

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

By His Excellency  
MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS  
Governor

## A PROCLAMATION 1984

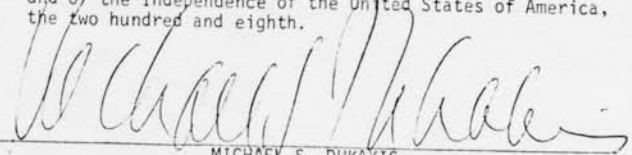
- WHEREAS: Dominic Daley and James Halligan were executed by hanging following their arrest, trial and conviction for the murder of Marcus Lyon in the Town of Northampton in June, 1806; and
- WHEREAS: Dominic Daley and James Halligan were Irish Catholic Immigrants who lived in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and
- WHEREAS: The historical record shows that Religious prejudice and ethnic intolerance played a significant role in their arrest and trial which resulted in the denial of their right to due process and a miscarriage of justice; and
- WHEREAS: Legal counsel for Daley and Halligan were appointed by the court only two days prior to the beginning of their trial and had no opportunity to prepare a defense, or visit the murder site; and
- WHEREAS: The primary testimony connecting Daley and Halligan with the murder came from a thirteen year old boy who only testified that he had seen the two men walking on the turnpike near where Lyon's body was found and could only identify one of the men at the trial; and
- WHEREAS: Not a word of testimony was offered in defense of Daley and Halligan and they were helpless to defend themselves because at that time defendants were not permitted to testify in their own defense; and
- WHEREAS: It has been reported that the true murderer of Marcus Lyon acknowledged his guilt years after the execution of Daley and Halligan; and
- WHEREAS: Irish immigrants to Massachusetts in the early nineteenth century were subjected to prejudice and discrimination based on their religious and ethnic background; and
- WHEREAS: The trial of Daley and Halligan was infected by such religious and ethnic prejudice which resulted in Daley and Halligan being denied a fair and impartial trial; and
- WHEREAS: It is now the policy of the Commonwealth to eradicate all racial, religious and ethnic discrimination and intolerance in all its forms and manifestations; and
- WHEREAS: The people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts take pride in their judicial system; and
- WHEREAS: The judicial system of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prides itself on its commitment to fairness and the use of criminal justice procedures which to the greatest extent possible ensure fair trials in which convictions are based on competent evidence establishing guilt beyond a reasonable doubt; and
- WHEREAS: We recognize the potential for human error to result in unjust convictions and are constantly striving to improve our judicial system to protect the rights of innocent persons; and
- WHEREAS: The trial and execution of Dominic Daley and James Halligan are reminders that we must constantly guard against the intrusion of fear and prejudice in all judicial and governmental decisions, and to resolve to not allow the rights of any racial, ethnic or religious group to be denied or infringed as a result of such prejudices; and
- WHEREAS: Our dedication to truth and justice requires us to recognize the unfairness of the circumstances surrounding their trial and which ultimately lead to their executions;
- NOW, THEREFORE, I, MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim March 18th, 1984 as

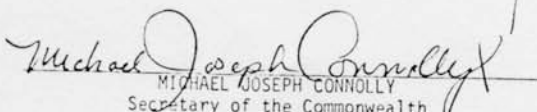
### DOMINIC DALEY AND JAMES HALLIGAN MEMORIAL DAY

and declare further that any stigma and disgrace associated with their names as a result of their conviction for the murder of Marcus Lyon is hereby removed; and I hereby call upon the people of the Commonwealth to give serious consideration to the fear and prejudice which pervaded the trial of these men and substantially contributed to their being executed; and I further call upon the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to affirm their resolve not to allow fear, intolerance or prejudice to operate to the detriment for their fellow citizens.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this sixteenth day of March, one thousand nine hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and eighth.

By His Excellency the Governor

  
MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS

  
MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

