

I am Carol Miller, a 21 year resident of Overland Park and a Coldwater-born daughter of the state. I am writing to you in support of Bill SB5; legislation to designate a portion of HWY 69 in Overland Park to be named the "2nd LT Justin Lee Sisson Memorial Highway". Thank you for recognizing the importance of honoring one of our own who grew up in this area and gave the ultimate sacrifice while militarily serving for us.

I knew Justin and I am friends of the entire Sisson family. Until someone experiences the loss of a loved one or a friend in war, it is difficult to completely understand how important, meaningful and powerful support is from others.

Upon learning of their son's death, Phyllis and Kevin Sisson asked of only two things of family and friends. They wanted people to know who Justin was. And secondly, they wanted people to share stories and memories of him. Neither of these were meant as a one-time request. I am among proud stewards of their wishes.

As you have been learning, Justin was exceptional. Exceptional in his character and in his service. He truly was a great example for being only 23 years old. Justin was a hero. A real hero. Justin earned his legacy in how he lived. Leaving a worthy legacy was important to him. Not for all he accomplished, but for how well he treated others. He is best remembered for that.

By designating this particular portion of HWY 69 in Overland Park, it would give a face and story to Justin in a place that was home to him and his family. It gives an opportunity for his story to be told; so even more people know who Justin was. It also gives the chance for stories and memories to be shared by having travelers learn about Justin as they seek to know more about him. (there are numerous pictures and articles about him on the internet to begin with) His battlefield cross stands in front of Blue Valley West High School. This memorial highway would honor Justin and also, importantly, honor his family as well. They have also sacrificed greatly for all us. The Sisson family have shown tremendous grace, dignity and philanthropy in their own service and in their grief. This designation is important to them. Therefore it is to those who knew Justin and know them.

Fittingly, HWY 69 is a route that leads south through our state as a pathway to NW Arkansas. A portion of HWY 71 through Mansfield, Arkansas was dedicated this past September as the "Specialist Robert Allan Pierce Memorial Highway". Spc. Pierce, 20, was killed in the same attack as Justin. Another platoon brother of Justin's, fallen days after Justin and Spc. Pierce, Sonny Zimmerman, 25, has part of a state highway in Ohio named in honor of him. For each military family, it is not about the recognition. It is about remembering. And to remind others to remember, too.

In a state that does honor the military in several ways, such as the Purple Heart Trail, and has the "Yellow Brick Road" as part of U.S. 54, major league baseball playing brothers from Circleville that served in WWI honored with a highway tribute for them, and the various notable Kansas politicians and advocates of projects in the state, being recognized with memorial highways of their own, I ask for your support and that of others, in passing SB5 in memory of a contemporary hero from our community and in honor of his family. Kansas was Justin's home. Justin is home now. He wanted to come back to Kansas. Justin's life's achievements and his ultimate sacrifice make him worthy of such an honor.

Respectfully,
Carol Miller
Overland Park, Kansas