

WASHINGTON—A statue of one of the state’s most famous figures—Helen Keller—will take its place in the U.S. Capitol complex this fall, Alabama’s congressional delegation announced today.

The statue will be unveiled on October 7 at a ceremony in the Capitol. The monument to Keller will permanently reside in the Main Hall of the new 580,000-square-foot Capitol Visitor’s Center.

The unveiling marks the end of a years-long process—initiated when Governor Bob Riley served in the U.S. House of Representatives—to fund, commission, and complete the statue. The figure, cast in bronze, was paid for with private donations.

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“Helen Keller’s story of overcoming incredible adversity is a true inspiration, as well as an embodiment of the perseverance and determination that sustains our great country,” said U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL). “It is fitting and I am proud that a statue honoring this daughter of Alabama will be prominently displayed in the United States Capitol.”

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“Helen Keller exemplified the strength, pride, and perseverance of true Alabama character,” U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) said. “Through raw grit and determination she overcame extraordinary obstacles to become a symbol of America’s indomitable will.”

This statue will be a lasting testament to a remarkable woman, and a reminder that our only limits are those that we place on ourselves.”

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“The moving image of a little girl standing at a water pump stands as a testament to human perseverance, courage, and ingenuity,” Rep. Jo Bonner (R-Mobile) said. “It challenges us to invest in each other’s successes with her same confidence and determination. The state of Alabama is proud this statue of Helen Keller will take its rightful place in the halls of the U.S. Capitol.”

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“Helen Keller’s story has inspired generations of Americans,” Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-Birmingham) said. “Her statue will remind visitors to the U.S. Capitol how a young woman from Alabama overcame tremendous challenges to become a symbol of hope and determination for all of us.”

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“I am honored a statue of Alabama’s Helen Keller will be placed in the Capitol complex. Keller’s determination and spirit is an example to us all that we can overcome the toughest of circumstances,” said Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Saks).

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“Helen Keller was an amazing woman and honored our state with courage and determination,” said Rep. Parker Griffith (D-Huntsville). “Her ability to overcome some of life’s most intimidating challenges was a true testament to what it is to be American”

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“Helen Keller’s life is one of the most encouraging stories for those who face challenges that seem impossible,” said Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Haleyville). “The recognition of her life accomplishments despite her physical disabilities is something that will inspire Americans for many years to come and I am extremely proud that Alabama native Helen Keller will be forever honored with a statue in the Capitol Visitor’s Center.”

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“Helen Keller’s story has been told the world over and she has become an inspiration to people everywhere,” Congressman Bobby Bright (D-Montgomery) said. “The high esteem in which our state and country hold Helen Keller will soon be evident to everyone when her statue is unveiled in the Capitol Visitor’s Center. I am proud to join with my fellow Alabama delegation members in announcing this statue and celebrating the many achievements of this truly remarkable woman.”

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“Helen Keller was a beloved daughter of Alabama,” said Rep. Artur Davis (D-Birmingham). “As someone who could have easily been limited by her disabilities, Helen Keller taught by the power of example to generations of Americans the power of dedication. I look forward to joining my colleagues from Alabama when the statue is unveiled October 7th.”

Keller, born in Tuscumbia on June 27, 1880, lost her sight and hearing after a bout of meningitis before her second birthday.

She overcame these enormous obstacles, going on to become an internationally recognized author and activist. A pioneer for all those with disabilities throughout the world, Keller was, in the words of LIFE Magazine, a “national treasure” and “one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th Century.”

Keller’s life story and work also received official recognition on Alabama’s quarter, part of the 50 State commemorative coin set issued by the U.S. Mint, which included her likeness and the inscription “Spirit of Courage.”

Each state donates two statues to display in the Capitol complex. Alabama’s other honored figure is “Fighting” Joe Wheeler, a Civil War general and nine-term U.S. Representative.

Members of the delegation are preparing a Joint Resolution in Congress to approve the final seating of the Keller monument. Congress is expected to easily approve the resolution this summer.