

**NBCSL Proclamation**  
**Honoring the Life and Legacy of Nathan "Nearest" Green, the Godfather**  
**of Tennessee Whiskey**

**Duly proclaimed on December 6, 2019**

**By the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)**

WHEREAS, it is the pleasure of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators to pay tribute and honor to those a legendary Tennesseans whose noteworthy contributions are a source of great pride for this country.

WHEREAS, one such individual is Nathan "Nearest" Green, known as the Godfather of Tennessee Whiskey; his remarkable journey from slavery to one of the wealthiest and best known African Americans in his community continues to be an inspiration, and his gift of a whiskey is a source of pride for Tennesseans and a source of delight for imbibers the world over;

WHEREAS, known as Uncle Nearest in his hometown of Lynchburg, Nearest Green was the first master distiller for Jack Daniel Distillery and, consequently, the first African American master distiller on record in the United States;

WHEREAS, he is the man who taught Jack Daniel how to make whiskey, and he is also thought to have helped perfect the Lincoln County Process, a special sugar maple charcoal filtering method required for whiskey to be considered Tennessee Whiskey;

WHEREAS, before the Civil War, enslaved persons plucked and shucked grains, milled them, and helped distill whiskey across the United States; these men, women, and, sometimes, children were listed as property in the official accounting records, but their contributions were never fully known;

WHEREAS, Nearest Green's instrumental role in creating Tennessee Whiskey was first revealed in the 1967 biography Jack Daniel's Legacy, which mentions Mr. Green and his descendants some fifty times, but Jack Daniel has only recently begun to embrace Mr. Green's legacy through its social media platforms, marketing campaigns, and tours;

WHEREAS, uncovering the truth of Mr. Green's life concurrently dismantled the narrative of slavery in that particular place and time; to ensure that his story is never again lost, the Nearest Green Memorial Park on the grounds of the future Tennessee Whiskey Museum in Lynchburg will permanently memorialize the life and times of this gifted artisan;

WHEREAS, Mr. Green's name and legacy also live on through the Nearest Green Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and honoring the first African American master distiller in the nation;

WHEREAS, the organization was founded by Fawn Weaver, a New York Times bestselling author who is currently at work on a book about Mr. Green's life that will further illuminate his important story;

WHEREAS, Ms. Weaver is also the CEO, Co-Founder, and Chief Historian of Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey, which is wholly and independently owned by the Nearest Green Foundation, and is one of the fastest growing American whiskeys in the country, the award-winning brand features Premium Aged and Tennessee Silver products that are distilled, aged, bottled, and hand-labeled in Tennessee using locally sourced grains; and

WHEREAS, Nearest Green brought pride and a rich heritage to the people of Tennessee and the Nation, and it is most fitting that we honor his memory and not forget his role in building this country and whisky industry at this time.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL), honors the life and legacy of Nathan "Nearest" Green, reflecting on his contributions to the culture and economy of Tennessee and the United States of America and extending our best wishes for the continuance of his incredible legacy; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

**Introduced by: NBCSL Executive Officers**  
**President, State Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC),**  
**President Elect, Representative Billy Mitchell (GA)**  
**Vice President, Representative Laura Hall (AL)**  
**Treasurer, Senator Raumesh Akbari (TN)**  
**Secretary, Representative Rena Moran (TN)**  
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