

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 562 Session of  
2019

---

INTRODUCED BY JOHNSON-HARRELL, HENNESSEY, FREEMAN, HILL-EVANS,  
WILLIAMS, KINSEY, HOHENSTEIN, KORTZ, READSHAW, MILLARD,  
SHUSTERMAN, HEFFLEY, MURT, RABB, JONES, FITZGERALD,  
McCLINTON, LEE, BURGOS, CALTAGIRONE, SIMS AND SCHWEYER,  
OCTOBER 15, 2019

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
OCTOBER 15, 2019

---

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing October 18, 2019, as "Kùlú Mèlé Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The origins of Kùlú Mèlé began when Ghanaian drummer  
4 Saka Acquaye came to Philadelphia during the 1950s and employed  
5 the services of the late Baba Robert "Ibikunle" Crowder and  
6 other prominent individuals, such as Arthur Hall and Ione Nash,  
7 in the creation of several dance ensembles, drum ensembles and  
8 albums; and

9 WHEREAS, Kùlú Mèlé was founded in 1969 by Crowder, making  
10 Kùlú Mèlé the oldest continually performing African dance and  
11 drum ensemble in the nation; and

12 WHEREAS, During the first five years of their formation, Kùlú  
13 Mèlé grew in number after performing at community events, black  
14 arts programs and black history tributes, as well as at a prison  
15 with poet Sonia Sanchez and at a Young Workers Liberation League  
16 Convention Rally for Youth Rights with activist Angela Davis;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Under Crowder, Kùlú Mèlé, which translates to "voice  
3 of our ancestors," helped give birth to a cultural renaissance  
4 in Philadelphia's African-American communities and became a  
5 major part of the foundation of the Black Arts Movement of the  
6 1960s and 1970s; and

7 WHEREAS, The group began embracing Afro-Cuban culture from  
8 1982 to 1984 with the addition of Cuban percussionist Enrique  
9 Adamo Admiral, who was influential on Kùlú Mèlé's artistic,  
10 cultural and spiritual education; and

11 WHEREAS, By the 1990s, Dorothy Wilkie became the artistic  
12 director of Kùlú Mèlé and started incorporating West-African  
13 dance into the choreography; and

14 WHEREAS, The Philadelphia-based ensemble is dedicated to  
15 serving the community by presenting and preserving the culture,  
16 dance and music of Africa and its diaspora; and

17 WHEREAS, Kùlú Mèlé presents dance traditions rooted in  
18 cultures and aesthetic values of the African diaspora and blends  
19 West-African traditions with African-American creativity; and

20 WHEREAS, Kùlú Mèlé draws on the musical and movement genres  
21 of Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana and the  
22 Senegambia region as well as African-American art forms,  
23 including hip-hop, the bop, cha-cha and the slop; and

24 WHEREAS, Today, Kùlú Mèlé has more than 20 members and  
25 includes a children's ensemble, Omo Kùlú Mèlé; therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize October  
27 18, 2019, as "Kùlú Mèlé Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the 50th  
29 anniversary of the founding of Kùlú Mèlé.