

SENATE BILL 1536

By Beavers

AN ACT to name a segment of State Route 53/State Route 141 in Smith County in honor of Colonel Bernie Sanford Bass.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who have made great sacrifices in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Bernie Sanford Bass, a highly decorated thirty-year veteran of the United States Army Air Corps and the United States Air Force, is one such courageous volunteer who proudly served this nation with the courage and dedication befitting a true Tennessee hero; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Gordonsville High School and Morgan School in Petersburg, Tennessee, Colonel Bass left college prior to graduating to answer his country's call to duty; he volunteered as an aviation cadet for the U.S. Army Air Corps in September of 1941; and

WHEREAS, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and awarded pilot's wings in April of 1942; in World War II, he bravely completed 114 combat missions during two combat tours in North Africa, Tunisia, Pantelleria, and Sicily, piloting a Curtiss P-40, and in France and Germany, flying a Republic P-47; and

WHEREAS, following the war, he returned to Cumberland University, received a Bachelor of Arts degree, and served as an instructor at Castle Heights Military Academy in Lebanon; he also eventually earned a Master of Arts degree in American History from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Bass again served as a fighter pilot during the Korean War; was posted to assignments in the United States, Japan, France, England, and Vietnam during the

Cold War; and served as a Base Commander in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, he served as Commander of F-100 jet-fighter squadrons in the 1950s at Air Force bases in New Mexico, France, and England, and he was Base Commander at two air bases in England in the 1960s; he also taught at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, following a tour of duty as director of the U.S. Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, he retired on November 1, 1976, and returned to Castle Heights where he taught until the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, for his heroic actions, Colonel Bass has been honored with a plethora of awards and decorations, including the Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with thirteen Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one Cluster, and the Meritorious Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, since retiring from the military, Bernie S. Bass has been an active and valuable volunteer in his community for the last thirty years; the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon and Cumberland University are two among many institutions that have benefited greatly from his accomplished leadership; and

WHEREAS, a native of New Middleton, Tennessee, who graduated from Gordonsville High School, Colonel Bass is a member of a distinguished family whose roots in Tennessee history extend back over two hundred years to the first pioneers who crossed the Appalachians in the late 18th century; and

WHEREAS, for these and many other reasons, including his distinguished career and heroic service in the United States armed forces, this General Assembly finds it most appropriate to name a certain segment of State Route 53/State Route 141 in Smith County in honor of Colonel Bernie S. Bass, who has led a remarkable life as a Christian, family man, and patriot; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the segment of State Route 53/State Route 141 in Smith County between the New Middleton community and the Town of Gordonsville is hereby designated the "Colonel Bernie S. Bass Highway" as a lasting tribute to one of Smith County's most highly decorated veterans who served his country courageously and with great personal sacrifice during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the segment of State Route 53/State Route 141 described in Section 1 as the "Colonel Bernie S. Bass Highway".

SECTION 3. The erection of such directional signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.