

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1702

A RESOLUTION honoring the life, career and trailblazing achievements of Kansas icon Ed Dwight.

WHEREAS, Ed Dwight was born in Kansas City, Kansas, on September 9, 1933, rising to meteoric heights as the first African American selected for NASA's early astronaut corps, a celebrated sculptor and the oldest person to reach space; and

WHEREAS, Dwight's parents emphasized education and fought for equal opportunities for their son, who became the first African American graduate of Bishop Ward High School in 1951; and

WHEREAS, Dwight earned an associate's degree in engineering from Kansas City Junior College and enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1953; and

WHEREAS, Dwight rose to the rank of Captain, flying high performance jets, training at the aerospace research pilot school and serving as a test pilot at Edwards Air Force Base; and

WHEREAS, While serving proudly in the Air Force, Dwight earned a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from Arizona State University; and

WHEREAS, Dwight was a trailblazer as the first African American astronaut candidate, advancing to the second phase of the training course in the face of great pressure and prejudice; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, despite Dwight's accomplishments and qualifications, he was not selected for Astronaut Group 3, and resigned from the Air Force in 1966, after a highly distinguished career; and

WHEREAS, Dwight went on to earn a master's degree in sculpture from the University of Denver in 1977 and became a celebrated sculptor, recognized worldwide for the creation of works that tell African American history, including "Evolution of Jazz" and a sculpture of President Obama's first inauguration; and

WHEREAS, On May 19, 2024, Ed Dwight, a man who personifies the Kansas state motto Ad Astra Per Aspera, became the oldest person to travel to space, breaking the record previously held by actor William Shatner; and

WHEREAS, Kansans applaud and celebrate Dwight's contributions to the historical, artistic and social fabric of Kansas and the nation as he continues to create and inspire from his studio and gallery in Denver, Colorado: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we honor the life, career and trailblazing achievements of Kansas icon Ed Dwight; and

*Be it further resolved:* That we seek to permanently display Ed Dwight's art in a prominent place in or around the Capitol to forever commemorate the brilliant work of a great Kansan; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate shall send one enrolled copy of this resolution to Ed Dwight and Senators Haley and Baumgardner.

Senate Resolution No. 1702 was sponsored by Senators David Haley and Molly Baumgardner.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*