

Chapter 555

(Senate Bill 328)

AN ACT concerning

State Highways – Dedication – Henrietta Lacks Way

FOR the purpose of requiring the State Highway Administration to dedicate a certain portion of ~~Dundalk Avenue~~ Maryland Route 695A in Baltimore County as Henrietta Lacks Way; *providing for an abnormal effective date*; and generally relating to State highway dedications.

BY adding to

Article – Transportation

Section 8–659

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2015 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, Henrietta Lacks was a tobacco farmer born on August 1, 1920, in Roanoke, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, She died on October 4, 1951, at the age of 31 from cervical cancer, and was survived by her husband David and five children; and

WHEREAS, She was diagnosed with the cancer at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1951 and the cancer took only 8 months to end her life; and

WHEREAS, ~~Her tumorous cells were harvested for research without her knowledge at Johns Hopkins Hospital~~ Some of her cancer cells were collected for research, as was the case at the time for all cervical cancer patients at Johns Hopkins, regardless of race or socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, Researchers were astonished that these cells continued to live for a long time outside of the body in petri dishes and reproduced rapidly, dramatically increasing their usefulness to researchers; and

WHEREAS, Using the first two letters of each of her names, the cells became known as “HeLa” cells, the first immortal human cell line in history; and

WHEREAS, The Johns Hopkins researchers who discovered the unique qualities of the HeLa cells shared them widely and at no cost for scientific research, thereby enabling scientists across the world to study cancer and many other diseases; and

WHEREAS, Since that time, and continuing to this day, HeLa cells have furthered the understanding of cancer, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, HIV/AIDS, and chemotherapy, traveled into space, been exposed to nuclear testing, helped Jonas Salk develop the polio vaccine for human use, and been instrumental in creating the cancer drug ~~tomaxiphin~~ tamoxifen, among other medical advances; and

WHEREAS, The HeLa cells were ~~sold~~ later sold by private companies outside Maryland and became responsible for countless treatments and experiments that resulted in billions of dollars in earnings while Henrietta's family languished in poverty in Turner Station, a small community in Dundalk, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, ~~These events have raised legal and moral issues about patient consent and the rights of an individual to the genetic material and tissue of the individual~~ The events surrounding the discovery of Henrietta Lacks' immortal cells have contributed significantly to the national discussion about patient consent and the rights that one has over one's own genetic material and tissue; and

WHEREAS, This discussion has helped to establish national standards for patient consent with respect to the donation and use of human tissue cells that all medical research organizations in the United States strictly adhere to today, but that did not exist at the time that Henrietta Lacks' cells were collected; and

WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health has entered into an agreement with the Lacks family that gives the family some control over access to Henrietta Lacks' genome data; and

WHEREAS, HeLa cells continue to grow and divide to this day, facilitating further significant medical and scientific advances; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Transportation

8-659.

THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL DEDICATE THE PORTION OF ~~DUNDALK AVENUE~~ IN ~~BALTIMORE COUNTY BETWEEN THE 3400 BLOCK AND 3800 BLOCK, INCLUSIVE,~~ MARYLAND ROUTE 695A (BROENING HIGHWAY) THAT IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE BALTIMORE CITY-BALTIMORE COUNTY LINE AND THE INTERSECTION OF MARYLAND ROUTE 695A WITH MARYLAND AVENUE AND AVON BEACH ROAD AS HENRIETTA LACKS WAY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~October~~ August 1, 2017.

Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2017.