

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1718

A RESOLUTION honoring the lives lost during the construction of the Kansas State Capitol.

WHEREAS, The Kansas State Capitol was constructed between 1866 and 1903; and

WHEREAS, When the Kansas State Capitol was built, the construction field lacked basic safety standards; and

WHEREAS, Construction workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries worked in one of the most challenging and dangerous employment fields; and

WHEREAS, The construction of the Kansas State Capitol and, in particular, the Capitol's dome came at a tragic and fatal cost; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas State Capitol construction workers completed tasks from dizzying heights with heavy machinery and little to no safety precautions; and

WHEREAS, At least seven construction workers lost their lives building the Kansas State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, According to information on the Capitol provided by the Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas State Library, Young Campbell was a 58-year-old stone mason from Topeka and married with seven children. Campbell was attempting to move a large stone with a wheelbarrow around a corner scaffolding. Unfortunately, the wheelbarrow tipped, causing Campbell to tragically fall from the scaffolding. He passed away on August 16, 1886; and

WHEREAS, Major Hiram W. Jones was a 67-year-old timekeeper from Lawrence and married with three children. Jones was working when a horse-drawn block, tackle and derrick system, which was constructed to hoist heavy stone and ironworks, collapsed. A falling stone and broken cable then hit Jones, and consequently, he passed away on October 6, 1887. Jones is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence; and

WHEREAS, William "Billy" Cullins was a 24-year-old machinist from Vermont and was to be married had tragedy not struck five days before his wedding date. Cullins passed away from a collapsed scaffolding on November 20, 1888. Cullins is buried at the Historic Topeka Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Charles Ewing Howell was a 23-year-old iron worker from Leavenworth. Howell passed away after falling from the South Wing roof on September 21, 1889. Howell is buried at Mount Muncie Cemetery in Lansing; and

WHEREAS, Jack Williams was a 21-year-old electric motor operator from Topeka. Williams operated the new electric winch motor installed at the uppermost level of the dome to hoist heavy stone and ironworks. Williams fell to his death while attempting to climb down at the end of his workday on May 24, 1890; and

WHEREAS, John Cave was a 24-year-old iron worker from Scottsville and married with children. Cave was sitting astride the outer rim of the dome and tightening a bolt with a wrench so large that it required the use of both hands and all of his weight behind it. The wrench slipped, causing Cave to fall over the outside of the dome, through a skylight and into the North Wing below. Cave passed away on July 26, 1890; and

WHEREAS, Myrtie Deegan was a 48-year-old iron worker from Topeka and married with two children. Deegan was working inside the dome when he stepped on a loose, round piece of iron and fell to the rotunda, thus meeting an untimely death on December 9, 1890; and

WHEREAS, During the construction of the Kansas State Capitol, newspapers had reported another unidentifiable death that likely occurred in 1890; and

WHEREAS, Brave construction workers continued their honest and admirable work to ensure that the Kansas State Capitol was built, even after witnessing the horrific and devastating deaths of their fellow tradesmen and knowing that their work posed serious risks and some assignments were fraught with peril; and

WHEREAS, The selfless tradesmen who gave their lives to build the Kansas State Capitol have been forgotten for too long; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we honor the lives lost during the construction of the Kansas State Capitol; and

Be it further resolved: That we never forget the sacrifices that these construction workers made in constructing one of the most historic buildings in the State of Kansas; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate shall send 10 enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Bowers.

Senate Resolution No. 1718 was sponsored by Senators Elaine Bowers and Richard Wilborn.

I hereby certify that the above Resolution originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.