

SEP 09 2016

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Monday, August 29, 2016

Jennie A. Chinn, Executive Director  
Kansas Historical Society  
2016 SW Sixth Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099

Dear Jennie:

Several weeks ago, a friend of mine, Mary Decker, showed me a book displaying the entries for the mural competition at the Kansas Capitol. Murals are not as typical today as they were a century ago, I guess because of demand and also because so few artists do historical work. I told Chris Meinhardt how impressed I was with one entry (who is why Mary has the booklet), Wayne Wildcat. Chris said, "Why don't you tell Jennie about it." Cindy Shillings in your office further suggested that I write, so here I am, giving you an unsolicited opinion.

I find the Wildcat mural a fascinating and clear historical panorama. It seems so right for today; I found the others more imitative of earlier work. The Wildcat speaks of community, most of all, and the general achievement of Brown vs Topeka. Even as a photograph, I was able to "read" the story and be inspired by it. The population of the long canvas seems to step out of a thousand old family photographs one sees all the time. I respond to the rise in the center of the procession and how the upward thrust relates to the Kansas Tornado elsewhere in the rotunda. I was touched by it and how to me it relates to the capitol's general historical art over the past century, not to mention the "pageant" of Kansas past in general. Apart from the lynching vignette in the top right corner of the mural, I found quite perfect, in my opinion, for the Capitol.

Capitol Preservation Committee

Date: 11-29-16

Attachment: 9

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This mural seems to me to belong to the long history of capitol murals, yet is modern. Fascinating details, like scenes in a movie, keep one studying the flow of the story. It is not abstract in the sense of being obscure but has a scientific sort of accuracy---as with the school being called to the country church.

It shows achievement for all, which seems the enduring importance of Brown vs. Topeka, and will be for many years and many lives to come.

Thanks for listening, Jennie. I never forget my capitols (now ten restorations and lots more in consultation reports), so anything new like this really stirs me. Constitution Hall has further attached me to Kansas.

All the best,



William Seale