Report of the Capitol Preservation Committee to the 2015 Kansas Legislature

Chairperson: Jennie Chinn, State Historical Society

Senate President’s Appointees: Senator Elaine Bowers; Ryan Gilliland

House Speaker’s Appointees: Wade Hapgood; Lana Gordon, Secretary of Labor

Senate Minority Leader’s Appointee: Tim Graham

Governor’s Appointees: Landon Fulmer; Dr. Richard Kyle; Peggy Palmer

House Minority Leader’s Appointee: Representative Valdenia Winn

Other Members (Ex Officio): Barry Greis, Statehouse Architect; Peter Jasso, Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission

Charge

- Finalize guidelines and request forms for temporary exhibits;
- Finalize guidelines and request forms for permanent displays, artwork, and architectural modifications;
- Select finalists for the Brown v. Board mural; and
- Consider submitted requests.
Conclusions and Recommendations

- The Committee makes no conclusions or recommendations.

Proposed Legislation: None.
legislator, a state agency head, or an elected state official) to endorse a request. The Committee also plans to specify when the architectural modification request form would be necessary.

**KBI Plaque Proposal**

A representative from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) requested the placement of a plaque in the Capitol to honor the 75th anniversary of the KBI. The KBI proposes a bronze plaque be installed in the southwest corner of the first floor of the Capitol, either outside Committee Room 152-S or on the exterior wall of the original offices of the KBI. The plaque would be similar in size and quality to other small plaques presently displayed on the Capitol walls.

The Committee will consider the proposal at its next meeting and may make suggestions for the plaque and its wording. If the Committee approves the plaque proposal, then pursuant to KSA 75-2269, a legislative bill would need to be enacted to authorize its installation.

**Brown v. Board of Education Mural**

Over 30 artists initially submitted their credentials for the Committee to consider. From that group, 14 artists were selected as semi-finalists and invited to prepare a rendering. Artists had the choice of two locations for their mural proposals, one being on the third floor on the exterior wall of the Old Supreme Court Room and the other being in an alcove area on the fourth floor leading to the House gallery. All but two of the artists selected the third floor location. The deadline for the Committee to receive proposals was April 1, 2014. Nine artists submitted renderings to the Committee.

A representative from the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence, and Research provided testimony concerning aspects and elements to consider when reviewing the submitted entries. Those who view the mural need to understand that, above all other states in the nation, Kansas was at the forefront to end school segregation. It would be better, in the conferees’s opinion, to not depict any of the living people unless all of the living people could be included. The U.S. Supreme Court combined cases from Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The conferee concluded that what the Committee is attempting to do is difficult, because the story is so layered and there are so many elements which could be conveyed in one artistic rendering. The final mural depiction may come down to something simplistic, instead of failing to capture everything that Brown encompasses.

Before evaluating the mural proposals, the Committee plans to consider the uniqueness of Kansas in the struggle for school desegregation; the issue of living people, being either all included or not at all; the role of the legal team and the recruitment of parents; and the historic continuum.

A representative from the Brown Mural Project SB-54, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, expressed hope for the mural’s mission to be accomplished, because it is long overdue. The community, state, and nation are ready for the mural to take place.

The Committee plans to request an additional meeting day, which would be used sometime before the end of April 2015. At the next meeting, the Committee plans to hear from an art expert on the public aspect of murals.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Committee makes no conclusions or recommendations.