



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 17-1031

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Nordberg and Exum, Carver, Arndt, Becker J., Becker K., Beckman, Benavidez, Bridges, Buck, Buckner, Catlin, Coleman, Covarrubias, Danielson, Esgar, Everett, Foote, Garnett, Ginal, Gray, Hamner, Hansen, Herod, Hooton, Humphrey, Jackson, Kennedy, Kraft-Tharp, Landgraf, Lebsock, Lee, Leonard, Lewis, Liston, Lontine, Lundeen, McKean, McLachlan, Melton, Michaelson Jenet, Mitsch Bush, Navarro, Neville P., Pabon, Pettersen, Rankin, Ransom, Rosenthal, Saine, Salazar, Sias, Singer, Thurlow, Valdez, Van Winkle, Weissman, Willett, Williams D., Wilson, Winter, Wist, Young, Duran; also SENATOR(S) Gardner and Merrifield, Aguilar, Baumgardner, Cooke, Coram, Court, Crowder, Donovan, Fenberg, Fields, Garcia, Guzman, Hill, Holbert, Jahn, Jones, Kagan, Kefalas, Kerr, Lambert, Lundberg, Marble, Martinez Humenik, Moreno, Neville T., Priola, Scott, Smallwood, Sonnenberg, Tate, Todd, Williams A., Zenzinger, Grantham.

CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF THE CIMARRON AVENUE BRIDGE SPANNING INTERSTATE 25 IN COLORADO SPRINGS AS THE "LIEUTENANT JAMES "JIM" DOWNING BRIDGE".

WHEREAS, James "Jim" Downing was born in Oak Grove, Missouri, on August 22, 1913; and

WHEREAS, In 1932, at the age of 19, Lieutenant Downing enlisted in the United States Navy, serving as Gunner's Mate 1st Class and postmaster aboard the U.S.S. *West Virginia* in Long Beach, California; and

WHEREAS, During his time in California, Lieutenant Downing met his wife, Morena, and the two were married just one month after the couple was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941; and

WHEREAS, On the morning of December 7, 1941, while hosting breakfast for several servicemen at their home on base, Lieutenant Downing, his wife, and his guests heard the sound of explosions in the distance, and then an anti-aircraft shell landed right outside their home, exploding a large crater 25 feet across; and

WHEREAS, Realizing they were under attack, Lieutenant Downing and his fellow servicemen immediately raced to their ships, among which Lieutenant Downing's ship, the U.S.S. *West Virginia*, had been hit in quick succession by nine Japanese torpedoes, and was in flames and sinking by the time he arrived; and

WHEREAS, Running into danger, Lieutenant Downing slid down the gun barrel of another ship, the U.S.S. *Tennessee*, to board the U.S.S. *West Virginia*, where he fought to keep the fires from spreading to live ammunition lockers and save his fellow servicemen; and

WHEREAS, Upon seeing the dead and wounded, Lieutenant Downing quickly began memorizing the names of his fellow servicemen, and later wrote personal letters to their families to let them know that he was with them in their final moments; and

WHEREAS, On that "Day of Infamy", 2,403 people died and another 1,143 were wounded, marking the attack on Pearl Harbor as one of the deadliest foreign attacks on United States soil in modern history; and

WHEREAS, Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant Downing remained in the Navy for another 16 years, eventually serving as the commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Patapsco* during the Korean War from 1952 through 1955 before his retirement in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Following his retirement, Lieutenant Downing and his wife, Morena, settled in Colorado with their seven children and dedicated their lives to helping others deepen their Christian faith through the Navigators ministry; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Downing has provided invaluable historical information through the recounting of his experience at Pearl Harbor, sharing his stories through public speaking, helping to develop interactive educational materials, and publishing a book of his personal account of the attack; and

WHEREAS, Today, at 103 years old, Lieutenant Downing resides in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and is the 2nd oldest known living survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that we honor the life and valor of a man devoted to his family, his country, and his God, and who bore witness to one of the most important events in the history of the United States; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-first General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:

- (1) That the Cimarron Avenue bridge spanning Interstate 25 in Colorado Springs be designated as the "Lieutenant James "Jim" Downing Bridge";
- (2) That the Colorado Department of Transportation may accept and expend gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of the initial placement of signs visible from Interstate 25 to mark the bridge as the "Lieutenant James "Jim" Downing Bridge"; and
- (3) That the Colorado Department of Transportation may explore a cooperative agreement with the Board of County Commissioners for El Paso County for the maintenance of the markings for the "Lieutenant James "Jim" Downing Bridge".

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to James "Jim" Downing; Mayor of Colorado Springs, John Suthers; the City Council of Colorado Springs; the Board of County Commissioners

of El Paso County; the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Transportation, Shailen P. Bhatt; and the Colorado Transportation Commission.

Crisanta Duran
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Kevin J. Grantham
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
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Effie Ameen
SECRETARY OF
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