

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1705

A RESOLUTION commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Piatt Street plane crash,
the worst aviation military disaster in Kansas history.

WHEREAS, January 16, 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Piatt Street plane crash, an event that devastated the city of Wichita. On the 50th anniversary of this tragedy, all Wichitans and citizens of Kansas pause to remember and honor the lives of those who died; and

WHEREAS, Tragedy struck Wichita on the cold Saturday morning of January 16, 1965. While many children were watching cartoons at 9:31 a.m., a fuel-laden KC-135A jet tanker from McConnell Air Force Base crashed into the neighborhood of 20th and Piatt Streets, killing seven air crewmen and 23 residents, including an unborn child. In addition, numerous family pets were lost; and

WHEREAS, The events of the tragic day united Wichitans in the spirit of helping their fellow citizens, including response teams of emergency workers, medical personnel, ministers and counselors; and

WHEREAS, A local committee of citizens responded by organizing a memorial service on June 9, 2001, at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas. Members of this committee included Claude L. Daniels, Jr., Victor S. Daniels, Evonne W. Dugan, Timmi Jackson, Dorothy Nixon and other members of the community; and

WHEREAS, After September 11, 2001, security on the base was tightened for safety, and civilian family members were denied entrance to the base. However, a marker is still on the base grounds to serve as a monument to those who perished; and

WHEREAS, The lack of access to McConnell Air Force Base prompted a second committee of local citizens to form, known as the Piatt Memorial Park Project Committee. The Committee was organized by Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau, a Kansas State Representative at the time. The Committee petitioned the Wichita City Council in 2004 to rename Piatt Park to "Piatt Memorial Park" to better reflect the site's history; and

WHEREAS, The Piatt Memorial Park Project Committee began raising funds for the memorial in 2004, and a monument was erected in 2007 at the site of the crash. The monument is fifteen feet tall, made of black granite and is surrounded by commemorative bricks and benches where family members can sit and reflect; and

WHEREAS, The unveiling and dedication ceremony for the monument took place on July 14, 2007, at the site of the crash, and 150 people were in attendance. At the site is a Kansas State Flag, presented by former Governor Kathleen Sebelius, and an American Flag, presented by former U.S. Representative Todd Tiahr; and

WHEREAS, The Piatt Memorial Park Project Committee members include: Chair, Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau; Vice Chair, Dr. Carla Lee; Secretary, John Polson; Treasurer, Inga Taylor; Survivor, Sonya House; Honorary Member, Captain Kelly Bolen, Tanker/Refueling Unit, MAFB; and members, James Arbertha and Jamil Moody; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas Historical Society recognizes the Piatt plane crash as the "Worst Non-natural Disaster Occurring in Kansas History," where the most people died on the same day, at the same time, and in the same place, in Kansas history; and

WHEREAS, D.W. Carter, a Kansas historian and educator, authored a book entitled "Mayday over Wichita: The Worst Military Aviation Disaster in Kansas History," recalling the events of that cold winter day in January 1965, and examining the myths and realities of the crash while providing new insights about the horrific four-minute flight that forever changed the history of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, A website was designed by Colonel Duncan of the Commemorative Air Force Jayhawk Wing, and can be found at www.duncanwebsiteservices.com/piattmemorial/index.htm; and

WHEREAS, The current members of the Piatt Memorial Park Project Committee seek to honor and remember the victims of the Piatt plane crash: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we commemorate and remember January 16, 2015, as the 50th anniversary of this tragic event and honor those who perished; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate shall send an enrolled copy of this resolution to Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau, Sharon Dale, Tracy Lempe, Leslie Steele, Chandra McCormick, Clyde Stevens, Hosea Davis, Chris Widseth, Claude Daniels, Mark Foster, Denise Foster and Leo Rogers.

Senate Resolution No. 1705 was sponsored by Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau.

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.