



New York State Commission for Social Justice

Order Sons of Italy in America

2101 Bellmore Avenue • Bellmore, New York 11710
(516) 785-4623 • (800) 322-OSIA • FAX (516) 221-OSIA
www.nyscsj.org

John A. Fratta
CSJ Chairman

Anthony Naccarato
State President

June 17, 2020

Mayor James Kenney
City of Philadelphia
City Hall Office 215
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mayor Kenney,

The New York Commission for Social Justice is the anti-defamation arm of the New York Grand Lodge, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America. The Commission has, throughout the years, engaged in a wide variety of activities geared toward accomplishing its twin goals of promoting a positive image of Italian Americans and fighting bias, bigotry, and defamation.

We believe your move to remove the statue of Columbus in Marconi Plaza is caving into the false narrative being pushed by bigots and uninformed individuals. By now I am sure you know that Columbus is a hero to Italian Americans and a source of pride. Although we believe that Columbus did not commit the atrocities he is being charged with, some of those allegations were acceptable during that period. We wonder, how people 500 years from now will look upon us today. We have been researching Columbus and these charges that have been leveled against him, and we found them to be false. We have been working with four scholars who began an in-depth investigation and their conclusion concurs with ours.

By you recommending the removal of his statue may be politically expedient today, it remains a slap in the face of your Italian American residents. Do you have that little regard to our Italian American community and our heritage? We would like to recommend to you two books to read: *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* written by Elizabeth Delaney and *Debunking Howard Zinn* by Mary Grabar. Both these books are written by non-Italians who were incensed when they began to investigate the allegations made against Columbus. Both these scholars debunk the charges against Columbus.

In closing, we are urging you to reconsider your decision to remove the Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza.

Sincerely,

Anthony Naccarato
Anthony Naccarato, President
New York Grand Lodge, OSDIA

John A. Fratta
John A. Fratta, Chairman
NYS Commission for Social Justice