



Board of County Commissioners

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MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioner Van Doren Speaks At Commemoration Ceremony Honoring Jacob And Mary Francis

On Sunday, June 25th, Commissioner Shaun Van Doren, with fellow Board members, Director Zach Rich, and Commissioner John Lanza, along with Representative Tom Kean Jr., Flemington Mayor, Marcia Karrow, and local historians attended a commemorative ceremony honoring the late Jacob Francis and his wife, Mary Francis. The event was held at the Flemington Baptist Church and the emcee for the event was Roger S. Williams, Historian for The New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

Jacob Francis was a free Black man born in Amwell Township and died in Flemington, New Jersey. During his long life, he was involved in both the American Revolution and the struggle for equal rights. Jacob and his wife, Mary became well respected members of the Flemington Baptist Church and resided with their family for several decades in Flemington.

Commissioner Van Doren shared during his remarks, "Today, we are reminded of Jacob Francis's courage and conviction to fight for the great promise of our nation, when he enlisted in the Continental Army in 1775. We are also reminded of the many other people of color who gave of their lives for our independence from Great Britain."

In addition to visiting the historical gravesites of Mr. and Mrs. Francis, the commemorative ceremony hosted an array of speakers, a Color Guard Muster, a presentation by the Washington Fife and Drum Corps, and the attendance of various members from the 16th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Line, Cadets of the New Jersey Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, and the Glover's Marblehead Regiment.

In closing Commissioner Van Doren stated, "On behalf of my colleagues on the Hunterdon County Commissioner Board, we thank everyone that has been involved in putting together today's commemoration event. I am grateful that we are taking the time to honor Jacob and Mary Francis, whose legacy and impact on our nation's history, including her in Hunterdon County, are important for current and future generations to reflect upon."

Organizers of the event include members from the Flemington Baptist Church, Hunterdon County Culture & Heritage, Flemington Borough, Sons of the Revolution in New Jersey and New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

Executive Director of the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, Natalie Zaman said, "The Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission was honored to partner with Flemington Community Partnership and the sponsoring lineage organizations to make this amazing program available to the public and raise awareness of the huge contribution of Black patriots to the American struggle for independence. Bringing untold stories to light, such as those of Jacob and Mary Francis, makes for a richer and fuller picture of our history, and shows how truly extraordinary our country is."



Group Pic (l-r):
Commissioner Director, Zach Rich; Representative Tom Kean Jr.; Flemington Mayor,
Marcia Karrow; Commissioners, Shaun Van Doren and John Lanza.

