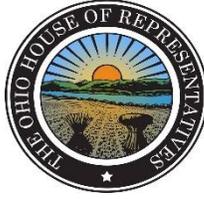


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**Representative Angie King
Ohio House District 84**

**Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 494
Before the House Transportation Committee
May 7, 2024**

Chairman McClain, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 494 to designate the bridge spanning Indian Creek in Darke County as the SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge.

Gene Morrison was born and raised in the heartland of Ohio where he was an active member of the community and possessed a spirit of service from an early age. Gene graduated from Versailles High School in May of 1958 when he answered the call to serve and enlisted in the U.S Marine Corps.

Throughout his military career, Gene demonstrated courage and commitment to his fellow marines. Gene served with the Force Logistical Command, Support Battalion, 1st Force Service Regiment, and Ammo Company over the course of 10 years. Gene's dream career was to be a Marine and he gave his all. In 1968 Gene was a member of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team at Dong Ha Marine Combat Base, located in Vietnam's 1 Corp, near the DMZ. Following an enemy rocket attack on the base Ammunition Supply Point, explosive ordnance was scattered throughout the area. Gene's team was assigned the task of organizing the munitions that had been strewn about. An 81mm mortar exploded in Gene's hands causing 3rd degree burns over 90% of his body and shrapnel wounds. He passed on June 3rd, 1968, at the age of 29 years old.

Gene was the recipient of the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal. By designating the bridge spanning Indian Creek in Darke County as the SSgt Gene F. Morrison Memorial Bridge, we not only pay homage to Gene's sacrifice but will memorialize a symbol of our enduring gratitude to those who have laid down their lives to defend our nation. I graciously ask for your support of this legislation and thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of House Bill 494.