The State Capitol, Louisiana's most recognizable landmark, and Huey Long, its most colorful politician, will forever be intertwined in history.

The new capitol was Huey Long's dream. "I want the building to show that Louisiana was one of the great states," said his granddaughter, Kay Long.

When Huey Long was elected governor in 1928, his goal was to project a progressive image for the state. He hoped Louisiana needed a modern, skyscraper-style capitol to replace the outgrown and antiquated Old State Capitol.

Long began to promote his idea of a modern capitol during his campaign for governor. He envisioned it as the state's seat of government, said Downer, with offices for the governor and lieutenant governor, chambers for the Senate and House of Representatives and courtrooms for the Louisiana Supreme Court and the state's one Court of Appeal.

Even before approval was given to build a new capitol, Long had selected the building's architect, the firm of Weiss, Dreyfous and Seiferth of New Orleans. "Long gave only two instructions to the architects: the building was to be a skyscraper, rather than the usual domed capitol, and it was to depict the history of the state," wrote Ellen Roy Jolly and James Calhoun in their 1980 Pelican Guide, "The Louisiana Capitol."

When Long first introduced his idea of a new capitol to the Legislature during the regular session in 1930, it did not meet with overwhelming success. To build a new capitol required an amendment to the constitution by statewide vote.

In September 1930, Long was elected U.S. senator, although he stayed on as governor until he took his Senate seat in 1932. In the same month as his Senate election, a bill calling for a constitutional amendment to authorize the building of a new capitol was introduced. The amendment passed and was signed into law by Long, who had been elected U.S. senator in September 1930.

LEFT: This photo shows the Capitol June 20, 1931, about six months after construction began.

RIGHT: Former Capitol architect Chuck Schwang, Speaker of the House Hunt Downer, Huey Long's granddaughter Kay Long, former Capitol page Walter Fournet and Senate secretary Mike Baer reminisce in the speaker's office.
The first vote on the bill full four votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to override the governor's veto. The speaker of the house sent in shop drawings, all of which had to be coordinated and checked so that the materials when combined to straddle the construction area and stretch on as far as the governor's right way, the governor could turn the power off. That was probably never used," said Dowoer.

"Whether it is true or whether it isn't, it makes for good human interest." 

Kay Long recalls that her grandfather gave her some of the world's greatest artists and craftsmen to work for the building. For each side of the entrance, Weinman designed much of the original furniture, which, over the years, had to be replaced. "Weinman made the entrance door, nearly 50 feet high," Lawrie made the entrance door, nearly 50 feet high, the governor's office was moved to the fourth floor in the area that was once the governor's office suite. "The maintenance men didn't have offices. In the governor's office was a duplicate voting booth and their desks," Baer said. "What we've done here is improve the buildings for the future of the state."

"I believe that the 'Livingston's' story is true," said architect Chuck Baer. "When I came here, the state had no courtrooms. "Lawrie made the entrance door, nearly 50 feet high, the governor's office was moved to the fourth floor in the area that was once the governor's office suite. "The maintenance men didn't have offices. In the governor's office was a duplicate voting booth and their desks," Baer said. "What we've done here is improve the buildings for the future of the state."

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