

We, the signers of this petition, submit, to the City Council of Fairmont and the West Virginia Legislature, our request that the new bridge being constructed over Coal Run Hollow, as part of the WV Route 310 extension, in Fairmont, WV, be named the Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins Memorial Bridge.

Please read this excerpt from her obituary, included below, to understand the reason we are proposing this honor.

=== Obituary of Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins, 86, 2006 ===

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins, 86, formerly of Fairmont, departed this life Sunday, July 30, at Providence Hospital after a 10-year battle with the insidious Alzheimer’s disease.

On March 26, 1920, in Fairmont, Ann Alberta Rolls (Thornton) introduced a baby girl to her husband, Theodore Emory Rolls Sr. They named her Rose Agnes in honor of both grandmothers. She joined an older brother, T. Emory Jr.

Her academic ability allowed her to graduate from high school and begin college at age 16. At West Virginia State College in Institute, Rose took the campus by storm, involving herself as a varsity cheerleader, acting in and directing school plays with the drama department and learning to fly airplanes in the Civilian Pilot’s Training Program.

Rose was the only young lady among eight male trainees and made history by becoming the first African American female to receive her Pilot’s License with this program administered by the Civil Aeronautics Authority. Some of her fellow male trainees went on to form the original nine Tuskegee Airmen. She received her bachelor of science degree in business administration in 1940.

While in college, Rose met Theodore W. Cousins from

Montclair, N.J., and they were married on Dec. 31, 1941. Before that union ended in 1969, two daughters were born, Emorene Nicole (Nikki) and Adrienne Michele.

Although she was equipped with a college degree, Rose could not find related employment due to her race. She taught algebra at Dunbar High School and Bible School in Marion County before being hired as a secretary for a city director, becoming the first African American to hold such a position in city government in Fairmont. In the mid 1950s, she was hired by the Monongahela Valley Association of Health Centers (Fairmont Clinic), where she became director of Medical Records, a position she held until her retirement in 1999.

During her life, Rose was active in politics and was a past member of the Marion County Democrat Women. She was a lifetime member of the NAACP and a civil rights activist, especially regarding employment of qualified African Americans. In addition, she was an actress and director of plays with the Marion County Little Theater and the Fairmont State College Summer Theater and a member of the American Medical Records Association, Soroptimist International and West Virginia Aeronautics Association. Her most treasured affiliation was Honorary Membership in the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

For several years, Rose was an adjunct lecturer and business education instructor at Fairmont State College. Having a tireless spirit and energy to burn, Rose was in constant motion, at work and at play. She was an inspiration to her family and to everyone with whom she came into contact. She loved to help young women move up in their careers and in their lives.

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The signers of this petition thank you for your consideration of our request!