

# 75

HALL FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

75 YEARS OF PARTNERING  
WITH THE COMMUNITY

Kansas Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee  
Senate Bill 140  
February 19, 2019  
Written Testimony

President Eisenhower and the founder of Hallmark Cards, Joyce Hall, were friends. Mr. Hall greatly admired the President. That admiration led to Mr. Hall being among those who raised funds to establish the Eisenhower Museum and Library in the 1950s. Mr. Hall also was the primary supporter of People to People, President Eisenhower's vision for international peace and understanding. Merrill Eisenhower Atwater continues the Eisenhower legacy by leading that effort today.

The Hall Foundation has committed \$2.5 million toward updating the museum. In part, this is a recognition of Mr. Hall's involvement, but more so it is a desire that this uniquely American and Kansas story be told in a contemporary way. President Eisenhower's story is one of the most compelling of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is a story of a small town boy of modest means who rose to be a war hero, president and world statesman. And it is a story where in spite of world adulation, he never forgot his roots were in Abilene, Kansas.

He left our state a treasure – his library, museum and boyhood home. It is one of only 14 presidential libraries, and I would say given President Eisenhower's military and political accomplishments, it is among the most important.

Most presidential libraries are in urban areas and are able to garner substantial private support from those areas. While Abilene is supportive, it's just not the same. Even in Kansas City, which is highly supportive of the Truman Library, the state of Missouri has provided approximately \$4 million in tax credits, over \$2 million in state tourism funds, and it is currently considering awarding an additional \$3.7 million in tax credits for Truman's planned \$17 million remodel. I hope Kansas will see the wisdom of supporting this effort to assure that Ike's important story is told in a contemporary way, similar to other presidential libraries.

I'd like to close quoting from a letter President Eisenhower wrote to Joyce Hall on October 20, 1953:

*"My visit to Abilene was a wonderful and memorable occasion. I was delighted to see the great progress made on the museum, and especially pleased that we could have a long-delayed visit.*

*It seems to me that great, lasting values are sure to result from the activities of the Foundation – for veterans and for the cause of good citizenship – if it continues to progress as it promises to. I know of nothing that could give me greater personal satisfaction than the knowledge that an Eisenhower Citizenship Foundation, or something of that sort, would be in a position to strengthen and advance the principles and understanding of good citizenship in American youth."*

This wish of the President is exactly what the museum does: it celebrates the past and inspires for the future. We are not telling that story in a way that today's audience expects. I hope you will help us tell the story of the life and accomplishments of this most extraordinary Kansan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Hall".

Bill Hall

President of the Hall Family Foundation and Assistant to the Chairman of Hallmark Cards  
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