

SENATE RESOLUTION

8685

By Senator Baumgartner

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Elson S. Floyd became the 10th president of  
2 Washington State University in 2007, after 29 years in higher  
3 education and presidencies at two other universities; and

4 WHEREAS, President Floyd epitomized the belief of his hardworking  
5 parents, particularly his mother, that education is the ticket to a  
6 better life, with his academic performance leading to scholarships at  
7 the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in his home state;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, President Floyd earned a bachelor of arts degree in  
10 political science, a master of education degree in adult education,  
11 and a doctorate in higher and adult education at the University of  
12 North Carolina before embarking on a career that included leadership  
13 posts at Eastern Washington University and the Washington State  
14 Higher Education Coordinating Board; and

15 WHEREAS, President Floyd was highly sought after for leadership  
16 positions at higher education institutions around the nation until he  
17 and his wife, Carmento, finally came back "home" to Washington eight  
18 years ago for what he called "the best job in the country"—that of  
19 leading Washington State University; and

20 WHEREAS, In Pullman, the man who became known affectionately  
21 as President "E Flo" recognized and acknowledged that there is  
22 something special about Washington State University and something

1 even more special about being a Cougar, a quality that endeared himself  
2 to students and staff; and

3 WHEREAS, As an administrator, President Floyd expertly steered  
4 Washington State University through some of the most difficult  
5 financial times ever faced by the university, all while strengthening  
6 its academic programs, enhancing its reputation, and resolving to  
7 meet new levels of excellence; and

8 WHEREAS, President Floyd worked to eliminate boundaries to higher  
9 education, even when the barrier was a mountain range, expanding  
10 Washington State University's footprint beyond Pullman to reach every  
11 corner of the state—from Spokane and the Tri-Cities, to Vancouver and  
12 Everett—and increasing enrollment to record highs, including a record  
13 high number of students from diverse backgrounds; and

14 WHEREAS, President Floyd's tenure included many substantial  
15 accomplishments that will serve as lasting legacies for Washington  
16 State University, including the installation of the Edward R. Murrow  
17 College of Communication, the completion of the Ste. Michelle Wine  
18 Estates Wine Science Center, the opening of the Paul G. Allen School  
19 for Global Animal Health, and increasing research funding by an  
20 astounding 57.5 percent; and

21 WHEREAS, President Floyd's final contribution to Washington State  
22 University would prove to be his tireless and successful advocacy in  
23 Olympia for a change in the law that limited Washington to one  
24 medical school; and

25 WHEREAS, President Floyd undertook this initiative out of the  
26 belief that his adopted state would be better if more students could  
27 stay in Washington to attend medical school and have opportunities to  
28 learn and practice east of the Cascades, benefiting smaller  
29 communities where medical professionals are scarce; and

30 WHEREAS, It is now apparent that in recent months President Floyd  
31 served his beloved Cougar nation tirelessly while battling the  
32 disease that claimed his life so unexpectedly on June 20, 2015, just  
33 over two weeks after he took medical leave; and

34 WHEREAS, There would be no more fitting tribute to President  
35 Floyd, his unwavering vision for Washington State University, and his  
36 exceptional leadership than to name the future Washington State  
37 University medical school the "Elson S. Floyd Medical Center"; and

38 WHEREAS, Even more importantly, President Floyd's devotion to his  
39 cherished wife Carmento, his children, his parents, and even his  
40 brothers will serve as his lasting personal legacy; and

1       WHEREAS, Great accomplishments aside, all who knew President  
2 Floyd knew him to be a genuine and kind man of strong faith who spoke  
3 his mind and treated those around him with the same respect and care,  
4 regardless of whether they were students, university staff, elected  
5 officials, or influential business leaders;

6       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That with great sadness the  
7 Washington State Senate honor and remember the life and legacy of Dr.  
8 Elson S. Floyd, Washington State University president and dedicated  
9 public servant and leader, who will be missed by his family, friends,  
10 students, and colleagues more than words and a shout of "GO COUGS!"  
11 in his honor can convey; and

12       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
13 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to President  
14 Floyd's wife, Carmento Floyd; his two children, Jessica and Kenneth;  
15 and his mother, Dorothy.

--- END ---