

# Sponsor Statement

## HB 147

**“An Act naming the William Ransom Wood Centennial Bridge in Fairbanks.”**

[House Bill 147](#) will name the Fairbanks Riverwalk Centennial Bridge in honor of Dr. William Ransom Wood.

In 1973, Dr. Wood retired as the President of the University of Alaska after thirteen years of service. One of two University of Alaska presidents who decided to stay in state, Dr. Wood opened an office in Fairbanks where international, state, local, and academic ideas and plans were given birth and manifested as parks, plazas, hospitals, and industrial and agricultural growth.

It is important to remember that Dr. Wood was not only an educator, but also a poet, a thinker, an advocate for economic development, and an advocate for individual responsibility and self-reliance. He also understood the requisite relationship between successful self-reliant individuals and a robust, prosperous community.

Dr. Wood inspired thousands of individuals around the world through his deeds and dedication for this place we call home. He also leaves a legacy of Alaskans and Fairbanksans who consider him a regional and local hero. This from a man who asked no more of life than to leave his community and state a little better than he found it. At that he succeeded.

As the executive director of Festival Fairbanks, he desired to commemorate the centennial of Fairbanks with a pedestrian bridge crossing the Chena River. By naming that bridge the William Ransom Wood Centennial Bridge, we will hopefully inspire future generations of Alaskans to ponder and aspire to Dr. Wood's simple yet magnificent legacy; to ask nothing more of life than to leave our state, our home, just a little better than we found it.