

Proclamation



CITY OF ALBANY, NEW YORK

Office of the Mayor

- WHEREAS: Since the early 17th century, people from a variety of cultures have found work, raised families and established social, economic and cultural networks in the City of Albany; and
- WHEREAS: At the dawn of a new century, Albany began to witness a growing migration of people from Italy. These people were attracted to Albany by the prospect of employment, they first settled in a diverse neighborhood framed by Madison Avenue and Grand Street in the South End. There, they established a thriving community and worshipped at St. Anthony's Church. Many men found work in the railroad and construction industries, while others started businesses; and
- WHEREAS: By the end of World War II, many second generation Italians started to move away from the old South End neighborhood, often referred to as "Little Italy". They built new homes and raised families in such areas as Western Avenue near Russell Road, and Delaware Avenue near St. James Church; and
- WHEREAS: Italian-Americans have helped to build, shape and enrich life in Albany, while sharing their strong cultural traditions that include dedication to hard work, a commitment to fairness of all people and maintaining the importance of "la familia", the family unit; and
- WHEREAS: The West Albany Italian Benevolent Society was founded in 1909 by a group of recently arrived Italians residing in the area along the Albany-Schenectady Road, and like most immigrants, they arrived in the United States with very few possessions and many owed for their passage; and
- WHEREAS: They saw various needs in the community and recognized a moral obligation to assist their neighbors and the Society, therefore, began to provide modest financial aid during illness, a small sum upon the death of a member for funeral expenses and charity for its members whose needs exceeded the normal aid; and
- WHEREAS: Today, various benefits and institutions exist for the above purposes, however the Society still exists and is growing stronger than ever as a community organization committed to preserving a common heritage and the friendships that resulted from the efforts of a courageous group of Italians establishing a home in a New World; and
- WHEREAS: The annual Columbus Parade and Italian Festival, held in conjunction with the national holiday, celebrates the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, and commemorates the heritage of Italian-Americans in the Capital Region and their many contributions. Therefore, 18th Annual Columbus Parade & Italian Festival is proud to have the WAIBS as the Grand Marshal in 2009.

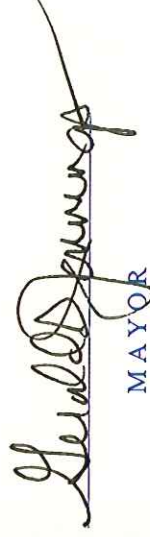
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gerald D. Jennings, Mayor of the City of Albany, New York, do hereby proclaim October 10 – October 12, 2009 as

“ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE DAYS”

in the City of Albany, New York.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Albany, New York to be affixed this 24th day of September, 2009.


MAYOR