

# LACEY V. MURROW MEMORIAL BRIDGE



June 30, 1967

Washington State Highway Commission  
Department of Highways



IN THE LEGISLATURE  
of the  
**STATE OF WASHINGTON**



SENATE RESOLUTION

1967-21

By Senators Al Henry, Frank Foley, August P. Mardesich, Dewey C. Donohue, Lowell Peterson, Joel M. Pritchard, Damon R. Canfield, Marshall A. Neill, Perry B. Woodall, Frank Connor, Ernest W. Lennart, John N. Ryder, John H. Stender, Ted G. Peterson, Walter B. Williams, John T. McCutcheon, Gordon Sandison, Sam C. Guess, Don L. Talley, Nat Washington, Reuben A. Knoblauch, George W. Kupka, Fred G. Redmon, R. Frank Atwood and R. R. Bob Greive

WHEREAS, Lacey V. Murrow had a distinguished career as an engineer, military officer and legislative consultant; and,

WHEREAS, His work as consultant to the architects of the Highway Act of 1956 capped his professional efforts and his military service in the China - Burma - India Theater during World War II from which he emerged a General was an outstanding achievement, his work as Director of Highways of the State of Washington is certainly best remembered by the citizens of this state; and

WHEREAS, The Mercer Island Floating Bridge provided a unique, ingenious and resourceful solution to a difficult engineering problem at the time it was designed and built and more than twenty-five years later continues to serve the public well by providing access to move people from city to suburbs, and stands as a monument to Lacey Murrow's successful tour of duty as State Director of Highways; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate honor the memory of Lacey V. Murrow by requesting the State Highway Commission to designate the Mercer Island Floating Bridge as the Lacey V. Murrow Memorial Bridge; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Commission for its action.

I, Ward Bowden, Secretary of the Senate, do hereby certify this is a true and correct copy of Senate Resolution No. 1967-21 adopted by the Senate on February 25, 1967.

*Ward Bowden*  
WARD BOWDEN  
Secretary of the Senate

## In Honor of a Great Engineer



LACEY V. MURROW, age 62, passed away in December, 1966. At the time of his death, he was chairman of the board and recently retired president of Transportation Consultants, Inc., Washington, D. C.

He was a retired Brigadier General, United States Air Force, having served in every theater of combat during World War II and the Korean War. His military honors included the Legion of Merit and a presidential citation with four cluster decorations, as well as the Croix de Guerre and the Order of the British Empire.

His distinguished career as a professional engineer began with his appointment, at the age of 28 as Director of the Washington State Department of Highways and concurrently as Chief Engineer for the Washington State Toll Bridge Authority. He advanced the idea for the first Lake Washington Floating Bridge, which was designed and constructed under his direction.

Senate Resolution Number 1967-21, adopted by the Senate on February 25, 1967 and passed by the House unanimously, stated that the Mercer Island Floating Bridge (the first Lake Washington Bridge) "provide a unique, ingenious and resourceful solution to a difficult engineering problem at the time it was designed and built, and more than twenty-five years later continues to serve the public well." It requested that the State Highway Commission designate the bridge as a tribute to Mr. Murrow.

The State Highway Commission concurred in Resolution Number 1815, adopted March 20, which stated that "this notable engineering achievement received worldwide recognition for its pioneering of a new concept in over-water structures" and resolved that the bridge be named "in honor of the engineer whose leadership turned this daring proposal into a reality."

### Washington State Highway Commission

George D. Zahn, *Chairman*

James M. Blair, Sr.

Robert L. Mikalson

Harold Walsh

Baker Ferguson

Charles G. Pahl, *Director of Highways*

Lorenz Goetz, *Secretary*





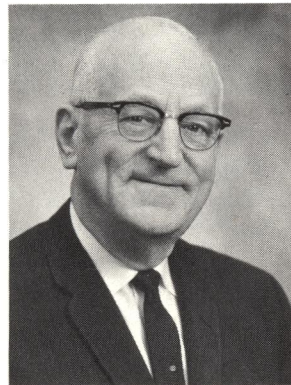
**The Honorable Daniel J. Evans,**  
*Governor, State of Washington*



**Senator Al Henry**  
17th District  
Chairman, Joint Committee  
on Highways



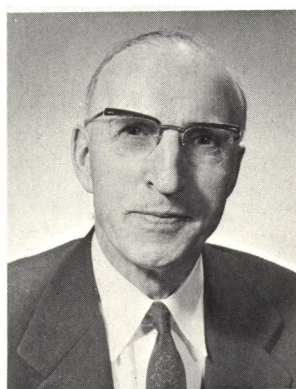
**Rep. Alfred E. Leland**  
48th District  
Vice-Chairman, Joint  
Committee on Highways



**Senator Fred Redmon**  
14th District  
Joint Committee on Highways



**Charles G. Prah**  
Director of Highways



**George D. Zahn**  
Chairman, State Highway  
Commission



**Mayor J. D. Braman**  
City of Seattle

# Dedication Program

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Mr. George D. Zahn  
*Chairman*  
*Washington State Highway Commission*

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

## PRESENTATION OF COLORS

*Boy Scout Troop 624, Mercer Island*  
Dr. James W. M. Owens, Scoutmaster

## UNVEILING OF PLAQUE

Mrs. Lacey V. Murrow

*Following the unveiling, guests will proceed east on the bridge and reassemble at the  
Floating Bridge Inn, Mercer Island*

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## LUNCHEON

## INVOCATION

Dr. Robert L. Brizee  
*Mercer Island Methodist Church*

## WELCOME

Mayor A. C. Burton, *Town of Mercer Island*  
Mayor Cleveland Anshell, *City of Mercer Island*

## COMMENTS

Mr. Charles G. Prah, *Director of Highways*  
Mayor J. D. Braman, *City of Seattle*  
Senator Fred Redmon, *Joint Committee on Highways*  
Senator Al Henry, *Joint Committee on Highways*



# The Story of a Bridge

Greater than the combined weight of three battleships, larger in bulk than a 25-story building, the Lake Washington Floating Bridge was acknowledged when built to be the largest structure afloat. This engineering marvel of 100,000 tons of steel and concrete rests upon twenty-five floating sections, each fashioned like a honeycomb with water-tight compartments. Sixty-four anchors, each weighing 65 tons, secure it to the lake bottom.

There is no vibration, no sway, throughout the more than one mile length, four lanes wide. Near the Mercer Island end of the bridge, a huge floating draw span affords a channel opening of 202 feet, permitting passage of larger vessels. Provision is made for smaller vessels to pass under the arched approach spans at each extremity.

## *Unique Concept*

Back in the 1930's, the concept was revolutionary. A floating span on such a scale had never been tried before. The storm of controversy aroused by its proposal might have discouraged a lesser man. The young Lacey Murrow, then Director of Highways, needed calm, clear judgment, a sound grasp of the engineering principles involved and the stamina to resist public abuse.

Lake Washington was a mile and a half wide at the location suggested for crossing. Its depth was 200 feet. A conventional bridge would cost twice as much to build, and there was doubt that the lake bottom would prove suitable for its foundations. Highways Director Murrow stood by the decision: a floating bridge was the only type of structure appropriate to the need.

On December 29, 1938, construction was begun. On July 2, 1940, Governor Clarence D. Martin paid the first toll on the new bridge, opening up a new era in Washington state transportation.

## *New Freedom of Mobility*

With this new freedom of mobility, communities on the east side of Lake Washington—Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond—began to develop their long dormant potential. Homes in the scenic, spacious residential suburbs became a long-wished-for reality for thousands of Seattle families now that the bridge provided a convenient ten-minute drive to the city.

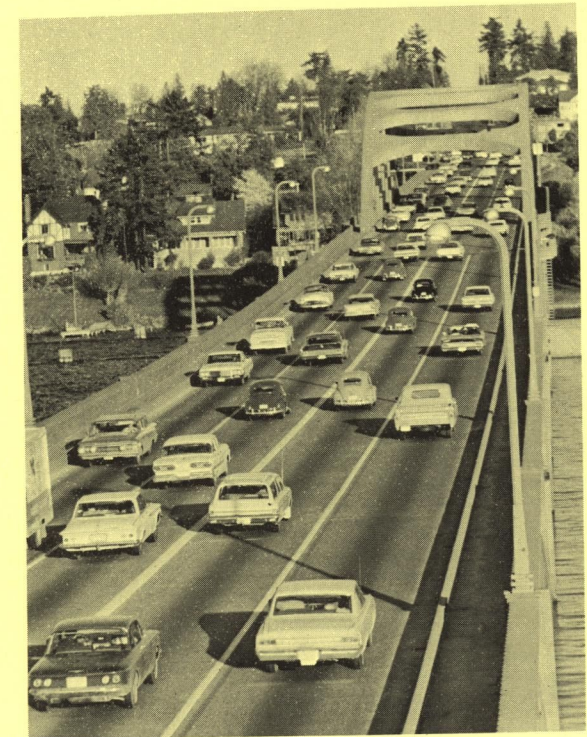
Forty-four million crossings later, the bridge became toll-free, just nine years to the day after its opening. Within five more years, its traffic load had reached the point where a second bridge was needed. By 1963, an even longer floating span was opened at Evergreen Point.

In recent years, the first bridge has become known as Mercer Island Floating Bridge. Today, it receives the name of the man responsible for its success.

Even as the dedication ceremony proceeds, a third Lake Washington bridge is under consideration—another floating span to be constructed upon the same principles pioneered by Lacey V. Murrow thirty years ago.



A floating pontoon being moved into place during construction. Thirty years ago, dire forecasts were made for the fate of the floating span. As many as 80,000 people now cross the bridge daily.



Traffic congestion and reversible lanes on the existing span will be eliminated by construction of a new bridge parallel to the Lacey V. Murrow Memorial Bridge.