

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 179

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Designates April 9 of each year as Dr. James Still Day in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating April 9 of each year as Dr.
2 James Still Day in New Jersey.

3
4 **WHEREAS**, Dr. James Still, a renowned African-American herbalist
5 and homeopathic healer, was born on April 9, 1812, in Indian Mills,
6 New Jersey, to former slaves Levin and Charity Still; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Born into poverty, Dr. James Still only received three
8 months of formal education and spent a majority of his early life as
9 a day laborer chopping wood, making charcoal, picking berries, and
10 clearing land; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Still had an innate passion for the field of medicine and
12 spent many hours reading books on the subjects of medicine,
13 botany, and herbal remedies; and

14 **WHEREAS**, Due to Dr. Still's racial and financial status, he was unable
15 to attend medical school, but he continued to acquire medical
16 knowledge through self-education; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Still found success within his medical career when he
18 created a cough balm from plants and herbs, the balm
19 demonstrating his ingenuity and bringing him recognition and
20 wealth as many pharmacists began buying the product; and

21 **WHEREAS**, With the profit yielded from his innovative cough balm,
22 Dr. Still built a home and medical office in Medford, New Jersey,
23 where he would treat patients from throughout the region; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Despite his widespread success within the medical field,
25 racial animus caused many local doctors to challenge his medical
26 credentials, and in response to these challenges, Dr. Still began
27 offering his medical services to patients free of charge; and

28 **WHEREAS**, In 2005, the State of New Jersey purchased Dr. Still's
29 medical office, making the office the first African-American
30 historical property acquired for preservation and interpretation by
31 the State; and

32 **WHEREAS**, In 2013, the property and nearby grounds became the Dr.
33 James Still Historic Office and Education Center which teaches and
34 preserves the legacy of Dr. James Still; and

35 **WHEREAS**, Dr. James Still's dedication to the medical field and
36 successful life should be remembered and celebrated by all New
37 Jersey citizens; now, therefore,

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39 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
40 *State of New Jersey:*

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42 1. April 9 of each year is designated as Dr. James Still Day in
43 New Jersey to honor the life of Dr. James Still and his contributions
44 to the medical field.

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46 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
47 proclamation calling upon public officials, private organizations,

1 and all citizens of the State to observe “Dr. James Still Day” with
2 appropriate events and activities.

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4 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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9 This joint resolution designates April 9 of each year as Dr. James
10 Still Day in New Jersey. Dr. James Still overcame prejudice and
11 poverty through hard work and determination to become a
12 successful, self-educated homeopathic healer.

13 Dr. James Still was born into poverty on April 9, 1812, to former
14 slaves Levin and Charity Still. Dr. Still was passionate about the
15 medical field from a young age, however, due to his racial and
16 financial background, he was unable to attend medical school. Despite
17 his inability to attend medical school, Dr. Still continued to acquire
18 medical knowledge through self-education. Dr. Still found success
19 within the medical field when he developed a cough balm from plants
20 and herbs. This innovative balm brought Dr. Still recognition and
21 wealth. With this newly acquired wealth, Dr. Still purchased a home
22 and created a medical office in Medford, New Jersey. Dr. Still’s
23 knowledge of plants and medicine allowed him to treat patients
24 throughout the region. Despite his success within the medical field,
25 Dr. Still’s medical credentials were challenged by many local doctors.
26 In response to these challenges, Dr. Still began treating his patients
27 free of charge. Dr. Still continued to treat patients with homeopathic
28 healing until his death in 1882.

29 To honor and preserve the legacy of Dr. James Still, his medical
30 office was purchased by the State of New Jersey in 2005. In 2013, the
31 property and nearby grounds became the Dr. James Still Historic
32 Office and Education Center which teaches and preserves the legacy of
33 Dr. James Still. Dr. Still’s dedication to the medical field and
34 successful life should be remembered and celebrated among the
35 citizens of New Jersey.