

“Legend” Kiosk

For Wayne Wildcat’s Revised Design 2016

Kansas Capitol Mural: *Brown v. Board of Education* 2/19/16

This legend helps the viewer identify the people and historical scenes in the design. The numbers on these pages correspond to those on the numbered design.

We feel that Wildcat’s design fulfills the broad scope and vision of the original mission asked of the artists:

“The mural will memorialize the landmark significance of *Oliver Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka et al.* by capturing its antecedents, elements and effects on Kansas, the United States, and the international community. It will be historically accurate.”

Capitol Preservation Committee

Date: 11-29-16

Attachment: 2

Kansas' nationally significant history "frames" Wildcat's design

Along the bottom level of the design, these scenes of historical "antecedents" 'frame' the center of the design that features the legal, personal and educational "elements" of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case, 1954

1. To portray the historic "antecedents" of inequality in education, Wildcat begins (at bottom left) with formerly enslaved people. The words beneath them "ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL" reveal the self-evident truths we hold, yet the continued struggle needed to make them a reality. Slaves were not allowed an education. Punishment was harsh. "Fingers were lost." (*Jim Crow's Children*). Thurgood Marshall said, you can't expect a person to come out of hundreds of years of slavery, and overcome that in a few decades (1954-present). The grandparents of the lawyers who argued the Brown case at the Supreme Court were slaves; they argued the case with a moral mission
2. Several slaves form the next narrative scene. The sign advertising "SLAVES FOR SALE" indicates their deep tragedy; they were property. Slave auctions were held daily, weekly. Families were separated.
3. Underground Railroad "conductors" Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman risked their lives to help enslaved people escape from slavery. They stand here with boys who risked their lives to run away to freedom.
4. Thoreau wrote The Duty of Civil Disobedience and felt citizens have a duty to disobey the laws if they are unjust. His theory was practiced by himself, the Kansas Abolitionists, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Mandela and others.
5. William Lloyd Garrison, Abolitionist editor of The Liberator.
6. Frederick Douglass, lectures with Thoreau and Garrison in his audience. Douglass was a former slave and author of An American Slave. A reviewer of his book wrote in 1845: "If you read his book you can see what a mind would have been wasted in slavery."
7. Kansas Jayhawkers, Abolitionists and Underground Railroad Conductors fought to ensure Kansas entered the Union a Free State. At the center of the design they stand, after their rescue of fellow UGRR conductor John Doy, who left Kansas in 1859 on an UGRR journey, but was captured. John Brown's parallel UGRR journey that same time was successful. He succeeded in getting 13 formerly enslaved people to Canada and freedom 1859. This Underground Railroad trip was John Brown's last exit from Kansas, aided by John Ritchie from Topeka. His next mission was his last attempt to free slaves, his poorly planned military attack on Harper's Ferry.
8. John Brown of Kansas here pledges his life to end slavery (1854).
9. John Ritchie, Topeka, Kansas Abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor protected John Brown on his last UGRR trip in Kansas, 1859. He was also an educator, philanthropist, etc.
10. John Speer stands in front of Dred Scott's portrait on the wall. Dred Scott lost his Supreme Court case, some say the Court's worst decision ever.

11. John Speer, Abolitionist and newspaper editor from Lawrence Kansas, holds his bold "Defy", his life threatening defiance to the Fugitive Slave Law, a Federal law which made it illegal to aid runaway slaves.

12. Jim Lane (Kansas politician, military strategist, UGRR man, founder of the Lane Trail, Kansas' first Senator) stands with the First Kansas Colored Infantry that he recruited in October, 1862. Kansas was the first to allow African Americans to fight in the Civil War.

13. President Abraham Lincoln stands next to his Emancipation Proclamation, issued 1863... "Slaves shall be FREE" and the 13th and 14th Amendments. Above Lincoln in the design are protests in 1963 (Birmingham and Selma). 100 years after their Emancipation, African Americans were still not free, and were still struggling for their equality and fulfillment of the Brown decision's promise.

14. Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, called the "Black Moses" stands with a group of African Americans students. He led them and thousands out of the Jim Crow South to Kansas (1879-1880).

The top left part of the design, the "Jim Crow," corner, shows historical "antecedents" to the Brown case, realities of the Jim Crow era and the Supreme Court's refusal to change the Separate but Equal law.

15. Plessy stands with news of his Supreme Court challenge: "Jim Crow Train Car Case," 1896. He lost his appeal to let Blacks and Whites ride together in the same train cars. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* the Court declared that "Separate is Equal," and continued: the XIV Amendment "could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color...if one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the U.S. cannot put them upon the same plane." Plessy responded: "We, as freemen, still believe that we were right and our cause is sacred." After the Plessy decision Jim Crow ran wild as one dissenting Justice predicted.

16. Women from many states, including Kansas, marched at the Capitol against lynchings, another of Jim Crow injustices.

17. The design's top left scene in the Jim Crow corner has been revised. A lynching is averted in Kansas when William Allen White makes Kansas the first state to outlaw the Klan. White stands, newspaper cartoon in hand, showing him chasing the Klan out of Kansas. White said "Everything happens first in Kansas."

On the right side, Wildcat's design portrays some of the Civil Rights Protests—the "effects" the Brown decision had "on Kansas, the United States, and the international community."

The mandate for integrated schools did not happen easily or immediately. The "effects" of the Brown decision were not as simple as Black and White children being read to together. The Brown decision was a catalyst, as the grand children of slaves hoped for as they argued the case, to shape society, not merely to integrate the schools.

18. In 1954, in the rare unanimous decision, the Supreme Court justices declared "Separate is not Equal." Integration did not happen easily or immediately.

There were protests (1963-68), marches, and martyrs. Some of the protests and marches are shown in Wildcat's design -Birmingham and Selma. To the right of the lawyers Little Rock protestors surround a student who had to be escorted to a White school by Federal marshals. On the far right of the *We March with Selma* banner, a young boy carries a sign that says: "Segregated Education is Ipso Facto Inferior." The Black Veteran's sign reads "We fought fascism abroad; we want equality at home."

Some schools did integrate and happy children, Black and White together, then and now run out of a fine, familiar red brick school building. For others it was not so easy as sitting down together to learn or eat. But out of the struggle to fulfill the promise of the *Brown* decision, the "effects on the nation" were clear: society was changed. The Civil Rights movement broadened the urge for equality in society.

Near the top right Wildcat shows World Leaders whose speeches and acts shaped the effects of the Brown decision on the "Nation and International Community". The whole world was watching America try to live up to its promise of the Brown decision, for equality in schools and society.

19. Ike, a Kansan, had to send in federal troops to escort Little Rock students to school in 1957 (center of design). At the top right of the design Wildcat shows him also signing the Civil Rights Act. He was fully aware of how scenes of occupying troops at schools in the U.S. looked to Khrushchev and the world. The U.S. could not criticize Russia's human rights violations during the Cold War if our own house was not in order.

Ten years after Brown, with Martin Luther King by his side, LBJ signed the Civil Rights Act, which finally enforced the Brown decision by denying Federal funds to schools that did not integrate. In his speech, LBJ echoed the Civil Rights promise of, "We Shall Overcome" that Martin Luther King, Jr. made in his 1963 March on Washington. Influenced by America's path of non-violent civil disobedience, Mandela led South Africa out of apartheid, More recently brave Malala was almost martyred because of her desire for an education amid the intolerance and brutality of the Taliban.

THE CENTER OF Wildcat's DESIGN

The "elements" of the *Brown v. Board Supreme Court case*
 [This could be a design submission even as it stands alone,
 without history's antecedents that surround it on three sides.]

The spirit of Justice appears at the center of the top, heralding this turning point in history: the *Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision*. The rays of the sun stream down on the world of the painting, indicating the breakthrough event that the *Brown* decision represented, and shining light on remaining injustices so they might be healed.

A column of "crusaders" forms the center of the design (1854-1954)

At the center of the design, three of the lawyers, Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and Nabrit, walk victorious down the steps of the Supreme Court joining the other case lawyers. The Supreme Court Justices unanimously decided that "Separate is not Equal." Their decision overturned the 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that said "Separate is Equal." Houston, the lawyer in the center of three attorneys, spent his whole life litigating to overturn the *Plessy* decision, but died in 1950 before the *Brown* decision.

The grandparents of these lawyers were slaves. They argued the law with a moral mission. Initially in these cases, Blacks in most of the 5 cases had only politely requested equal facilities, or a ride on the bus going to the richer, closer White school. After their repeated rejections for these simple equalities, Lawyer Nabrit decided they should challenge the whole system of segregation as they appealed the cases to the Supreme Court. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders pray on either side of the Lawyers in the design.

Wildcat includes "elements" of the 5 cases that composed the *Brown* case in the design. In front of Attorney Houston, the children/students of the **Kansas case** appear "on the shoulders" of the other group of students from Virginia. Wildcat adds Nancy Todd to the stairstep photo of the other children of the *Brown* case. The 15 year old girl in the blue dress, front and center, led them to STRIKE against the poor conditions in the Farmville, **Virginia** school. Even after the *Brown* decision, their White school closed for five years rather than integrate it. In all five cases, parents suffered greatly for their participation.

On the left of center, Black children of all ages line up for learning in that one room wooden school house (similar to the one in **South Carolina case**). Their school provides a clear contrast with the grand red brick building in the distance, the actual White school in the South Carolina case. The inequality of conditions and money spent on education is visible; 24 cents vs. \$1 per student. A family of sharecroppers stands in front of their shingled shack, shockingly in **1958**.

Among the protestors, one brave Black Little Rock student walks to class at a White school amid protestors. A young boy stands near her with a flag and a sign: "Segregation is God's Plan...Genesis." Little Rock's Central High's resistance to integration was a constitutional challenge; Eisenhower responded by upholding the federal authority and the Supreme Court decision by sending Federal marshals to protect the students entering the White school.

On the right side, smiling boys and girls, Blacks and Whites together, run out of the red brick building with the familiar arch of secondary schools for Whites. This school shows integration how it could and can be, as the Justices hoped all schools would do "in due time." It took LBJ's Civil Rights Act of 1964 to enforce integration by denying Federal funds if schools did not integrate.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is a catalyst for the continual struggle to fulfill the journey toward a more perfect America.

Written by Dr. Tolly Wildcat and artist, Wayne Wildcat

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