

06-11-2019

Representatives Green, McClain, and Sheehy
House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

re: Letter of support for House Bill 259 "Designate Sgt David S. Harris Memorial Highway"

Honored Representatives:

Who is David S. Harris and why should he be memorialized? He did nothing to change the entire world. BUT, he did accomplished numerous things that changed many lives. He was born in southeastern Ohio to a middle income family. He had to wear a corrective shoe because of a leg length issue. He and his family moved to Marion when he was 5. There appears to have been an undiagnosed learning disability.

In the thirteenth year of his life, his parents divorced, he won three different events at Marion's first Junior Olympics. At 14, he was one of the students chosen to represent his city in the National School Patrol Jamboree in Washington, DC. The age of 15, he broke the shot put record at the Junior High School Track Championships, won the shot put event at the Ohio Jaycee Junior Champ Track Championship, competed in the National Jaycee Junior Champ Track Championship as well as thee Junior Olympics, and was voted class treasurer.

He was selected to the first team All-Conference, named conference fullback of the year as well as his high school's MVP when 16. His 17th year had such accolades at All District, All Conference, All Ohio, and high school MVP in football. At the county All Sports Banquet, he was named outstanding athlete in football. His senior year in high school, he participated in the class play, was named first team All-Ohio, named high school MVP for the third year in a row, All Conference, All County, All District, high school's top football player, had his jersey retired, and was offered (and accepted) a football scholarship to the University of Nebraska.

May I remind you that he had both physical and learning challenges. He excelled in sports in college but fell into scholastic problems after about a year and a half. His coach wanted him to move to a junior college to improve his grades; his scholarship would be held for him. The Vietnam conflict was going on. He gave up his scholarship, moved back home, and entered the Army. He was an only child and could have been considered ineligible. He chose to serve.

In less than a year, David went from being a civilian to basic training, NCO training, landed in Vietnam, and was killed in Vietnam in the Kien Phong Province (he was in Vietnam less than a month) while attempting to save two of his comrades.

None of the above appears to be worthy of dedicating a highway. BUT, the entire time in school, he worked part time jobs to help the family income, he helped younger people with their sports skills, he was a loyal friend and confidante to all, he excelled in the military enough to attend NCO school, died as a sergeant (in less than a year), was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor, Combat Infantryman Badge, Gallantry Cross with Palm (one of Vietnam's highest honors), National Defense Service Medal, inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame, Purple Heart, Silver Star, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal.

Less than two months after David's death, his father died. His grandfather died the day after his father. Entire bloodline eradicated.

We, his supporters, request that he is more than worthy to have this highway dedication become a reality. We all look forward to your decision.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Young Brown". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Barbara Young Brown, schoolmate

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