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Historical Foundation: 2020 Capitol ornament celebrates the State Capitol Senate stained glass ceiling

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Madison, Wis. – The 2020 Wisconsin State Capitol commemorative ornament, presented by the Wisconsin Historical Foundation, was inspired by and is a tribute to the leaded glasswork skylight in the State Senate Chamber. This is the 17th annual commemorative Capitol ornament.

“This year’s ornament celebrates the distinctive glasswork that is composed of translucent stained glass pieces in assorted hues in the Wisconsin State Senate Chamber ceiling,” said Julie Lussier, executive director of the Wisconsin Historical Foundation. “All proceeds from the sale of these ornaments will support the State Capitol Restoration Fund.”

Reconstruction work on the new Senate Chamber in the south wing began in 1910 and was completed in 1913. The crowning touch illuminating the new chamber was the three-story-high ceiling dominated by the circular stained-glass skylight.

The glass in the ceiling is arranged in 16 pie-shaped sections, held together by a metal framework. Natural light filters through the 28-foot circular leaded glasswork, which functions as an interior skylight for the chamber. The ornament sells for $20.00 and comes in an ornate gift box which includes a detailed booklet describing the original designs of the skylight and the Senate Chamber it illuminates.

Cate Zeuske, Capitol Ornament Committee Chairperson said, “The historic booklet included with the ornament also highlights, State Senator Fred Risser’s record-setting 64-year career of public service. 2020 marks the end of his career as the longest-serving state legislator in the nation’s history. He represents the 4th

generation of state legislators in his family."

Since 2004, the proceeds from ornament sales have supported over $75,000 in restoration projects around the Capitol building. Previous ornament sales have helped to fund the visitor's bird's eye view from the glass perch inside the dome of the State Capitol.

The ornament will be available for purchase while supplies last at Orange Tree Imports, Tis the Season Middleton and Sun Prairie Flowers and Gifts. Online ornament purchases may be made by visiting wisconsinhistory.org/shop.