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Sheridan Coliseum: Letter, to Ronald Pflughoft, from Clarita and Don Crawford, September 30, 1986

Clarita Crawford

Don Crawford

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200 Arapahoe Trail
Carol Stream, IL 60188
September 30, 1986

Mr. Ronald C. Pflughoft
Vice President for Development
Fort Hays State University
Hays, Kansas 67601-4099

Dear Mr. Pflughoft:

It was good talking with you recently about the Sheridan Coliseum Campaign. As I mentioned on the phone, a Schlicher Family Reunion was held in Illinois in August, at which time several family members elected to support the Campaign. We would like to sponsor a seat in the new Performing Arts Center in memory of John Schlicher, a state representative at the time Sheridan Coliseum was approved by the Kansas legislature. Please note the enclosed form. We would also like to share a bit of family history--which you indicated may be of interest to the Alumni News:

He was saying the same thing in 1915 as we are saying today. Role & Scope

It is a matter of public record that funds for the coliseum were appropriated during the 1915 legislative session. A "champion" for the coliseum was Representative John Schlicher, from Sheridan County. According to members of the Schlicher family, the representative had a deep concern for public education. Because Fort Hays Normal School (the precursor of FHSU) was the only state institution of higher learning in the whole western portion of Kansas, Schlicher vigorously supported state funding to keep it operating. And the proposed coliseum would aid Western Kansas both educationally and culturally.

Representative Schlicher, reporting on one of the legislative sessions to his family, said that debate over the issue of funding for Fort Hays became so heated that at one point chairs were hoisted menacingly in the air. When passions cooled and a vote was taken during the 1915 session, however, \$218,000 had been appropriated for Fort Hays. The grant, which seems minuscule in today's economy, not only insured the continuance of the school but also provided enough money to erect a coliseum on the Fort Hays campus. The record shows that \$100,000 was allotted for the coliseum's construction.

When a name for the coliseum at Fort Hays was being discussed, according to family history, one proposal was to call it Schlicher Coliseum in honor of the man who had championed funding for Fort Hays. The representative, however, refused the recognition and suggested instead that the coliseum be named after General Philip Sheridan, the Civil War officer for whom the county he represented was named. Thus, Sheridan Coliseum came into being.

Sincerely,

Clareta Crawford
Don Crawford

Clareta Schlicher Crawford ('51)
Don Crawford ('57)