotel and Restaurant Management and minored in business administration. She also worked in food service for Chartwells and volunteered at Big Lakes Development Center. "I think these experiences helped me to become a better manager, to be more well-rounded and work with lots of different people." Jill said.

Jill got an internship with the Kansas City Chiefs. "I started at the very bottom," Jill said. But she worked her way up and, in one-and-a-half years, became a manager. She had responsibility for booking the Stadium Club at Arrowhead Stadium and grew the business to \$3.5 million in catering sales annually.

That led to an opportunity to go to Los Angeles, California. She helped plan and execute events for the big pro teams such as the LA Galaxy, the Lakers, Kings, and Dodgers. She was involved in special events such as VIP parties for the Emmys and Grammy awards, NBA playoff games and annual events such as the Kentucky Derby. She lived on the water at Newport Beach and planned posh weddings and special events at a boutique hotel. It sounds like an unbelievable career.

Of course, she was exposed to the quirks and demands of big time celebrities. "One time we were hosting Elton John for a performance," Jill said. "In his dressing room, he had 25 different pairs of sunglasses. I also remember that he had to have 1 ½ x 1 ½ squares of filet mignon for his dog."

It was the experience of a lifetime, but this Kansas farm girl was missing the simplicity and values of the Midwest. Most of her family was still back in her home state. Unlike Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, it wasn't ruby slippers but rather a call about the new Hilton Garden Inn in Manhattan that brought her back to Kansas. This new corporate hotel and conference center was starting a catering department, and Jill decided to pursue this opportunity back home.

After several years at the catering department, she wanted to start a party and planning business of her own. It is named Confetti & Cashmere. "I wanted a name that suggested both celebration and class," Jill said. It operated as an online business at first, and then in 2014 she opened a physical storefront in the historic limestone buildings of downtown Manhattan.

Confetti & Cashmere Party Boutique offers handcrafted party items such as hats and garland banners, trendy paper products, vintage party supplies, amazing balloons, soiree styling, equipment rentals, and custom made items and gifts. These are sold online

as well as in the store. She also helps plan events such as realtor open houses and corporate events all around Kansas.

“Whether it is an intimate gathering for ten or an elaborate gala for 4,500, I love how a simple idea becomes a spectacular memory that is cherished for a lifetime,” Jill wrote on her website. Through her online business, she has sold products from Alaska to Alabama. It’s a remarkable record for a farm kid who grew up near the rural community of Carlton, population 38 people. Now, that’s rural.

For more information, go to [www.confettiandcashmere.com](http://www.confettiandcashmere.com).

It’s time to leave Los Angeles, where a VIP after-party for the Emmy Awards was planned by a girl from Kansas. Now she has brought her creative skills back to her native state. We commend Jill Mason of Confetti & Cashmere Party Boutique for making a difference with her entrepreneurship and creativity. With that, it’s time to party.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.