

Barth Burgett Testimony

November 12, 2019

Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Representative Sheehy, Ranking Members and Members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee.

I am Barth Burgett, the youngest son of William Burgett, and I have with me two of his grandsons Bryce Burgett and Geoff Rinehart, one of his nephews, Mark Osborn, as well as, the Mayor of Fredericktown Jerry Day and Village Administrator- Bruce Snell.

Our family is very appreciative of your efforts to adopt a resolution to designate a portion of State Route 13 in Knox County as the "William 'Bill' Burgett Memorial Highway".

Dad was best known as Founder of Kokosing Construction Company. Those who knew him well would say he was a man of unwavering integrity, resilient work ethic, perseverance, belief in doing it right and strong faith in God. He initially started Kokosing to provide for his family, but soon realized that he could provide opportunities for others to provide for their family as well. Today, his company has provided job opportunities to nearly 49,000 people, some of whom are 4th Generation team members.

Dad was also known as an outstanding leader and a visionary. He saw it as part of his work to volunteer his time to improve the quality and funding for construction in Ohio and the United States. He felt the asphalt pavement on Ohio highways should last longer and pushed hard to get a warranty specification, requiring contractors to guarantee their work for a period of time. As you can imagine, this was not popular with other contractors, but that did not stop Dad. A testament of this was shown on an asphalt paving project on SR 95 that Kokosing completed and received final acceptance from ODOT. Dad felt the pavement did not ride smooth enough, so he had Kokosing remove & replace a substantial section of pavement to meet his high standards.

He served as an active member and a term as President of The National Utility Contractors Association, Chairman of the Board of Flexible Pavements and The Ohio Contractors Association. While serving as a Trustee for the Ohio Operating Engineers Apprenticeship Program, dad advocated for continual year-round training for young Apprentices and led the concept of building an indoor equipment training facility. This facility is now one of four indoor Operator training facilities in Ohio and was one of the first of its kind in the United States.

Dad also helped those in the community in many ways that we were not aware of until after he died. He never wanted to draw attention to himself. There are so many projects he helped build for the community but you will not see his name on them. Many wheel chair ramps and driveways were paved for those who never asked for help. Dad would recognize the need and would take action to help make their situation better. He just loved pulling people and resources together to help improve the community. A few notable projects that he led for the community was the building of Sockman Park, which is home of the local baseball diamonds and swimming hole; the Gazebo in the Village of Fredericktown, which serves as the center point for the town square; the Fredericktown Public Library and the Hospice of Knox County building.

In his final years, I think that how Dad reacted to having Parkinson's is a real testament to who he was. Dad found out that specific exercises helped keep those with Parkinson moving. Most of us would take that information and do the exercises. Not Dad, he helped others by starting a Parkinson's group for those in the community to perform exercises together. Though he is gone, to this day the group still meets.

Bill Burgett's philosophy that guided him through life are what he called the four D's. Dream, Desire, Determination and Discipline. He was truly an amazing man who made a real difference.

Thank you for your consideration in honoring William Burgett by naming a portion of a memorial highway after him. It is truly full circle considering how much he cared about construction, our community and quality roadways.