

**Testimony in Support of Naming the *William “Bill” Burgett Memorial Highway*  
Presented by Jerry Day, Mayor of the Village of Fredericktown (Knox County)**

William “Bill” Burgett was a farm boy from the Fredericktown (OH) area with humble beginnings, and the son of two school teachers. Bill was blessed with God-given talent, aspirations, and an innate knowledge of how to build things with his hands. Bill was a 1948 graduate of Johnsville High School, which was a small rural school in Morrow County. Shortly after graduating high school, Bill married Shirley Ackerman, and Bill would have agreed that Shirley was his best friend and strongest supporter.

Bill was supported by many friends, mentors, family members, and the people who worked for the William Burgett Builders & Concrete Company. The company grew and was soon found performing all sorts of construction throughout Central Ohio, employing about a dozen men and women of all ages and backgrounds.

It was in 1954 in the small town of Fredericktown where Bill changed the name of his company to Kokosing Construction Company, which was headquartered in Fredericktown. In the early days, odd jobs included remodeling houses, building barns, churches, schools, a milk house, and several small commercial projects. Kokosing Construction eventually grew into a company that created hundreds of jobs throughout Central Ohio, providing its employees an opportunity to achieve the American Dream. The company saw exponential growth as it grew into a progressive general construction company that moved earth on a large scale, built multi-story buildings, bridges, major highways, water and waste water treatment plants, and constructed underground sewer, water and storm-water infrastructure, among other things. Bill and Shirley’s five children would eventually work for the company over the years as the company met new challenges and Kokosing Construction Company began to see exponential growth.

In the early 1970s, the bright “Kokosing orange” helicopter could be seen almost daily flying over virtually every county in Ohio as the company scurried to manage its projects throughout the state. In the 1980s, Kokosing Construction would become one of the top-400 general construction companies in the country, with more than 800 employees working on scores of projects throughout Ohio and even in Texas and Arizona. The scope of work grew to include large freeway bridges, miles and miles of irrigation canals and pipelines, and moving millions of cubic yards of earth in the deserts of the Southwestern United States.

By the 1990s, Kokosing Construction and its subsidiaries had completed over 800 projects in multiple states, ranging from the Midwest to the Southwestern United States. By the 2000s, Kokosing Construction Company and its subsidiaries reached all the way to the East Coast, as they were an integral part of installing underwater cable from Long Island, NY to Connecticut.

Today, Kokosing Construction Company has operations in multiple states from the East Coast to the Midwest. Third-generation descendants of William and Shirley Burgett manage and operate Kokosing Construction Company and its subsidiaries, providing thousands of jobs to men and women throughout the region. This construction giant got its start when a visionary farm boy from a rural town in Central Ohio decided he wanted to be a carpenter and build things. What better way to recognize the decades of hard work and prosperity yielded as a result of Bill Burgett’s dream of creating a company made up of people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, than naming the *William “Bill” Burgett Memorial Highway* in honor of him. Bill Burgett has passed away but Shirley still resides in the Fredericktown area and nothing would please her more than seeing her late husband recognized for all he has done for the people of the State of Ohio.