



March 31, 2017

Mr. Delbert Wilburn  
P.O. Box 1274  
Topeka, KS 66601

Dear Mr. Wilburn:

With great enthusiasm, I support the community effort to recognize the crucial role Nick Chiles played in the historical development of Topeka. Born in South Carolina's African American community of Abbeyville in 1867, Mr. Chiles received his formal education in Greenville, South Carolina. By 1886, he and his wife had moved to Topeka, Kansas, where his uncles settled years earlier.

At a time when laws and overt practices of racial segregation and discrimination were enforced throughout the United States, especially in the South, Mr. Chiles seized economic and political opportunities for advancement in Kansas by establishing a variety of small business enterprises and becoming an active member of the state's Republican Party. In 1899, he founded the Topeka *Plaindealer* weekly newspaper, serving as its manager and editor. Due to his fervent push for racial uplift through self-help activities and desire to have Kansas serve as a beacon for freedom and equality for all peoples, Mr. Chiles's business acumen enabled the *Plaindealer* to enjoy the largest circulation of any African American newspaper west of the Mississippi. He also served as president of the Western Negro Press Association in 1904.

As a native Topekan, I first learned about Mr. Chiles from my father, who spoke of my maternal grandfather's friendship with Mr. Chiles and revered Mr. Chiles as a prominent Topeka civic leader. Among scholars and other researchers in African American history, Mr. Chiles is well known. For example, last year a graduate student in history from Baylor University traveled from Texas to our archives to explore our African American Experience Collections for his dissertation study on life in Topeka during the era of Nick Chiles and the *Plaindealer*.

Indeed, Mr. Nick Chiles and his Topeka *Plaindealer* enhanced the growth of Topeka during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sincerely,

  
Deborah Dandridge, Field Archivist/Curator  
African American Experience Collections

Home Address: 1015 S.E. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.; Topeka, KS 66607-1506

April 7, 2017



2016 *Library  
of the Year*

1515 SW 10th Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas  
66604-1374

PHONE 785 580-4491  
FAX 785 580-4496  
[www.tscpl.org](http://www.tscpl.org)

To The Governing Body:

I am writing to show my support for Delbert Wilburn's proposal for the renaming of 10<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge located at Banner to the Nick Chiles Bridge. I am the Local History Librarian at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. In this capacity, I have assisted Delmar in his research efforts as well as conducted my own research of Nick Chiles.

Nick Chiles is a name that should be just as well known in Topeka as Cyrus K. Holliday or Author Capper. Chiles' accomplishments are as far reaching as theirs. Chiles' impact as an entrepreneur and a tireless advocate for African American's social and civil rights in Topeka and across the nation every citizen cannot be measured. He did this all by starting the longest running African American newspaper west of the Mississippi in 1899 here in Topeka.

Chiles made the trek to Kansas in 1886 from South Carolina. Known as a natural leader, he operated several businesses in Topeka which included; the first hotel for African Americans in the city, a restaurant, a 160 acre farm and skating rink. He found his real passion in 1899 when he started the small newspaper "Topeka Plaindealer". As the editor and publisher Chiles circulated the most popular newspaper for African Americans in the Midwest and beyond for thirty years. In an editorial published after his death it states that Chiles was "a consistent, militant attitude and fearless advocacy of full citizenship rights for every man stood him out as a champion of the race." Truly, he was an embodiment of values that all Topekans would be proud of.

As a public historian I am always seeking ways to take history out of the classroom and into people's everyday lives. This renaming of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge is a project that certainly exemplifies a way to do that. It is these visible reminders, such as a sign on a bridge, that bring history to the forefront every day. A history to be proud of. I hope the city will continue to seek out and support projects such as this one.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing this project. I am looking forward to the day when the Nick Chiles sign is placed on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. If you have any questions or concerns, I will be happy to answer them or find the answer.

Sincerely,

Donna Rae Pearson  
Local History Librarian

Date: 4-26-2017

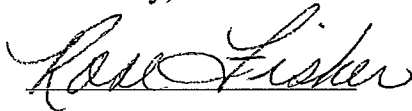
Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

Dear Topeka City Council:

I support naming the current bridge under construction for the Shunganunga Creek on South East 10<sup>th</sup>, just west of South East Branner Street Trafficway, the ***Nick Chiles Bridge***. This community effort led by Topekan Delbert Wilburn gives recognition to one of Topeka's most influential community leaders during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As owner and editor of the ***Plaindealer*** newspaper in Topeka, Kansas, Mr. Chiles maintained the largest circulation of any African American newspaper west of the Mississippi for more than thirty years.

I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



**Address:**

Mr. Carmel

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Nauden Austin

Address: 124 SE. 38<sup>th</sup>

**Additional comments by signee:**

Yes! I support the Name of the Bridge in memory  
of Mr. Chiles

Name: Nauden Austin

Date: 4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Louis A. Keeling

Address: 919 SE. 44<sup>th</sup> St.

Additional comments by signee:

Name: Louis A. Keeling

Date: 4-27-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

---

Address: 1658 SW 22<sup>nd</sup> St

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: Walter Shuler

Date: 4-26-2017


Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



Address:

2427 Fillmore

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Roy L. Abbott

Address:

2337 SE Monroe  
Topeka, Kansas 66603-1156

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 4-26-17

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

Dear Topeka City Council:

I support naming the current bridge under construction for the Shunganunga Creek on South East 10<sup>th</sup>, just west of South East Branner Street Trafficway, the **Nick Chiles Bridge**. This community effort led by Topekan Delbert Wilburn gives recognition to one of Topeka's most influential community leaders during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As owner and editor of the **Plaindealer** newspaper in Topeka, Kansas, Mr. Chiles maintained the largest circulation of any African American newspaper west of the Mississippi for more than thirty years.

I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address: 2527 S.E. Monroe Topeka, Kansas, 66605

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: Zois Prudhomme

Date: 4-16-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Al Goodwin

**Address:**

2500 SE Monroe  
Topeka, KS 66605

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: Al Goodwin

Date: 4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Address:

401 SE 24<sup>th</sup> St. Topeka, KS 66605-1136

Additional comments by signee:

To whom it may concern, Nick Chiles is a Role Model. Whom I consider is worthy of this. I'm looking forward to see this done.  
Thank you,

Name:

Ernie, Audrey, Robinson

Date:

4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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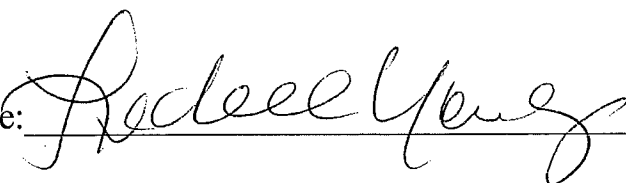
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**Address:**

2146 SE Malison

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name:



Date: 4-27-2017

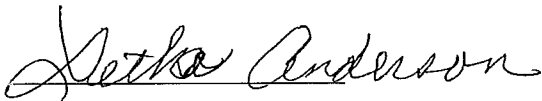
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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



Address:

700 SE 23rd St

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

4-27-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

700 SE 23<sup>RD</sup> ST

**Address:**

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: Rev. Kenneth M. Robinson

Date:

4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

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**Address:**

Mr. Carmel Chu

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name:

Cindy White

Date: 4-26-2017

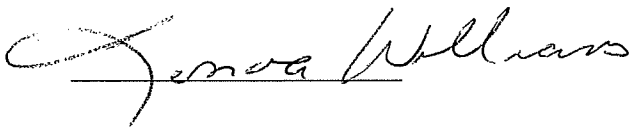
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Sincerely,



Address:

Additional comments by signee:

Currently have business in the Chiles Hotel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 4-26-2017

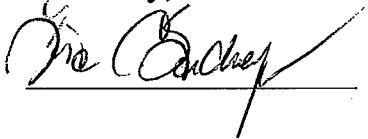
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Sincerely,



Address:

Topeka Cemetery

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

4-26-2017

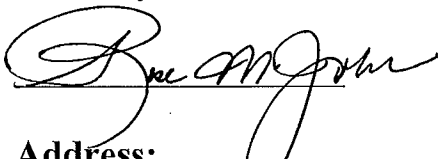
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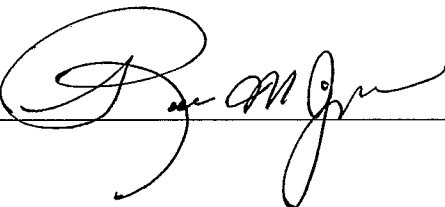


Address:

2515 S.E. Monroe City 66605

Additional comments by signee:

Name:



Date: 4-26-2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

2527<sup>SE</sup> Monroe 66605

**Address:**

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: Pauline Johnson

Date: 4-28-2017

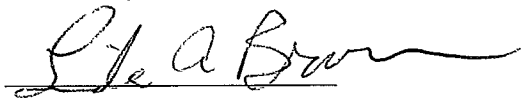
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215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



Address: 728 SE. Hackberry DR  
Topeka, KS 66607

Additional comments by signee:

Name: Linda Brown

Date:

4-27-2016

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

---

**Address:**

914 SE Golden Ave

**Additional comments by signee:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Date:

4-27-2016

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

---

**Address:** 1020 SE. 6<sup>TH</sup> AVE

**Additional comments by signee:**

NICK CHILES IS MY  
GREAT UNCLE.

Name:

Delbert Wilburn

Date: 4-26-17

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

Victoria J. Benson

Address:  
1139 S. E. LAWRENCE ST.  
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66607

**Additional comments by signee:**

Mr. Nick Chiles paved the way for my parents, my sister and me to serve as plaintiffs in the Topeka case of the 1954 Brown v Board Supreme Court decision.

Name: Victoria J. Benson

Date: *April 23, 2017*

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

*Joe & Nathaniel Douglas, Jr.*

Address:

*1811 S.E. Indiana  
Topeka, KS 66607-1423.*

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Date:

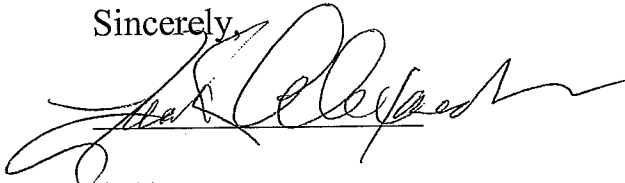
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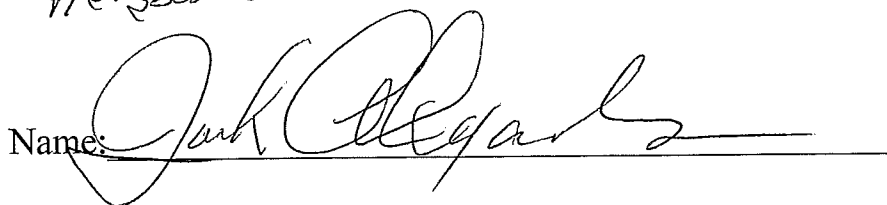
Address:

2509 S.W. Fillmore  
Topeka, KS 66611

Additional comments by signee:

I remember the newspaper's name. I also am old enough that I remember the Chiles name as a youth. I also grew up in that neighborhood.

Name:



Date:


Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

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Sincerely,

 Deborah Dandridge

Address:

1015 S.E. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave; Topeka, KS 66607  
-1506

Additional comments by signee:

Phone 232-3364

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Letter Supporting the Naming of the Nick Chiles Bridge**

April 30, 2017

Topeka City Council  
255 South East 7<sup>th</sup>  
Suite 255  
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Topeka City Council:

In the late 1800's and throughout the 1900's the Black Press was a premier form of communication for the Black community. In 1899, a new Topeka resident, Nick Chiles, found a way to educate, inform and entertain the Black community through his newspaper, the Plaindealer. Mr. Chiles was the owner and editor of the Plaindealer newspaper in Topeka, Kansas. His words brought information from state to state and was read by thousands. The contents of his paper opened the eyes of the community to the soul of the nation.

Mr. Chiles was a serial entrepreneur. He owned several businesses between 112 and 118 SE Seventh Street, including the Chiles Hotel.

I, Glenda Washington, support the naming of the current bridge, under construction for the Shunganunga Creek on South East 10<sup>th</sup>, just West of South East Branner Street Trafficway, the **Nick Chiles Bridge**. I am requesting that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda on May 2, 2017.

Sincerely,



Glenda Washington  
Topeka Citizen

# In Support of the Proposed Dedication of the Nick Chiles Bridge

*C. Patrick Woods*

May 2, 2017

Mr. Mayor, Mr. Manager and members of the Governing Body, thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening on this important topic.

My name is Patrick Woods and I'm here to declare my strong support for the proposal to rename the bridge that takes S.E. 10th Street over Brunner Road the Nick Chiles Bridge, in honor of the longtime publisher, entrepreneur and activist. As you have no doubt heard, Mr. Chiles left a legacy unmatched by many who have followed, though the works that constitute his legacy have benefited all of us.

Mr. Chiles made his way to Kansas in 1886 from the former confederate state of South Carolina. Following many African Americans who made their way west, seeking not only new opportunities to realize their full citizenship, but also seeking refuge from the discrimination and terrorism that had become all-too-common in the deep south, Mr. Chiles found his home

right here in Topeka. His days in the capital city are distinguished not only by the multiple successful businesses he operated, which include: the ***Topeka Plaindealer***, which was the most widely circulated black periodical this side of the Mississippi; a restaurant; a hotel; and a skating rink for black Topekans. Rather, the true measure of Mr. Chiles's distinguished citizenship becomes clear once we consider his activism for the civil rights of black Americans. I don't have time to fully and adequately discuss all the change that was achieved due to Mr. Chiles's service -- and no doubt you will have already read much of it in the written material submitted to the body, but I will say that history has proven Mr. Chiles's unyielding and self-sacrificing activism to have been effective in achieving change that has proved to be not only meaningful, but enduring.

Finally, the principal reason that I believe that this change should be made is because of what it can do for our young people. In my night life, I serve on our local school board. While I'm not addressing you on behalf of the board, but solely as a Topekan, I believe that it is critically important that we embrace efforts like this one -- whereby correcting historical omissions and completing our history, we make history more relevant to all of our young people, who are just at the age where they are beginning to form their world view. With this one, simple change we can correct an omission in Topeka's history by

placing the name of Nick Chiles in the public view, and we can equip our children with a more complete historical lens through which they can view our shared past, interpret the events of the present, and maybe (hopefully), even divine the future. You could inspire the next ***Nick Chiles***.

For these reasons I urge you to approve the measure before you tonight. Thank you for your consideration of my comments and thank you for your service to our city.

Date: April 29, 2017

Topeka City Council  
215 S. E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
#255  
Topeka, Kansas 66603

Dear Topeka City Council:

I support naming the current bridge under construction for the Shunganunga Creek on South East 10<sup>th</sup>, just west of South East Branner Street Trafficway, the **Nick Chiles Bridge**. This community effort led by Topekan Delbert Wilburn gives recognition to one of Topeka's most influential community leaders during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As owner and editor of the **Plaindealer** newspaper in Topeka, Kansas, Mr. Chiles maintained the largest circulation of any African American newspaper west of the Mississippi for more than thirty years.

I ask that you place this matter on the Council's Agenda for its May 2, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,

Maryanne V. Dawson

Address:

2147 S.E. Belame St  
Topeka, KS 66605

Additional comments by signee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL  
AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
KANSAS CHAPTER (KAAHGS)

May 1, 2017

Topeka City Council  
255 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 255  
Topeka Kansas

Dear Topeka City Council:

Thank you for your consideration and support for naming the current bridge under construction at the Shunganunga Creek on Southeast 10<sup>th</sup> Street & Branner, the Nick Chiles Bridge. The extensive research of Nick Chiles by our member, Delbert Wilburn, has been ongoing for some years now and has uncovered the richness of the heritage of Mr. Chiles' legacy. We recognize the leadership of Mr. Chiles within the Topeka community and his appointment as part of Topeka's rich history.

Not only was Mr. Chiles a well-respected editor and journalist in Topeka, but around the country. His influence connected Topeka with well-known journalists across the nation. He was influential and helpful to famous Topekans such as Carrie Nation. He owned and maintained a hotel and newspaper business. As a businessman and owner/editor of the *Plaindealer* in Topeka, he maintained the largest circulation of any African American newspaper west of the Mississippi for over 30 years.

KAAHGS joins our member, Delbert Wilburn, in the effort to recognize the influence and leadership of Mr. Nick Chiles. We ask that you vote to name the aforesaid bridge after Mr. Chiles to forever acknowledge the success and leadership of an African American in Topeka.

Kansas Chapter of the Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society (KAAHGS) look forward to your adoption of the name Nick Chiles Bridge, for the aforesaid bridge.

Thank you,

Members:

Chapter President  
KAAHGS  
2601 Westport Dr.  
Topeka, Kansas 66614  
[info@kaahgs.org](mailto:info@kaahgs.org)

Kathleen Brandt  
Ramona & Ramon Brice  
Sherri & Dwayne Camp  
Michael Clark  
Charlene & Larry Coleman  
Shirley Curtis  
Juanita Cox

Jozie Echols  
Mildred Edwards  
Rah Gist  
Jacqueline Lugrand  
Khadijah Matin  
Linda Brown Thompson  
Delbert Wilburn