



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **Elizabeth M. Caruso**

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### **Testimony Presenting LD 2028:**

**"Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in West Forks Plantation and The Forks Plantation the Gordon Clifton Berry, Sr. Bridge"**

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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Caruso. I live in Caratunk, which is part of the Greater Forks Area, and I represent the people of House District 72. I am honored to present to you LD 2028, "Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in West Forks Plantation and The Forks Plantation the Gordon Clifton Berry, Sr. Bridge".

It is truly a deep privilege for me to stand here before you in honor of Gordon Berry Sr. Gordon was the steadfast pillar of our Forks Area community. He was an amazing husband, father, entrepreneur, and friend and loved by all who knew him... and he knew a lot of people from all over Maine and the country.

Born in Jackman in 1954, Gordon passed away at his West Forks home on July 29, 2025 at the age of 70. He loved fishing, hunting, wildlife, giving his time to the community, and exploring the woods. At only 10 years old, Gordon began working at his parents' Berry's General Store, when it opened in the early 60's, and he worked until his last day. He graduated from Bingham's Valley high school in 1973. He was married in 1979 to Carol, his precious wife of 46 years. He became a father to Gordon Jr in 1982 and Brandon in 1987. A kind and compassionate person, he was lauded as a great friend, a role model and leader to our community.

I've submitted his obituary for your review, but I wanted to highlight the following:

"Gordon was a simple man with a generous heart who believed deeply in making sure everyone had what they needed. He worked tirelessly at the family store – seven days a week – until his very last day. His dedication to both work and community was unwavering. For over 40 years, he served on the volunteer Fire Department in West Forks. He also took immense pride in founding the local deer feed program nearly 30 years ago – a cause that reflected both his love for wildlife and commitment to giving back."

I met Gordon in 1992 when I became a Maine guide and would soon after own 3 businesses just ¼ mile from Berry's General Store. Gordon would greet me and others from behind the counter

with his genuine warmth and kindness, joy, and acceptance. He was a ready source of wisdom and good ol' Maine common sense as well as a wealth of local knowledge and history of the area, geography and aspects of significance. His input in local decision-making was always critical and sought after.

I would like to highlight two aspects of Gordon's life.

Firstly, Gordon was a family man and a man of utmost character. He was steadfast, loving, and sacrificial in the way he cared for his family. The signature love of this family is shown by their close-knit lives - working together in their family business in their family town. That is the unconditional love and acceptance that Carol and Gordon have always stewarded so deeply and that kept their sons closeby. That doesn't happen by accident - it is the purposeful and well-practiced unconditional love and acceptance of amazing parents.

Secondly, Gordon's heart for people and the Forks Area community is what brought over 1000 people to his service. Being a West Forks resident and business owner, I was in Berry's Store quite frequently. It was the epitome of a Maine general store and local meeting place of the young and old - the only store and gas station for 50 miles. Many times, I teased our guests and clients, "if Berry's doesn't have it, you don't need it!"

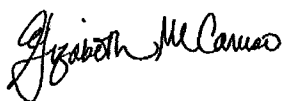
Working closely with the snowmobile clubs, Gordon was always there to contribute and pitch in to the collaborative efforts of The Forks Area business economy. Whether it's building snowmobile bridges, working on trails, contributing to the crews who are doing the work, Gordon was there...always an integral voice and partner.

I vividly remember the days when the white-water industry was booming with a plethora of rafting companies and guides. A significant majority had charge accounts at the store. They would come in filling up buses, trip trucks, owners' vehicles, and then sign for their gas, food, or whatever other supplies they needed that day. Don't you know that Gordon Berry carried our tourism industry every month? Not some big bank, not some big corporation, but Gordon carried us along until we paid the Berry's bill the following month.

In summary, Gordon prioritized family first and then community. Gordon Berry's store was the pillar of the Forks area, and Gordon was at the center - the steadfast heartbeat of Berry's Store and our community. I feel it's only fitting that naming this bridge after Gordon will allow him to still welcome people and to carry our community!

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill, and I respectfully urge the committee's support. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,



Rep. Elizabeth M. Caruso  
House District 72

# **The Forks Plantation**

## **BOARD OF ASSESSOR'S**

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### **LD 2028 "Resolve, to Rename a Bridge In The Forks Plantation and West Forks Plantation the Gordon Clifton Berry, Sr. Bridge"**

Good morning, Senator Nagle, Representative Craft's and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

We, the elected Representatives of The Forks Plantation, Maine, correspond with you today in support of LD 2028: "Resolve to Rename a bridge that spans the Kennebec River, between The Forks Plantation and West Forks Plantation, the Gordon Clifton Berry, Sr. Bridge".

Gordon Clifton Berry Sr. lived his entire life in The Forks/West Forks region. He was not just from here, was of here. Family man, iconic business owner, and skilled outdoorsman. He knew every nook, cranny beaver bog and fishing hole within a 75 mile radius of his families' namesake "Berry's General Store". His ready smile, his kind words, and years of selfless service to The West Forks Fire and Rescue; his life defined the very essence and character of a life well lived in the Upper Kennebec Valley.

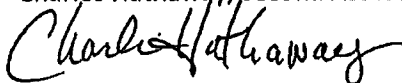
To memorialize Gordon's profound and lasting impact on this entire region, passing LD 2028 has our complete and unconditional support.

Respectfully,

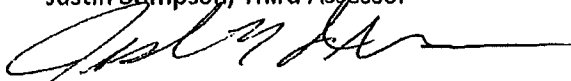
David Rancourt, First Assessor



Charles Hathaway, Second Assessor



Justin Stimpson, Third Assessor



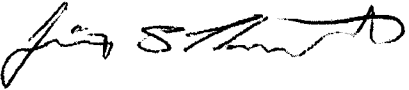
The Forks Plantation, Maine

## West Forks Town Office

Senator Nangle, Representative crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Jim ST.Laurent, I live in the West Forks. As the first selectman, I am presenting on behalf of the West Forks Plantation which is in full support of LD2028, "Resolve, to Rename a bridge in the West Forks Plantation and The Forks Plantation the Gordon Clifton Berry, SR. Bridge"

sign



1/6/2026

## Obituary: Gordon Clifton Berry Sr.

centralmaine.com/2025/08/08/obituarygordon-clifton-berry-sr-2

August 8, 2025



Gordon Clifton Berry Sr.

WEST FORKS – Gordon Clifton Berry Sr., 70, of West Forks, passed away on July 29, 2025, in the town he called home for his entire life.

Born on Oct. 28, 1954, in Jackman, Gordon was the son of Guy Clifton Berry and Francine Berry. He graduated from Upper Kennebec Valley High School and went on to build a life rooted in family, hard work, and service to his community.

In 1979, Gordon married Carol, and together they raised their family in West Forks. A devoted husband and father, Gordon is survived by his wife Carol; his sons Gordon Berry Jr. and his wife O'ill Berry, and Brandon Berry and his wife Jillian Berry; his daughter Natasha Robinson; his sister Darlene Robinson; and grandsons Aisoon Suthinruek and Gabe Pooler.

He was predeceased by his parents; his brothers, Michael Berry, Jeffrey Berry, and Ronnie Berry; and his sister Linda Robinson.

Gordon was a simple man with a generous heart who believed deeply in making sure everyone had what they needed. He worked tirelessly at the family store – seven days a week – until his very last day. His dedication to both work and community was unwavering. For over 40 years, he served on the volunteer Fire Department in West Forks. He also took immense pride in founding the local deer feed program nearly 30 years ago – a cause that reflected both his love for wildlife and commitment to giving back.

An outdoorsman through and through, Gordon found joy in hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, gold panning, collecting coins, and searching for deer and moose antlers. In earlier years he competed as a canoe racer. He loved spending time at Fish Pond camps with family or at "The River Camp" during hunting season. Whether cooking up meals to ensure no one went hungry or playing a game of pool with friends, Gordon brought warmth and camaraderie wherever he went. One of Gordon's favorite past times, was watching Gunsmoke with his wife in the comfort of his home.

Gordon's legacy lives on through the lives he touched with kindness, generosity, and steadfast dedication. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him. A memorial service will be held on Sunday Aug. 24, 2025, at 4 p.m., at the ballfield in West Forks. Following the service, we will have food and soft drinks. The family invites attendees to wear casual attire – Berry's shirts and hats are especially welcome – as we gather to honor a man who gave so much to this community.

The Berry Family would like to offer their sincere gratitude for the immense outpour of love and support that has truly been a blessing in this difficult time.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Giberson Funeral Home and Cremation Services. To leave a condolence for the family and to view the online obituary, please visit <http://www.gibersonfuneralhome.com>.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Forks Area Fish and Game Association deer feed program—a cause close to Gordon's heart.