SENATE RESOLUTION

8685

By Senator Baumgartner

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, In Pullman, the man who became known affectionately as President "E Flo" recognized and acknowledged that there is something special about Washington State University and something even more special about being a Coug, a quality that endeared himself to students and staff; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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