

Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee Meeting

July 30, 2021

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. CST

Zoom and In-Person

**Dr. Don R. Gerlach Capitol View Room
1500 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508**

At 9:00 a.m., Chairman Ron Hull called the meeting to order, stating that a notice to the press had been given, and that the Open Meetings Act had been printed.

Chairman Hull asked for a Roll Call Vote and a Motion to Approve the Minutes for May 21, 2021 Meeting.

Motioned by Sara Crook, Seconded by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not present: Trevor Jones, Ron Naugle

Guests: Ruth Haley Keene, Ashley Olson, Katie Brossy, Littleton Alston

Assistant to the Committee: Anne Dorsheimer

Chairman Hull explained that he preferred to continue the routine of the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee Meeting once a month, with subcommittees meeting on the alternate month, so the Committee is up to date on the Dedication and Reception in Washington D.C.

Dedication Subcommittee: Ron Hull

Chairman Hull stated that members of this subcommittee include Tim Heller, Ashley Olson, Rod Bates, and Ron Hull. Ron stated that the Committee needs a back-up for Laura Bush in case Laura Bush is not able to attend. He indicated the Committee needs to recommend a Congressperson and Senator to represent Nebraska.

Chairman Hull noted these following decisions:

- The back-up for Laura Bush is the actress, Gabrielle Union. He asked for a volunteer on the Committee to discover the contact information for Gabrielle. Tim commented that the University of Nebraska has the contact information, and that she is a frequent attendee of sporting events. Tim will call the University of Nebraska, Lincoln Athletic Department to acquire contact information.
- There is a need for back-up for Michael Curry, the primary Bishop of the Episcopalian Church. Chairman Hull has been in contact with his assistant within the last ten days. He was delighted to be asked and wants to do this, but if he is not able to do this based on his schedule, then the Committee will ask him to recommend someone else.

- The committee recommends U.S. Senator Ben Sasse and U.S. Congressman Adrian Smith to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office for the congressional delegation.
- Chairman Hull reconfirmed that the unveiling will be done by Abby Smith, Laurie Camp's daughter, and the grandnephew of James Cather.

These are the recommendations of the Dedication Committee. Chairperson Hull asked for discussion, ratification, and closure.

Chairman Hull asked for a Second to accept these recommendations.

Sara Crook Seconded. No discussion ensued.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not present: Trevor Jones, Ron Naugle

Invitation List Subcommittee: Aaron Wyatt

Aaron Wyatt mentioned that the subcommittee met last month and reviewed their current list from Ashley's team, and he contacted Trevor for a list of Foundation Board Members and potential donors. Anne Dorsheimer has sent Aaron the list, but he has not had a chance to add those names to the master list.

Rod Bates is going to reach out to the Chancellor's office about contacting any personalities from PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) as well as American Public Television, and Ashley is going to check with her Board and Foundation.

Rod asked Mike Zeleny to help the Committee with who should be invited from the University. Mike is working on putting a list together and he will have that ready in the first part of next month.

Aaron also asked Ashley for a list of Cather Foundation invitees. Ashley will try to get a list of those interested to Aaron soon.

Aaron asked how to assess the list in the future – will we create tiers of invitees?

Sara Crook asked if the rest of the Committee could look over the list to ensure that we do not miss any important invites, regardless of tiers. Aaron suggested that the entire Committee see the list at the next time the Committee meets.

Rod noted that the number of invitations will dictate what kind of facility the Committee needs, so the head count will be important. Chairman Hull remarked that he hoped the Committee would have the same space as the reception for Standing Bear, with room for 250. He asked Aaron if anyone has submitted family member names yet, and Aaron stated that no one has done so. Sara Crook mentioned she will have her daughter attend with her. Chairman Hull has also included family members and friends that are important to him. Aaron noted that if people have names of family members, please submit them.

Chairman Hull recognized Katie Brossy as she entered the meeting at 9:15 a.m. He asked about the size of the facility and how soon the Committee needs to book it. Katie stated it is difficult to make a reservation until the Committee acquires a date from the Speaker's office. If a federal facility is chosen,

then the Committee will need a Congressional Office to put in the request. When the Committee gets closer to the date and there are a few options, then a Congressional office can make a reservation when the exact date is confirmed.

Reception Subcommittee: Sara Crook

The subcommittee met last week and came up with several decisions:

- Senator Burke Harr was delighted to accept the invitation to make remarks at the reception.
- Mike Zeleny reported that the English Department at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in consultation with the Willa Cather project will have Andy Jewell and Melissa Homestead invited to the reception. If Andy cannot attend, then Melissa will make the remarks in his place.
- The UNL Music department will collaborate with the Willa Cather project to devise a playlist for background music.
- Craig Chandler will be the photographer and the videographer will be Dave Fitzgibbon. They will be working in collaboration with Nebraska Public Media to ensure the entire day is documented. Chairman Hull reported that Nebraska Public Media is already in the process of documenting the making of the statue.

The medallions and coins will be given away at the reception at the registration table. The state seal will be on the back half of half the coins, and the UNL logo or Love Library will go on the back side of the other half of coins. On the front of all the coins will be a replica of the Willa Cather statue.

The registration table at the reception may need name tags from the dedication ceremony. Speaker Pelosi's office does not provide name tags. Discussion occurred in the subcommittee whether there should be a UNL logo or History Nebraska on the name tags. She asked if any member had strong feelings regarding the logo on the name tags, and asked for feedback. There is no firm decision on this idea.

Discussion in the subcommittee meeting had ensued on how to distribute the decorations, flowers, and books when the ceremony is over, but there was no consensus on this. The subcommittee felt there would be more time later to make a decision.

Sara asked for approval from the Committee on the decision to invite Senator Burke Harr, Andy Jewell, and Melissa Homestead, as well as the videographer and photographer from UNL, and to have medallions that are half and half the state seal and UNL logo, and the name tags and distribution of decorations.

Chairman Hull recognized Ruth Haley Keene.

Ruth expressed concern regarding using the UNL logo on the medallions and felt that it should be the state seal, as well as on the name tags. Ruth does not feel that this is a UNL event, and she asked for clarification on that. She felt that it should reflect History Nebraska, or the State of Nebraska, or Willa Cather.

Sara remarked that the reception subcommittee is being underwritten by UNL and they are funding the reception. Ruth likes acknowledgement for the patrons of an event, but would rather see the Nebraska state seal on it. She does not believe that it becomes a UNL event.

Sara decided that the medallions would be half and half, and she recalls that Trevor Jones expressed an opinion. However, the medallions are going to be part of the budget that UNL provides. So, they are entitled to it, because they are paying the bill for that. Sara would like to see both logos on the name tag, and Willa Cather Foundation logo as well.

Mike Zeleny mentioned that the University is a supportive partner and whatever is most appropriate is best for all. The University is happy to showcase Willa's close partnership with the University, but also with Nebraska and the Foundation. Mike liked Sara's suggestion to include more, and with regard to name tags, he mentioned that they have some University of Nebraska name tags, but it is not necessary to use them.

Littleton Alston asked about where the part is for the artist to speak about the sculpture. Sara said he is on the list and this has been reported at an earlier meeting. Trevor Jones will also speak from History Nebraska, and others. Sara will send the list to Anne and she can send it out to everyone.

Chairman Hull asked for comments.

Sara Crook asked for approval of the recommendations, including the name tags and distribution of flowers and books.

Chairman Hull asked for a Second to accept these recommendations.

Tim Heller Seconded.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull

No: None

Abstain: Aaron Wyatt

Not present: Trevor Jones, Ron Naugle

Aaron stated that he is more inclined to Ruth Haley Keene's opinion regarding the coins, and Trevor Jones shares that opinion as well. However, Sara also made it clear that UNL is the patron of the event. Aaron stated that he is conflicted.

Ruth commented that the name tags often become a souvenir, and thought on whether we should be guided by that. If she were to put it in a scrap book, she would name it Willa Cather Statue at the U.S. Capitol as a reminder.

Status of the Willa Cather Statues: Littleton Alston

Littleton thanked the committee members and Chairman Hull. He asked if everyone received the email with his photographs of the patina and casting, and he pointed out that in the last image with Willa's head and hat, that it is a mold. He spoke with Dr. Cohen discussing the patinas. The images sent are the best, because of the colors of the patina that relay a beautiful sense of warmth and the color that relates to the land and also to Willa being in nature, and also because of the delicacy and intricacy of the details. The patina will not be too garish, but it is lovely and strong. Littleton wants her to be of the earth and he

wants it to be solid. A sense of permanence and solidity will speak through the work and the sculpture. Littleton asked for questions.

Ruth Haley Keene stated she loved seeing the images and thanked Littleton.

Littleton will accomplish the patina process from August 31st to September 1st. Public TV will be there and they will record. He'll be retuning with the granite pedestal. He stated this has been a very long process and he is following the process closely. Katie Brossy asked about the base and Littleton said it was a simple highly polished Brazilian black granite and has a perfect contrast with the patina.

Chairman Hull inquired about how many stages are involved in the casting process. Littleton mentioned there are 35 pieces, including the hat and the book. Once all cast, they are gadded and waxed. Then, everything is bound together. He reiterated that this process will be finished by the end of August. Chairman Hull asked when the pedestal comes in. Littleton will be bringing everything to the studio and it's an excellent opportunity for pictures and a soiree to see the Bronze, even though it will not be on the base. She will be down on the pallet, and the pedestal will be on the pallet. The back of the pedestal will have a door that opens to secure the bronze to the granite. All of this has been approved and engineered.

Dr. Cohen told Littleton that the U.S. Capitol is still closed to the public, and some statues have taken quite a bit of time. This is not just a simple install. It is also removing the other statute and bringing the pedestal back. This will involve an install and transportation back and forth. Katie Brossy asked Littleton for pictures of all sides of the statue, and the pedestal, and then the final weight and dimensions, and the inscription to submit as a package to AOC for review and then to the Joint Library Committee.

Chairman Hull asked if the package goes to the Speaker's office or to the Architect of the U.S. Capitol. Katie stated it does not go to the Speaker's office yet. The Committee has to get approval for the final statue. Then, the Committee can reach out to the Speaker's office for the unveiling and the dedication. Chairman Hull asked if this will be done by the end of October. Katie thought that it seems reasonable, as well as considering Dr. Cohen's readiness in review and recommendations, which will expedite the Architect of the U.S. Capitol's approval or recommendation.

When the Speaker's office is notified, then the Committee is ready to move. Approvals will be done and taking into account if the U.S. Capitol is going to be open, how they are hosting ceremonies, and then the scheduling to make sure all leaders are available. That is the hardest scheduling issue, including with the Governor. Chairperson Hull commented that there will be work to do in the last phase, which may involve only one month. He recalled with the Standing Bear ceremony, the Speaker's office changed the date from December to later. Katie responded that the Speaker's office deems these dedications very important and wants to make the ceremonies significant and give it the attention it deserves. However, the office does not see any ceremonies happening in 2021. So, the Committee is looking for 2022 for the unveiling and dedication.

Chairman Hull thanked the subcommittees, Littleton Alston, Katie Brossy, Mike Zeleny and Ruth Haley Keene, as well as other members of the Committee. The next meeting is scheduled in September, so the subcommittees need to meet in August. Chairman Hull asked members to keep the ball rolling along, and stated he appreciated everything the committee is accomplishing.

Tim Heller motioned to strike content from these minutes and the Minutes from May 21, 2021 on subject matter related to signatures, as it is not related to the official business on the Agenda.

Seconded by Sara Crook.

Chairman asked for a Motion to adjourn.

Motioned by Tim Heller.

Seconded by Sara Crook.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not present: Trevor Jones, Ron Naugle