

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1720

A RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas.

WHEREAS, Ottawa University traces its roots to a strong partnership between Baptist missionaries and the Ottawa Indian Tribe that began prior to Kansas' statehood; and

WHEREAS, In 1837, the Reverend Jotham Meeker, his wife, Eleanor Richardson Meeker, and their children moved to the banks of the Marais des Cygnes River to devote themselves to serving as ministers, physicians, teachers and counselors to the Ottawa Indian Tribes who had recently been moved to the area; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Meeker inspired others, including John Tecumseh "Taui" Jones, to take up this work of building a vibrant partnership with the tribal leaders; and

WHEREAS, This partnership between the Kansas Baptist denomination and the Ottawa Indian Tribe, under Taui Jones' leadership, led to the foundation in 1865 of a school dedicated to the benefit of the children of the Ottawa people, placed on 20,000 acres of land endowed by the Tribe to support the establishment of the institution; and

WHEREAS, The original charter was to form a boarding school for tribal children. Both parties quickly recognized the importance of offering a college-level education and the understanding by members of the Tribe, the Baptists, and the people of Ottawa that a college would serve as an economic growth engine for the emerging community around the Marais des Cygnes; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University's Christian heritage and respectful partnership with the Ottawa Indians remains alive and powerful today, evidenced by the 2008 agreement between Kevin Eichner, President of the University, and Chief John Ballard of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma to grant, in perpetuity, free tuition, room and board to all certified tribal members who wish to attend either the residential college in Ottawa, Kansas or any of Ottawa University's adult on-campus or online programs. This agreement has been widely embraced and celebrated by faculty, alumni, board members and friends of the University and by tribal members as emblematic of the institution's core mission and principles and its enduring commitment to serve the mutual purposes of its founders; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its history, Ottawa University has pursued an innovative approach to higher education's role in society. In the 1970s, Ottawa University was one of the first to embrace a growing demand for programs specifically tailored to the needs of adult students, opening an adult campus in Kansas City in 1974; in Phoenix, Arizona in 1977; in Brookfield, Wisconsin in 1992; in Jeffersonville, Indiana in 2002; and in Chandler, Arizona in 2009. The University also began offering exclusive degree programs online in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University's mission is to provide the highest quality liberal arts and professional education in a caring, Christ-centered community of grace – which integrates faith, learning and life; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University serves more than 4,800 students from 49 states and 16 countries; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University employs more than 200 Kansans as faculty and staff who are equally committed to ensuring that each and every student receives personal attention and the highest quality education that honors the school's mission and history; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 23,000 distinguished graduates of Ottawa University serving their communities, professions and churches around the world; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University has grown from a single building to a comprehensive, global institution of higher learning dedicated to preparing students for a lifetime of enlightened faith, exemplary service, inspired leadership and personal growth and significance; and

WHEREAS, Ottawa University's commitment to education exemplifies the best of Kansas' past, present and future and serves as an inspiration to all Kansans: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we commend and celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. Ottawa University inspires students of Kansas to lead with competence and character and we urge all Kansans to celebrate its success; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate shall send five enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Tyson.

Senate Resolution No. 1720 was sponsored by Senators Caryn Tyson and Jeff Melcher.

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

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.