

CHAPTER 97-314

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1366

An act relating to road designations; designating State Road 293 (Mid-Bay Bridge Road) from the south portion of the bridge toward U.S. Highway 98 in Destin as "Danny Wuerffel Way"; designating a portion of State Highway 85 in Okaloosa County as the "Robert L.F. Sikes Parkway"; designating an overpass bridge in New Smyrna Beach as the "Martin Luther King, Jr., Bridge"; directing the Department of Transportation to erect suitable markers; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, Daniel Carl "Danny" Wuerffel, a resident of Destin in Okaloosa County, is an honor graduate of Fort Walton Beach High School and the recipient of academic honors, including, in recognition of his 4.5 GPA, being made a member of the National Honor Society, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel, while playing quarterback at Fort Walton Beach High School, led their Viking Football Team to a State Championship in 1991 with a perfect 14-0 record, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel, as a member of the Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings, earned honors on the field, including selection as the 1991 USA Today Florida Player of the Year and selection as a member of the First Team All State, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel attended and graduated with honors from the University of Florida, and was the recipient of academic honors including a 3.68 GPA, multiple inductions into the College Football Association Scholar-Athlete Team, and the award of the prestigious Draddy Scholarship Trophy, which goes each year to the nation's Number 1 Football Scholar-Athlete, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel, while compiling a distinguished academic record, led the University of Florida Gator Football Team to four SEC Championships and to the 1996 National Championship, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel became one of the most honored football players ever to attend the University of Florida and the holder of 32 school, 12 SEC, and 4 NCAA records, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel was twice nominated and once selected as the recipient of the Heisman Trophy, the premier honor accorded any collegiate football player in the nation, and

WHEREAS, it is both fitting and proper for the Florida Legislature to express its admiration and approval of a record as distinguished in both academics and athletics as that of Danny Wuerffel, and

WHEREAS, the admiration of this Legislature is made all the more profound by the exemplary manner in which Danny Wuerffel conducts himself as an individual of high moral and intellectual integrity, and

WHEREAS, Danny Wuerffel serves as a spiritual inspiration and role model to the youth of our nation, and

WHEREAS, State Road 293, currently Mid-Bay Bridge Road, runs right in front of the new middle school and can serve as an inspiration to the students attending, if named after Danny Wuerffel, and

WHEREAS, as Danny Wuerffel was compiling a personal and athletic record of unmatched distinction, Okaloosa County saw the passing of another alumnus of the University of Florida who left his own distinctive mark, the "He Coon" Congressman Robert Lee Fulton "Bob" Sikes of Crestview, and

WHEREAS, former Congressman Bob Sikes was highly instrumental in the development of transportation corridors within Okaloosa County to include State Highway 85, and

WHEREAS, Eglin Air Force Base Reservation land borders both sides of State Highway 85 from Shoal River to Niceville, and

WHEREAS, the Southern portion of State Highway 85 has already been designated the "Robert L.F. Sikes Parkway," and

WHEREAS, the designation of portions of vital roadways enhances communications during times of emergency like that seen in Okaloosa County at the approach of Hurricane Opal in 1995, and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr., served the people of the United States by leading the fight for racial equality and justice, and

WHEREAS, the loss of this great leader was mourned by all Americans regardless of race, and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and appropriate that the Legislature of the State of Florida honor the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. (1) That portion of State Road 293 (Mid-Bay Bridge Road) from the south portion of the bridge toward U.S. Highway 98 in Destin is designated "Danny Wuerffel Way."

(2) That portion of State Highway 85 in Okaloosa County commencing at the southern end of the Shoal River Bridge and extending south to the city limits of Niceville is designated the "Robert L.F. Sikes Parkway."

Section 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable markers bearing the designations made by this act.

Section 3. The Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House are directed to prepare for presentation by the local legislature delegation to the Honorees named herein official copies of this act.

Section 4. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bridge designated; Department of Transportation to erect suitable markers.—

(1) The State Road 44/U.S. overpass bridge in New Smyrna Beach is hereby designated as the “Martin Luther King, Jr., Bridge.”

(2) The Department of Transportation shall erect suitable markers designating the “Martin Luther King, Jr., Bridge” as described in subsection (1) in the following manner:

(a) One sign shall be located on the southwest side of the bridge.

(b) One sign shall be located on the northeast side of the bridge.

(c) Two signs shall be located on the outside facing of the bridge on the south and north sides of the bridge in such a manner as to provide visibility for the northbound and southbound lanes of U.S. 1.

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 1997.