

# Rep. Sampson W. Keeble

State of Tennessee Capitol Collection

*1.5 x Life* Bronze & Tennessee Pink Marble



SIZE 61" H x 36" W

March 29, 2010, the Legislative Black Caucus permanently placed a bronze and Tennessee pink marble monument honoring Sampson W. Keeble outside the House of Representatives Chambers in the Tennessee State Capitol.

Nashville barber Sampson W. Keeble became the first African American to serve in the Tennessee legislature when he was elected to represent Davidson County in the 38<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly, 1873-1874.

Keeble introduced several bills; one would amend Nashville's charter to allow African Americans to operate businesses downtown; a second would provide protection for wage earners and still another would appropriate state funds to help support the Tennessee Manual Labor University. He was appointed to the House Military Affairs Committee and the Immigration Committee.

As a result of his public service, Keeble was well known within the African American community and was elected a magistrate in the Davidson County Court, serving from 1877 to 1882. He later passed the Tennessee Bar and the last year Keeble's name appears in the Nashville City Directory is 1886, where he is listed as a teacher.

According to the inscription on his tombstone in Nashville's Greenwood Cemetery, Keeble was born in 1833 in Rutherford County, Tennessee. He was buried in 1887 with his daughter and son-in-law, Jeannette Keeble and Benjamin F. Cox. Sampson W., Jr and Jennie were his two surviving children by wife, Rebecca Cantrell Gordon.

Roy W. Butler | *redefining the Art of Life*

[www.roywbutler.com](http://www.roywbutler.com)

[rbicom@earthlink.net](mailto:rbicom@earthlink.net)

702-419-0505



THIS BUST CREATED IN THE LIKENESS OF  
SAMPSON W. KEEBLE

THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATURE. ALSO SERVES AS A COMMEMORATIVE EMBLEM TO ALL FOURTEEN AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGISLATORS ELECTED IN THE 19TH CENTURY

SAMPSON W. KEEBLE  
1873-1874, DAVIDSON  
JOHN W. BOYD  
1881-1884, TIPTON  
THOMAS F. CASSELS  
1881-1882, SHELBY  
ISAAC F. NORRIS  
1881-1882, SHELBY  
THOMAS A. SYKES  
1881-1882, DAVIDSON

LEON HOWARD  
1883-1884, SHELBY  
SAMUEL A. McELWEE  
1883-1888, HAYWOOD  
DAVID F. RIVERS  
1883-1886, FAYETTE  
GREENE E. EVANS  
1885-1886, SHELBY

WILLIAM A. FIELDS  
1885-1886, SHELBY  
WILLIAM C. HODGE  
1885-1886, HAMILTON  
MONROE W. GOODEN  
1887-1888, FAYETTE  
STYLES L. HUTCHINS  
1887-1888, HAMILTON  
JESSE M. H. GRAHAM  
1897-1898, MONTGOMERY

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The stone base, fabricated from a solid block of Tennessee pink marble is also inscribed with the names of fourteen African American legislators elected in the 19th century. The base measures 36" W x 18" H x 18" D.

Sculptor, Roy W. Butler is shown completing final details on the original 1.5 x life-size clay prior to mold fabrication and lost wax process of creating the final bronze. The bronze memorial stands approximately 61" H including the marble base and weighs 1,300 pounds.

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