

Assembly Resolution No. 635

BY: M. of A. McDonald

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor
Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 19, 2017, as
Ancestor Appreciation Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to bring recognition to historical places within the State of New York, and in doing so, help to ensure that the complete history of our State and Nation is preserved and shared with present generations of citizens; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 19, 2017, as Ancestor Appreciation Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, On June 5, 2005, while digging for a municipal sewer line, the remains of 13 human bodies were unearthed by workers in Menands, New York; another set was found in 1998; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, bio-archaeological analysis was completed by the New York State Museum in Albany, New York, and the analysis determined that the remains were about 200 years old, and were of African descent (West/East and Central Africa); and

WHEREAS, Two sets of remains are descendants of women from Madagascar (off the coast of Southeast Africa); another two sets were of African descent/Native Americans (Micmac Tribe: Eastern Canada and the Northeastern corner of the United States) and consisted of six women, one man, two children and five infants; for 10 years, the remains have been stored at the New York State Museum; and

WHEREAS, The burial ground was dated between the 1700s or early 1800s; property deed research indicates that the burial ground was part of a large estate owned by the colonial Schuyler family, some of the first Dutch settlers in the Albany area; and

WHEREAS, On Saturday, June 18, 2016, the remains were interred with dignity and respect by the African Burial Ground at Historic St. Agnes on Founders Hill at St. Agnes Cemetery in Menands; in addition, a bronze plaque was installed, telling the story of these people who lived and died over 200 years ago; and

WHEREAS, A memorial service was also held at the Schuyler Mansion located on 32 Catherine Street in Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, The African Burial Ground at Historic St. Agnes has incorporated the symbol of the Sankofa sign, which is derived from King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Africa; the symbolic meaning is "it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot"; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to express its highest admiration for the African Burial Ground at Historic St. Agnes, and for all of the individuals who have worked to bring proper attention to a place and time which merits recognition in the grand panorama of the history of our State and Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 19, 2017, as Ancestor Appreciation Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, and to the African Burial Ground at Historic St. Agnes.