STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 48th Legislature (2002)

SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION 63

By: Ford and Stipe of the Senate

and

Gray and Maddux of the House

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution stating pride in the many accomplishments of Oklahoma's Cartwright family; directing the Department of Central Services in cooperation with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries to prepare and show an exhibit recalling the Cartwright's many contributions; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the first famous American Cartwright was the Reverend Peter Cartwright (1785-1873), known as "God's Plowman". For more than 50 years he was the epitome of the Methodist circuit rider, receiving 10,000 members into the Methodist Church, personally baptizing 12,000, conducting over 500 funerals, and preaching more than 15,000 sermons. He once delivered a famous sermon to an audience which included General Andrew Jackson, during which Cartwright said, "If General Jackson doesn't get his soul converted, God will damn him as quickly as anyone else". Twice a member of the Illinois legislature, in 1846 he ran for the U.S. Congress but was defeated by Springfield lawyer Abraham Lincoln. Peter Cartwright was the great uncle of J.R. Cartwright, the patriarch of the Oklahoma Cartwrights; and

WHEREAS, the Cartwright family came to Oklahoma in 1903 when it was still Indian Territory. Led by Jackson Robert (J.R.) Cartwright and his wife Emma, the family migrated from eastern Tennessee to

near Wapanucka in the Chickasaw Nation. Later, when J.R. wanted to move the family to California, his wife Emma informed him that the family was staying in Oklahoma, and they did; and

WHEREAS, Wilburn Cartwright, a son of J.R. Cartwright, was the first family member to be elected to public office in Oklahoma. He was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1914, representing Coal County. He was reelected to the House in 1916 and was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 1918 from District 20. He ran for Oklahoma's Third District Congressional seat, losing in 1922 and 1924, but was finally elected in 1926. He held that position until he lost a reelection bid in 1942. During his 16 years representing Oklahoma's Third Congressional District, he sat on the House Indian Affairs Committee and chaired the House Roads and Highways Committee. He was most proud of the Hayden-Cartwright Act of 1934 that created what would become the country's interstate highway system. Upon leaving Congress, Wilburn joined the United States Army during World War II and served as a Major in North Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe, where he was injured near Foggia, Italy, in 1944. Returning to public life, Wilburn was elected as Oklahoma Secretary of State in 1946 and State Auditor in 1950. He made unsuccessful bids for the U.S. Senate in 1948 and the State Supreme Court in 1952. Elected to the Corporation Commission in 1954, he was reelected in 1960 and 1966 and served until 1972 when he retired at the age of 80 after 50 years of public service. He ran unsuccessfully for Governor in 1970 and for the U.S. Senate in 1974; and

WHEREAS, patriarch J.R. Cartwright, the father of Wilburn, Buck and Keith, was the next family member to hold political office in Oklahoma. J.R. Cartwright was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1928, representing Johnston County. In 1930 he was reelected after campaigning on the pledge he would not run for a third term. However, when he did decide to seek a third term in

1932, he was not reelected, due in part to the efforts of his wife, Emma, who wanted him to return to farming, and thus, campaigned against his candidacy; and

WHEREAS, Clifford (Buck) Cartwright, a younger brother of Wilburn and son of J.R., served in the Navy during World War II. Buck ran for the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1954 and was elected from Seminole County. He was reelected to the House in 1956 and then in 1958 ran for the Oklahoma State Senate from District 23 and won. In the State Senate he authored legislation that funded the Teacher's Retirement System and carried much of Governor Raymond Gary's legislative program. In 1966 he considered running for Lieutenant Governor but withdrew from the race; and

WHEREAS, the youngest Cartwright brother, Keith, joined the Marine Corps and received two purple hearts while serving in the South Pacific. In 1946 Keith was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives from Bryan County. Two years later he successfully won election in Oklahoma State Senate District 20, comprised of Bryan and Choctaw counties. During his first term he chaired the Welfare Committee and became close friends with Lloyd Rader. Keith was reelected in 1952 and chaired the Road and Highway Committee. He was the primary author of legislation that built the first state lodges. Successfully running for a third term in 1956, he supported J. Howard Edmondson for Governor and coauthored the State Merit System legislation for the Governor. In 1957, along with Fred Harris, he authored a bill to repeal prohibition in Oklahoma, resulting in his expulsion from the First Baptist Church of Durant, Oklahoma. During his third term, he also began investigating corruption in county commissioner bidding and purchasing practices and introduced legislation requiring county commissioners to make purchases through the state Central Purchasing Division. Defeated for reelection to a fourth term, he was hired as Executive Secretary of the Good Roads and Streets Association but was forced to quit

when he angered its membership by reporting bid rigging. Keith Cartwright was then appointed Executive Director of the Ozark Regional Commission. He was unsuccessful in his bid to be elected Governor in 1966; and

WHEREAS, cousin Earl Cartwright, a professional basketball player, was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives, from Bryan County, in 1956 and reelected in 1958 and 1960; and

WHEREAS, Jan Eric Cartwright was the grandson of J.R., son of Buck, and nephew of Keith and Wilburn Cartwright. After being appointed and serving as Assistant County Attorney for Muskogee County and Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Oklahoma Eastern District, he was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives from District 13 in Muskogee County in 1970, defeating Jim Barker who would later became Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives. Reelected in 1972, he became close friends with fellow State House member David Boren. When Boren was elected Governor, he asked Jan Eric to be his legislative liaison. Jan Eric did not run for reelection, took the position, and was later appointed as General Legal Counsel for the Governor. During the prison riot at Oklahoma's Granite Reformatory, he negotiated the release of eight hostages and reached a settlement with the inmates. When a position on the Corporation Commission opened, Jan Eric was appointed to fill the vacancy. He was elected to a full term on the Commission in 1976 and ran for Oklahoma Attorney General in 1978. He was elected, but after issuing a series of politically controversial legal opinions, was defeated in his reelection attempt in 1982. He died a short time later from a rare form of cancer. On May 1, 1986, House Concurrent Resolution 1038 was filed with the Oklahoma Secretary of State naming the Capitol Branch of the Department of Libraries the Jan Eric Cartwright Memorial Library; and

WHEREAS, the Cartwrights of Oklahoma were public servants to whom the terms "good government advocate" and "reformer" could justly be applied. They were all known to be scrupulously honest, tirelessly hardworking, physically brave and courageous, incorrigibly hardheaded and stubborn, and above all, not afraid to take on the most powerful political interests in the state. In fact, they had the reputation for seeking out and opposing the most influential foes they could find. A son-in-law of Wilburn Cartwright, Leo Gordon, created and wrote scripts for a popular television series about a frontier family who fought for law and order in the American West. The name of the popular television series was "Bonanza". The name of the family was the Cartwrights.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 48TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature takes great pride in the many accomplishments of the Cartwrights of Oklahoma and would like the public to become more familiar with this pioneering family.

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature directs the Department of Central Services in cooperation with Oklahoma Department of Libraries to prepare and show an exhibit in or near the Jan Eric Cartwright Memorial Library prominently displaying the story of the many contributions of the Cartwright family to the State of Oklahoma.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Department of Central Services and Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

48-2-3146 THC 6/12/2015 11:26:03 AM