

Legislation Text

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Designating the week of Monday, October 6 through Monday, October 13, 2014 as “Christopher Columbus/Italian American Heritage Week” in the City of Philadelphia. This is done in celebration of the festivities commemorating Columbus’ historic voyage to the New World and honoring Chazz Palminteri as Grand Marshall of the 2014 Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade.

WHEREAS, Five hundred and twenty-two years ago, a courageous Italian visionary set out on what would become one of the most momentous journeys in the annals of history. Christopher Columbus and the maps he charted to the “New World” were guiding lights to every ship that came to America; and

WHEREAS, The annual Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade began in South Philadelphia in 1957, and has since become one of the City’s premier ethnic celebrations. On October 12, 2014, the 1492 Society will host the annual parade. In addition to the active participation of the Delaware Valley’s Italian American community, the Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade tradition includes the world famous Philadelphia Mummers string bands, outstanding high school and elementary school marching bands and many other marching groups representing the various ethnic traditions of our great City. The Parade seeks to foster a spirit of multiculturalism and respect for people of all ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Grand Marshall, Chazz Palminteri born Calogero Lorenzo Palminteri to Lorenzo and Rose Palminteri, in the Belmont section of the Bronx in New York City on May 15, 1952, a neighborhood that would become the backdrop for the future one man show, play and movie *A Bronx Tale*; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from high school and studying at the Actor’s Studio Chazz tried to make it in the New York theatre scene with limited success so he set off for Los Angeles to try to ply his trade on the west coast where he landed several guest spots on popular television shows but nothing permanent. With no permanent acting jobs and after losing his day job he felt that his career had hit rock bottom and that’s when he remembered what his father had always told him, “that the saddest thing in life is wasted talent”. With this saying running through his head he decided to take his career into his own hands and wrote the play that would change his life, *A Bronx Tale*, about the experiences of an Italian-American boy growing up in an ethnic working-class neighborhood of New York. The rest as they say is history; and

WHEREAS, We also would like to dedicate this parade to Judge Anthony J. DeFino, who never wandered far from his South Philadelphia Italian roots. Judge DeFino was born, raised and resided in South Philadelphia his entire life. A graduate of South Philadelphia High School and Temple University Law School he went on to become a well respected member of the bench and worked in the legal field for over 50 years and was known for his fairness on the bench and equally if not more so known for his snappy dress, quick wit and jokes that could bring a smile to anyone’s face, especially on a Monday morning; and

WHEREAS, Judge DeFino was Grand Master and Founder of the Order of Brotherly Love, The Frank Palumbo Lodge, OSIA and various other charitable, social, civic and judicial organizations that promoted and celebrated his Italian heritage; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the annual Parade, Columbus Day festivities include an Italian Festival showcasing the culture and cuisine of the people of Italy. The Italian Festival takes place at Marconi Plaza the day of the Parade and includes food, dance and music from the many diverse regions of Italy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby designate the week of October 6 through October 13, 2014 as “Christopher Columbus/Italian American Heritage Week” and honor Chazz Palminteri as Grand Marshall of the 2014 Columbus Day Parade.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of this resolution be presented to the Grand Marshall of the Parade, Chazz Palminteri, and to the 1492 Society as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.