

SENATE RESOLUTION
8655

By Senators Fraser, Hargrove, Honeyford, Kohl-Welles, King, Keiser, Tom, Kline, Parlette, Sheldon, Brown, Pearson, Murray, Dammeier, Mullet, Chase, Hill, Padden, Fain, Ranker, Baumgartner, Shin, Hobbs, Eide, Nelson, McAuliffe, Hasegawa, Conway, Harper, Schlicher, Darneille, Rivers, Cleveland, Rolfes, Becker, Schoesler, Holmquist Newbry, Braun, Roach, Litzow, Benton, Hewitt, Ericksen, Smith, and Bailey

WHEREAS, During May 1963, many Washingtonians will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the nationally and globally acclaimed successes of the 1963 American Mt. Everest Expedition, because Washington climbers achieved its most notable successes, and Washingtonians enthusiastically supported this historic achievement in many ways; and

WHEREAS, Members of this Expedition are famed for four unprecedented mountaineering achievements:

(1) On May 1, Jim Whittaker, a Washington State native, climbing with Sherpa Nawang Gombu by the South Col route, became the first American to reach Everest's 29,028 foot summit, the highest point on Earth;

(2) On May 22, Willi Unsoeld, who would become a faculty member at The Evergreen State College, and Tom Hornbein, who returned from Everest to the faculty at the University of Washington School of Medicine, pioneered the unprecedented and exceptionally difficult West Ridge route to the summit and descended by the South Col route to complete the first traverse of a major Himalayan peak;

(3) A few hours earlier that same day, Lute Jerstad, a former Washington resident, and Barry Bishop of Washington D.C. reached the summit by the South Col route; and

(4) Both teams were benighted during the descent, Unsoeld and Hornbein catching up with Jerstad and Bishop. All four survived an unplanned and unprecedented all-night bivouac above 28,000 feet without oxygen, tents, or food, and Unsoeld and Bishop suffered severe frostbite; and

WHEREAS, These mountaineering achievements are successes of the human spirit, involving supreme human effort, extraordinary physical capability and endurance, clear vision and goals, intense determination and focus, superior teamwork, high tolerance for discomfort and danger, and exceptional organizational and logistical preparation; and

WHEREAS, These mountaineering achievements are also the successes of the highly appreciated, dedicated, expert Sherpa climbers who accompanied and supported the members of the Expedition; and

WHEREAS, Human survival at the upper elevations of Mt. Everest is possible only for brief periods of time because the air contains roughly one-third of the oxygen density of sea level, temperatures are generally around negative 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and hurricane force winds are frequent; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the 109 days of the Expedition, the team steadily engaged in scientific research relating to physiology, psychology, sociology, geology, and glaciology; and

WHEREAS, The Expedition's worldwide acclaim included recognition by President Kennedy at a White House ceremony, by the National Geographic Society, by King Mahendra of Nepal, by the United States Ambassador to Nepal Henry Stebbins, by India Prime Minister Nehru, by the United States Ambassador to India John Kenneth Galbraith, by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, by mountaineering organizations throughout the world, by major news media around the world, and more; and

WHEREAS, The people of Washington State played a very significant role in the historic successes of the Expedition, through team members with deep Washington ties, including Barry Prather of Ellensburg and John Breitenbach who attended the University of Washington and tragically died when a massive wall of ice in the Khumbu icefall shifted and buried him in tons of ice blocks; through many contributions of cash and in-kind donations from Washington businesses, organizations, and individuals; through Washington State's United States Senator Warren G.

Magnuson serving on the Expedition's Advisory Committee; through the Expedition's training and equipment testing taking place at Mount Rainier; and more; and

WHEREAS, Washingtonians' outdoor recreation heritage of hiking, climbing, and camping in the State's extensive mountain ranges, and the widespread appreciation by Washingtonians of the State's beautiful mountains and stately snowy peaks, served as the inspiration for and enthusiastic support of the Expedition in 1963;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the historic first American ascent of Mt. Everest:

(1) Congratulate members of this historic Expedition Jim Whittaker, Nawang Gombu, Willi Unsoeld, Tom Hornbein, Lute Jerstad, Barry Bishop, and all those who supported them;

(2) Express appreciation to all Washingtonians, to the hundreds of others from around the country who assisted its achievements, and to Norman G. Dyhrenfurth who, with his determination and genius, organized and led the Expedition; and

(3) Encourage Washingtonians to continue to engage in outdoor recreation in Washington's welcoming mountain ranges and to continue to appreciate their splendor and be inspired to greatness by them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to Jim Whittaker, Jolene Unsoeld, Tom Hornbein, Norman G. Dyhrenfurth, to the other four surviving members of the team, and to the surviving widows or nearest of kin of the team members now deceased.

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,
do hereby certify that this is a true and
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8655,
adopted by the Senate
April 16, 2013

HUNTER G. GOODMAN
Secretary of the Senate