
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 104 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, APRIL 25, 2023

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, APRIL 25, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of April 2023 as "Jazz Appreciation Month"
2 in Pennsylvania and recognizing Miles Davis for his
3 contributions to the world of jazz.

4 WHEREAS, "Jazz Appreciation Month" (JAM) was created in 2002
5 at the Smithsonian Museum to herald and celebrate the
6 extraordinary heritage and history of jazz in the month of
7 April; and

8 WHEREAS, JAM is intended to excite and encourage people of
9 all ages to participate in jazz, to study the music, attend
10 concerts, listen to recordings and read books about jazz; and

11 WHEREAS, This year, JAM will be exploring the legacy of Miles
12 Dewey Davis III, the pioneering trumpeter and bandleader whose
13 prowess in improvisation and bold experimentation with
14 instrumentation and tempo ushered jazz into the modern era; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis was born May 26, 1926, in Alton, Illinois,
16 to Miles Dewey Davis Jr., a dental surgeon, and Cleota Mae
17 Henry, a music teacher and violinist; and

18 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis received early trumpet lessons from Elwood
19 Buchanan, a patient of Mr. Davis's father and a musician whom

1 Mr. Davis later described as the biggest influence on his life;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Buchanan was instrumental in developing Mr.
4 Davis's style by directing him to play without vibrato, a
5 practice contrary to the style common among other trumpeters;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, With the trumpet he was gifted by his father at 13
8 years of age, Mr. Davis joined local bands and played
9 professionally while in high school; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1944, after learning that his trumpeter was too
11 sick to perform, the bandleader Billy Eckstine invited Mr. Davis
12 to play alongside Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie "Bird"
13 Parker for two weeks of shows at the Riviera in St. Louis,
14 Missouri; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis's experience at the Riviera inspired him
16 to move to New York City, where he enrolled in The Juilliard
17 School; and

18 WHEREAS, While enrolled in The Juilliard School, Mr. Davis
19 would often skip class to play music with his idol, Charlie
20 Parker, at Harlem nightclubs; and

21 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis dropped out of The Juilliard School in
22 1945 to play professionally full time as a member of the Charlie
23 Parker Quintet; and

24 WHEREAS, Throughout the late 1940s, Mr. Davis honed an
25 improvisational style that incorporated the relaxed tempos and
26 lighter tones that would come to define cool jazz; and

27 WHEREAS, In 1949, as bandleader of the Miles Davis Nonet,
28 which included the uncommon additions of the French horn,
29 trombone and tuba, Mr. Davis released a series of singles that
30 were later compiled in the album "Birth of the Cool"; and

1 WHEREAS, "Birth of the Cool" collects 11 tracks recorded
2 between 1949 and 1950 that are considered seminal contributions
3 to modern jazz and instrumental in the development of the cool
4 jazz movement; and

5 WHEREAS, After the "Birth of the Cool" sessions, Mr. Davis
6 struggled with addiction to heroin in the early 1950s; and

7 WHEREAS, After overcoming addiction in 1954, Mr. Davis staged
8 a comeback at the Newport Jazz Festival, where he played
9 alongside Thelonius Monk, Percy Heath, Connie Kay, Zoot Sims and
10 Gerry Mulligan; and

11 WHEREAS, After his triumphant performance at the Newport Jazz
12 Festival, Mr. Davis signed a record deal with Columbia Records,
13 which released "Kind of Blue" in 1959; and

14 WHEREAS, "Kind of Blue," which features the legendary
15 saxophonist John Coltrane, is widely considered Mr. Davis's
16 masterpiece and one of the greatest albums of all time, in any
17 genre, having sold more than 5 million copies; and

18 WHEREAS, Following great commercial success throughout the
19 first part of the 1960s, Mr. Davis began to experiment with
20 additional sounds, including the electric piano and guitar, a
21 period that culminated in the 1969 release of "Bitches Brew,"
22 considered a pioneering album in the jazz fusion movement; and

23 WHEREAS, Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Mr. Davis
24 experienced a number of highs and lows as he continued to
25 experiment with electronic instrumentation and struggled to
26 overcome ongoing drug abuse; and

27 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis received a Lifetime Achievement Grammy
28 Award in 1990; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis died at 65 years of age on September 28,
30 1991, as a result of pneumonia and respiratory failure; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis received a posthumous Grammy Award in 1993
2 for his recording with Quincy Jones, who joined him in 1991,
3 only months before his death, to perform a retrospective of Mr.
4 Davis's early years; and

5 WHEREAS, Jazz is a vital part of our American culture and a
6 part of the rich and diverse musical background of this
7 Commonwealth; therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the month of April 2023
9 as "Jazz Appreciation Month" in Pennsylvania and recognize Miles
10 Davis for his contributions to the world of jazz.