

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 48th Legislature (2002)

SENATE  
RESOLUTION 50

By: Stipe

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution praising the dedicated service of Richard D. Newkirk; directing the Fort Gibson Bridge be designated the "Richard D. Newkirk Bridge"; directing appropriate signage; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Richard D. "Dick" Newkirk was born March 14, 1918, to J.E. Newkirk and Jeanetta Terrell. He graduated from Sperry High School and married Lorraine Miller on December 28, 1941; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Richard Newkirk turned down an assignment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Riley, and, instead, enlisted and served with the Ninth Air Corps in England, rising to the rank of First Lieutenant. A gunnery instructor, he was credited with several innovations, including design of a sight that enhanced the ability of pilots to skip bombs into caves in the North Atlantic where enemy U-boats were hidden; and

WHEREAS, after the War, Richard D. Newkirk moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma, and served in the United States Army Corps of Engineers for three years, surveying the land that would become Fort Gibson Lake; and

WHEREAS, although possessing only a high school education, Richard D. Newkirk achieved certification as a Professional Civil Engineer and a Professional Land Surveyor; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk joined the Oklahoma Department of Transportation as a laborer earning 35 cents an hour. He served for

45 years, retiring in 1987 as Division One Division Engineer, after holding that position for 13 years; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk's legacies include the Shawnee Bypass, the Nat Irish Freeway, the Southeast (Peak Boulevard) Bypass, and the bridge crossing the railroad track which enters the OG&E plant in Muskogee, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk was very active in community affairs. He was a member of the Muskogee Park Board in the 1950s and a member of the Board of Directors of Commercial National Bank. He also served as Chair of the Muskogee Red Cross. Richard was a member and Chair of the Muskogee Port Authority for a period of 16 years and served for 23 years as a member of the General Hospital Board. In these positions, he was instrumental in the development of the Port of Muskogee and the Muskogee Regional Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk was a 32nd Degree Mason and past Director of Muskogee Court of Jesters #99. His charitable endeavors included the Bedouin Shrine Temple and the Shrine Circus; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk was an avid sportsman, an excellent marksman and fisherman. In his youth he played semi-professional baseball as a shortstop for several corporate teams in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, Richard D. Newkirk died at his lake home near Muskogee, Oklahoma, on Monday, August 17, 1998, at the age of 80 years old. He was posthumously awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Oklahoma Good Roads and Streets Association.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 48TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate praises Richard D. Newkirk's dedicated service to the people and State of Oklahoma.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate directs the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to designate the Fort Gibson Bridge east of

Wagoner, Oklahoma, and west of Hulbert, Oklahoma, on State Highway 51 the "Richard D. Newkirk Bridge".

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate directs the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to place permanent, suitable markers upon the bridge bearing his name.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Richard D. Newkirk's two daughters, Judy Newkirk Kelley and Jill Newkirk Gotcher; his son, Richard Terrell Newkirk; and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

48-2-3164

THC

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