

Report of the Capitol Preservation Committee to the 2017 Kansas Legislature

CHAIRPERSON: Jennie Chinn, State Historical Society

SENATE PRESIDENT'S APPOINTEES: Senator Elaine Bowers; Harrison Hems

HOUSE SPEAKER'S APPOINTEES: Rachel Whitten; Lana Gordon, Secretary of Labor

SENATE MINORITY LEADER'S APPOINTEE: Tim Graham

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTEES: Kim Borchers; Jeremy Stohs; Vacant position

HOUSE MINORITY LEADER'S APPOINTEE: Representative Valdenia Winn

OTHER MEMBERS (*EX OFFICIO*): Peter Jasso, Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission;
Vacant (Statehouse Architect)

CHARGE

Review finalists for *Brown v. Board of Education* mural. The study would include an invitation to the finalists for the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural to present final renditions and provide an opportunity for public input on the selections as a part of its statutory duties outlined in KSA 2016 Supp. 75-2269.

Capitol Preservation Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee selects Michael Young of Kansas City, Kansas, as the artist for the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural in the Capitol.

The Committee recommends the Chairperson meet with the Department of Administration and the Division of Legislative Administrative Services to move the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural project forward.

The Committee does not approve a Request for Approval of Artwork for Permanent Display submitted by an artist.

The Committee recommends the Chairperson meet with the Department of Administration to discuss the preservation of the Curry murals in the Capitol.

Proposed Legislation: None.

BACKGROUND

The Capitol Preservation Committee was created by the Legislature in 2010 to approve renovation proposals in all areas of the Capitol, the Visitor Center, and the Capitol grounds to ensure the historical beauty of the areas are preserved, preserve the proper decor of those areas, assure that any art or artistic displays are historically accurate and have historic significance, approve the location and types of temporary displays, and oversee the reconfiguration or redecoration of committee rooms within the Capitol. As provided by KSA 2016 Supp. 75-2269, the Division of Legislative Administrative Services has the responsibility of implementing the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee is made up of 12 members, with the Governor appointing 3, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each appointing 2, and the Minority Leaders of the House and Senate each appointing 1. The Committee's three *ex officio* members are the Statehouse Architect, the Executive Director of the

Kansas State Historical Society, and the Director of the Creative Arts Industries Commission. The Governor has the authority to appoint the chairperson from the Committee's membership.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Capitol Preservation Committee met November 29, 2016, to review a request to purchase paintings for the Capitol, discuss a request to review lighting of the John Steuart Curry murals in the Capitol, and to select the artist for the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural in the Capitol.

Purchase of Paintings

The Committee reviewed a Request for Approval of Artwork for Permanent Display from a Lenexa, Kansas-based artist. The artist requested the Committee approve for permanent exhibit in the Capitol five pieces of his artwork at a cost of \$14,000. The Committee reviewed the Request for Approval form and accompanying documentation.

Lighting of Curry Murals

The Committee received concerns from tour groups visiting the Capitol that the Curry murals are not lighted properly, which could destroy the paintings in the future. The Committee acknowledged the Curry murals are an important resource to the State and it is important they are preserved.

Brown v. Board of Education Mural

Of the 34 artists who submitted qualifications for the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural, 14 artists were selected in 2013 to be semi-finalists and each was invited to submit a proposal. Nine artists submitted proposals in 2014. In 2015, the Committee selected four artists as finalists:

- Wayne Wildcat, Lawrence, Kansas;
- Michael Young, Kansas City, Kansas;
- Mark Flickinger, Arkansas City, Kansas; and
- Thomas Hooper Seaman, New York, New York.

Each of the four finalists presented his original and revised mural proposals to the Committee and was given the opportunity to explain why the mural would be the best fit for the Capitol. The Committee asked questions of each artist to determine who should be chosen as the *Brown v. Board of Education* muralist.

Staff from the Legislative Research Department provided the Committee with letters of support for particular murals from community members.

The Committee heard testimony from a representative of the Brown Foundation, the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Cowley College, the Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission, the former President of the Kansas NAACP, an Associate Dean of Washburn University, and a finalist's wife. Conferees said the mural should portray the magnitude of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the decades of work leading to the outcome. Specific elements of the proposals were discussed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee does not wish to proceed any further with the artist's Request for Approval of Artwork for Permanent Display.

The Committee recommends the Chairperson, in her role as Executive Director of the State Historical Society, meet with the Department of Administration to discuss the preservation of the Curry murals in the Capitol.

The Committee selects Michael Young of Kansas City, Kansas, as the artist for the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural in the Capitol.

The Committee recommends the Chairperson meet with the Department of Administration and the Division of Legislative Administrative Services to move the *Brown v. Board of Education* mural project forward.