



July 7, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
Office of the Governor
State of Florida
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Since the General Edmund Kirby Smith statue ("Statue") is being displayed in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol, I wanted to let you know of a decision made by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners ("Board") before the Statue is returned to Florida. The Board is unified in its support of the State ensuring that the Statue be displayed in a museum or similar indoor, secure facility, but the Board has determined that the Lake County Historical Courthouse, which houses the Lake County Historical Museum, is not an appropriate location for this particular artifact. This decision was made based on three primary considerations: General Smith did not have a direct connection to Lake County; the tragic history associated with the Lake County Historical Courthouse and the role it played during the "Groveland Four" tragedy; and the division and strife created in our community over the decision to place the Smith statue in this particular location. Thus, on July 7, 2020, the Board voted to adopt the attached resolution and notify you and Secretary of State Laurel Lee of the above-described decision.

As you are aware, a statue of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune will take the place of the General Smith statue in National Statuary Hall upon its completion. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the creators of the Dr. Bethune statue were making significant progress toward its completion, but it appears the Covid-19 situation may have caused some delay. For this reason, the Board felt it was imperative to notify you of our decision so there is adequate time to assure a seamless transition considering the coordination that must occur with the Capitol Architect in this regard. We certainly do not want to delay delivery of the Dr. Bethune statue to the U.S. Capitol. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will make myself available to meet with you in person at a time and place convenient to you in order to help all parties involved meet future deadlines.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Campione, Chairman
Lake County Board of County Commissioners

Attachment

c: Secretary of State Laurel Lee

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE
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District 3

LESLIE CAMPIONE
District 4

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District 5

RESOLUTION 2020 - ____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; NOTIFYING THE STATE OF FLORIDA THAT THE LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL COURTHOUSE IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR RECEIPT OF THE GENERAL EDMUND KIRBY SMITH STATUE UPON ITS REMOVAL FROM NATIONAL STATUARY HALL IN THE U.S. CAPITOL; REQUESTING THAT THE STATE OF FLORIDA IDENTIFY AN INDOOR, SECURE ALTERNATE LOCATION FOR THE GENERAL EDMUND KIRBY SMITH STATUE TO FACILITATE THE INSTALLATION OF A STATUE OF MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE IN NATIONAL STATUARY HALL IN THE U.S. CAPITOL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2016, the Governor of the State of Florida signed Senate Bill No. 310, which started the process for replacing the General Edmund Kirby Smith statue (“Statue”) currently displayed in National Statuary Hall at the United States Capitol; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2018, the Governor signed Senate Bill No. 472, which requested the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress approve the replacement of the Statue with a statue of Mary McLeod Bethune; and

WHEREAS, on June 28, 2018, the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, Statue Location Selection Committee, voted to move the Statue to the Lake County Historical Museum, to be managed and maintained by the Lake County Historical Society, Inc., a non-profit corporation; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Historical Museum is located within the Lake County Historical Courthouse (“Historical Courthouse”), and the Historical Courthouse is owned and maintained by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Statue has not yet been moved to the Lake County Historical Courthouse, nor has it ever been located in the Lake County Historical Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, to the County’s knowledge, the Lake County Historical Society, Inc. has not yet entered into an exhibition and long-term loan agreement with the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners is unified in its support of the Statue being displayed in a museum or similar indoor, secure facility upon its removal from National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol; and

WHEREAS, after receiving community input regarding the placement of the Statue in the Historical Courthouse and hearing specific concerns of Lake County residents regarding the history associated with the Lake County Historical Courthouse and the role it played during the “Groveland Four” tragedy, and considering the fact that General Edmund Kirby Smith did not

have a direct connection to Lake County, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners has determined that the Historical Courthouse is not the appropriate location for this artifact upon its removal from National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Lake County, Florida:

Section 1. The above going recitals are incorporated herein.

Section 2. The Lake County Board of County Commissioners has determined that the Lake County Historical Courthouse, located at 350 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida, is not an appropriate location for the public display of the Statue upon its removal from National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol.

Section 3. Further, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners is unified in its support of the State ensuring that the Statue is displayed in a museum or similar indoor, secure facility, and is requesting that the State of Florida reconvene the Statue Location Selection Committee or take whatever steps it deems appropriate to identify a museum or similar indoor, secure facility for the public display of the Statue when it is removed from National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol.

Section 4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED in Tavares, Florida on this _____ day of _____, 2020.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Gary J. Cooney, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners
of Lake County, Florida

Leslie Campione, Chairman

This _____ day of _____, 2020.

Approved as to form and legality:

Melanie Marsh, County Attorney