

## ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 131

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 5, 1996

By Assemblyman DeSOPO and Assemblywoman ALLEN

1 AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION honoring the late Lieutenant Colonel James W.  
2 Widdis and Major Robert C. Davis for their service to this nation and  
3 extending condolences to their families.  
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5 WHEREAS, On March 23, 1969, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel James W.  
6 Widdis and his navigator, Major Robert C. Davis, both originally from  
7 Burlington County, were flying a night reconnaissance mission over Laos  
8 to pinpoint anti-aircraft positions manned by Laotian Communists; and  
9 WHEREAS, Their aircraft came under heavy fire as it approached the target  
10 zone; and  
11 WHEREAS, An airborne forward controller in another plane heard them say  
12 "we're going in" shortly after their A-26 attack plane made a pass over an  
13 anti-aircraft position; and  
14 WHEREAS, The controller then observed a fireball in the jungle, followed by  
15 a column of smoke; and  
16 WHEREAS, Visual and electronic searches the next day failed to locate the  
17 plane and the two officers; and  
18 WHEREAS, Joint field operations conducted by the United States and Laos in  
19 1994 and 1995 surveyed and excavated the crash site where they  
20 recovered human remains and the aircraft wreckage; and  
21 WHEREAS, The remains of Lieutenant Colonel Widdis and Major Davis were  
22 identified, partly through mitochondrial DNA testing; and  
23 WHEREAS, Now, more their 27 years after their plane went down, the remains  
24 of Lieutenant Colonel Widdis and Major Davis are coming home; and  
25 WHEREAS, Hopefully, this homecoming will bring a sense of closure to this  
26 tragedy for the families and friends of these fallen aviators; and  
27 WHEREAS, Hopefully, the continued cooperation of the Socialist Republic of  
28 Vietnam and the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic will result in the finding  
29 of the remains of other servicemen who have been deemed missing in  
30 action; and  
31 WHEREAS, It is appropriate to honor the late Lieutenant Colonel James W.  
32 Widdis and Major Robert C. Davis for their service to this nation and  
33 extend condolences to their families; now, therefore,  
34 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:  
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1       1. This House honors the late Lieutenant Colonel James W. Widdis and  
2 Major Robert C. Davis, both originally from Burlington County, for their  
3 service to this nation and extends its heartfelt condolences to their families.

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5       2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of  
6 the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk thereof, shall be transmitted  
7 to the families of the late Lieutenant Colonel James W. Widdis and Major  
8 Robert C. Davis.

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STATEMENT

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13       This resolution honors the late Lieutenant Colonel James W. Widdis and  
14 Major Robert C. Davis, both originally from Burlington County, for their  
15 service to this nation and extends its heartfelt condolences to their families.

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