

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1829

A RESOLUTION in memory of Oscar Micheaux.

WHEREAS, On March 24-25, 2001, the Great Bend community is sponsoring the golden anniversary memorial celebration of Oscar Micheaux, noted pioneer African-American film maker and author who died March 25, 1951, and is buried in the Great Bend cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Micheaux is highly deserving of this belated recognition:

- He was the first African-American to produce a feature film (1919);
- He was the first African-American to produce a talking feature film (1931);
- He was the first African-American to produce a film that opened in white theaters (1948);
- He has a star on Hollywood's "Walk of Fame";
- He produced 43 feature films in his lifetime;
- He wrote seven novels, one of which was a best seller; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Micheaux was born in 1884 near Metropolis, Illinois, the middle child of 11 children born to freed slaves. He worked as a shoe shine boy and Pullman porter before homesteading a farm in South Dakota. While on the farm he started writing novels. To sell his novels he formed his own publishing company and sold his books door-to-door. He became interested in the developing silent film industry and formed his own company to produce his own autobiographical novel "The Homesteader" into a movie in 1919. He wrote, produced and directed 43 movies in his life—27 silent films and 16 sound features. His last film "The Betrayal" was released in 1948. Oscar Micheaux died of a heart attack at the age of 67 while on a trip to the South to promote his work.

WHEREAS, Several of Oscar Micheaux's exoduster relatives homesteaded in Stafford County and his parents moved to Great Bend in 1901. Oscar Micheaux considered Great Bend his adopted hometown, and his younger siblings all attended Great Bend schools, including his youngest brother Swan Micheaux (1896-1975) who served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Micheaux Book and Film Company: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we honor the memory of this pioneer film maker and author and urge participation in his golden anniversary memorial celebration; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Black Filmmaker's Hall of Fame, 1322 Webster St., Suite 400, Oakland, California 94612; The Kansas African American Museum, 601 N. Water, Wichita, Kansas 67203; Kevin Willmott, 705 Fox Chase Court, Lawrence, Kansas 66049; Harley Robinson, Jr., 6069 So. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90044-3747; Pearl Bowser, African Diaspora Images, 71 Joralemon, Brooklyn, New York 11201; Martin J. Keenan, Keenan Law Firm, P.A., 2200 Larkin, P.O. Drawer 459, Great Bend, Kansas 67530 and six copies to Senator Haley.

Senate Resolution No. 1829 was sponsored by Senators David Haley and Ruth Teichman.

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

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*