

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 593 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY LAUGHLIN, APRIL 26, 2019

SENATOR K. WARD, TRANSPORTATION, AS AMENDED, APRIL 30, 2019

AN ACT

1 Designating a bridge, identified as Bridge Key 15986, on that
2 portion of Interstate 79 northbound over West 16th Street in
3 the City of Erie, Erie County, as the Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr.,
4 Memorial Bridge; AND DESIGNATING A BRIDGE ON THAT PORTION OF <--
5 STATE ROUTE 4011 OVER PINE CREEK, HEGINS TOWNSHIP, SCHUYLKILL
6 COUNTY, AS THE A. DONALD BUFFINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr., Memorial Bridge.

10 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
11 follows:

12 (1) Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr., was born May 18, 1930, in
13 the City of Erie, Erie County, and served the United States
14 in the Marine Corps, where he reached the rank of Captain.

15 (2) Captain Kennedy was the Senior Battalion Advisor to
16 the Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Brigade, in the
17 hostile area of Phu An, Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam.

18 (3) On June 12, 1966, Captain Kennedy was with the Fifth
19 Battalion Command Post when the lead elements were pinned
20 down by heavy enemy fire and the Command Post was destroyed

1 by enemy mortar and rifle fire, killing the Battalion  
2 Commander, the Battalion Surgeon, key staff officers and  
3 numerous soldiers.

4 (4) Although suffering multiple shrapnel wounds, Captain  
5 Kennedy located a radio and, with his last breath, reported  
6 the situation, allowing the battalion to set up a defensive  
7 perimeter and repulse repeated enemy attacks.

8 (5) Despite his mortal wounds, Captain Kennedy prevented  
9 enemy forces from overrunning the remaining battalion units  
10 and valiantly gave his life protecting the lives of his  
11 fellow Marines.

12 (6) For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action,  
13 Captain Kennedy was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the  
14 third-highest personal decoration for valor in combat.

15 (b) Designation.--The bridge, identified as Bridge Key  
16 15986, on that portion of Interstate 79 northbound over West  
17 16th Street in the City of Erie, Erie County, is designated the  
18 Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr., Memorial Bridge.

19 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and  
20 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to  
21 traffic in both directions on the bridge.

22 SECTION 2. A. DONALD BUFFINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE. <--

23 (A) FINDINGS.--THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES AS  
24 FOLLOWS:

25 (1) A. DONALD BUFFINGTON WAS BORN DECEMBER 16, 1929.

26 (2) MR. BUFFINGTON GRADUATED IN 1947 FROM THE FORMER  
27 HEGINS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL AND IN 1949 FROM THE FORMER  
28 ECKLES COLLEGE OF MORTUARY SCIENCE, PHILADELPHIA.

29 (3) MR. BUFFINGTON FAITHFULLY SERVED HIS COMMUNITY AS A  
30 BOARD MEMBER OF THE VALLEY VIEW PARK ASSOCIATION AND A BOARD

1 MEMBER OF THE TRI-VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD FOR SEVERAL DECADES.

2 (4) MR. BUFFINGTON SPENT SEVERAL DECADES OF TIME  
3 MAINTAINING THE VALLEY VIEW PARK WHICH INCLUDED PAINTING AND  
4 CUTTING GRASS.

5 (5) MR. BUFFINGTON WAS A COACH FOR THE HEGINS VALLEY  
6 TEENER LEAGUE AND WAS THE FIRST TEENER LEAGUE COACH FROM  
7 SCHUYLKILL COUNTY TO WIN THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1970.

8 (6) MR. BUFFINGTON PLAYED AND COACHED SEMI-PRO BASEBALL  
9 IN THE AREA FOR MANY YEARS.

10 (7) MR. BUFFINGTON WAS THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR FOR THE  
11 FORMER BUFFINGTON FUNERAL HOME AND THE BUFFINGTON-REED  
12 FUNERAL HOME, BOTH OF VALLEY VIEW.

13 (8) MR. BUFFINGTON WAS A MEMBER OF FRIEDENS UNITED  
14 CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HEGINS, VALLEY VIEW GUN CLUB AND VALLEY  
15 VIEW FIRE COMPANY.

16 (B) DESIGNATION.--THE BRIDGE LOCATED ON STATE ROUTE 4011  
17 OVER PINE CREEK, HEGINS TOWNSHIP, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, IS  
18 DESIGNATED THE A. DONALD BUFFINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE.

19 (C) SIGNS.--THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL ERECT AND  
20 MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE SIGNS DISPLAYING THE NAME OF THE BRIDGE TO  
21 TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ON THE BRIDGE.

22 Section 2 3. Effective date.

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23 This act shall take effect in 60 days.