

Ohio's National Statuary Selection Process, 2010

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According to its Chairman Senator Mark Wagoner, "the National Statuary Collection Study Committee was created in 2006 by the 126th Ohio General Assembly to select a replacement statue to be displayed at the United States Capitol as part of the National Statuary Hall Collection." In addition to Senator Wagoner (R-Ottawa Hills), the Committee is comprised of Vice Chairman Representative Tom Letson (D-Warren), Senator Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo), Representative Richard Adams (R-Troy), Senator Karen Gillmor (R-Tiffin) and Representative Connie Pillich (D-Montgomery.)

Members are working to present a formal recommendation to the Ohio General Assembly to replace the statue of former Ohio Governor William **Allen** with an individual who better represents the values and heritage of the state of Ohio. The other Ohioan represented is James A. **Garfield**, former President of the United States, Union General during the Civil War, and U.S. Representative from Ohio. **Allen** served from Ohio in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1832-1834 and in the U.S. Senate from 1837-1849. He was Governor of Ohio from 1874-1876. **Garfield** and **Allen** were selected as Ohio's representative statues in the 1880's.

The idea of the National Statuary Hall originated with suggestions on how to use the space in the rotunda of the Capitol and how to use the space vacated by the House of Representatives when its new (current) chamber was completed in 1857. One idea was to use the space as a "gallery of historical paintings". The space was thought to be too limited for paintings, but just the right size for busts and statuary. On 19 April 1864, Representative Justin S. Morrill asked: "To what end more useful or grand, and at the same time simple and inexpensive, can we devote it [the Chamber] than to ordain that it shall be set apart for the reception of such statuary as each State shall elect to be deserving of in this lasting commemoration?" His proposal to create a National Statuary Hall became law on 2 July 1864, allowing each state to provide "statues, in marble or bronze, not exceeding two in number for each state, of deceased persons, who have been citizens thereof, and illustrations for their historic renown or for distinguished civic or military service as each State may deem worthy of this national commemoration."

The Statuary Hall history prepared by the Architect of the Capitol states that all statues were placed in the National Statuary Hall until 1933, when it had become had become overcrowded with 65 statues and posed the danger of the floor collapsing because of the immense weight. A new resolution stated that the statues could be relocated to "designated areas and corridors of the Capitol." One statue from each state was to remain in the Statuary Hall. Ten of the thirteen original colonies were moved to the central hall, and the rest of them were distributed throughout the Capitol.

One interesting fact about the statues is that out of the 100 statues located in the National Statuary Hall in Washington D.C., 27 are individuals who have ties to the Civil War. They include Zachariah **Chandler** (Michigan), U.S. Senator who contributed to the start of the Civil War with his famous "Blood Letter;" Lewis **Wallace** (Indiana), Union General in the Civil War; James A. **Garfield** (Ohio), 20th President of the United States and Union Major General in the Civil War; Robert E. **Lee** (Virginia), Confederate Army General; and Jefferson **Davis** (Mississippi), President of the Confederate States of America.

Until December 2000, the states had to be content with their statues that were already in the Statuary Hall. The law was then changed to provide that a state could replace its statue if the request to do so was approved by the legislature and governor of the state. Each state is permitted to have two statues; if they choose to replace a statue, that statue will be transferred back to the state of origin.

The most recent state to update their statue is California (*Civil War Times*, April 2009.) California replaced a statue of Thomas Starr **King**, whose "fiery passion for the Union led him to weigh into a hard-fought battle against secession in California in 1861." King was replaced by the late President Ronald Reagan in June of 2009. Another state "in the process" is Michigan, replacing the 19th century U.S. Senator Zachariah **Chandler** with President Gerald Ford.

After more than a century standing in the National Statuary Hall, one of the two Ohio statues is being replaced. The statue that is being reinstated back to Ohio is Ohio Governor William **Allen**. He is being replaced because he fought

the policies of President Abraham **Lincoln**, opposed the Civil War, and tolerated slavery. Over a century and a half ago, his views were accepted by many white citizens, but in this century, his opinions are not representative of the State of Ohio.

The Washington Senior High School Research History has been rallying very hard for statutory candidate, James M. **Ashley**. The Research History Class hosted a group of legislators in Liberty Hall on Washington High School's campus on 8 October 2009. Some of the Research History students gave testimony for Mr. Ashley to the members of The National Statuary Collection Study Committee, explaining that James M. **Ashley** is one of the most notable people of our state's history. Some of the class members also traveled to the State House to give testimony for Mr. **Ashley**.

Ashley was born in Allegheny County PA, but grew up in Portsmouth OH. He became the editor of his local newspaper there, studied law, and was admitted to the Ohio Bar before moving to Toledo OH in 1851 where he opened a drug store. He was elected to the U. S. Congress in 1858 and was re-elected for four consecutive additional terms. He was appointed Territorial Governor of Montana by President **Grant** and served 1869-1870. Returning to Ohio, he extended a railroad line from Toledo to Northern Michigan, and served as its president for the next 16 years. On 22 September 1893, on Ohio's Emancipation Day, he was presented an award at the Chicago's World's Fair by African American citizens of Ohio and Tennessee. **Ashley** passed away in 1896. He was known for his famous quotes, one of them being, "If congress cannot abolish slavery...no power on Earth can" (1862.) He was known best for proposing and leading Congressional approval of Emancipation in the District of Columbia (1862), introducing the first proposition to amend the U.S. Constitution to abolish slavery (1863), and securing the passage of the 13th amendment (1865). (See companion article by Raelin Ingram.)

The Washington High School Research History Class has been working on the James M. **Ashley** project since 2006, and there are high hopes that this current class will finally conclude this project. If the Research History Class is successful at persuading the legislature, a statue of James M. **Ashley** will be put in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol in Washington D.C.

James M. **Ashley** was one of 93 original candidates from Ohio in the running to have their statue put in the National Statuary Hall. Out of the 93, the committee chose the top ten honorary people to represent Ohio. The committee voted using a points system; each committee member's first choice received ten points, second choice received fewer points, etc. The point totals were tallied and the persons receiving the most points were listed in the top ten. The top ten nominees in order of their vote tally and number of points received are:

1. Thomas Edison (1847-1931): Prolific inventor born in Milan OH. (46 Points)
2. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896): Cincinnati resident, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (40 Points)
3. Jesse Owens (1913-1980): African American track athlete from Ohio State University who won gold in Hitler-era Olympics in Berlin. (36 Points)
4. Harriet Taylor Upton (1853-1945): Women's suffrage activist from Ravenna. (27 Points)
5. James M. **Ashley** (1824-1896): Toledo congressman who wrote the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. (23 Points)
6. Wright Brothers, Orville (1871-1948) and Wilbur (1867-1912): Invented the first successful airplane. (22 Points)
7. William McCulloch (1901-1980): Leader in passing Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. (18 Points)
8. Judith Resnik (1949-1986): School teacher who joined NASA. She died when the shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after take-off. (18 Points)
9. Albert Sabin (1906-1993): Inventor of the oral Polio vaccine. (12 Points)
10. Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885): Best known as a General from the Civil War. He was also the President of the United States from 1869 to 1877. (11 Points)

Ohio residents are able to participate in this process by visiting <<http://www.legacyforohio.org/>> and casting their vote online, through e-mail, or at one of the 36 museum polling locations in Ohio. Voting is going to be held 20 March to 12 June 2010. Ohio residents and children are encouraged to participate.

"My hope is that many Ohioans, especially young people, will take the time to learn about these 10 great Ohioans

and to participate in the voting process by visiting one of our participating historical sites and museums,” Committee Chairman Senator Mark Wagoner said. “Our state has a proud history and our people have changed the world. This experience has been a great reminder for all of us of that fact.”

This is definitely an usual process and series of events. Every candidate in this statutory process has something to give to Ohio if chosen as its representative. Although Ohioans have a large influence in this decision, the final decision will be made by the Statuary Committee as to which statue will be presented in the Statuary Hall. The committee will make the final decision as to which statue will represent Ohio in late 2010. Private funds will be raised to create the new statue and to return Governor Allen’s statue to Ohio.

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Co-Correspondents: Senator Mark Wagoner and Kristin Strobel in Senator Wagoner’s office.