

Columbus Day: On Fifth Avenue Italian-American Pride Marches

Riccardo Chioni (October 16, 2014)



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The governor [Andrew Cuomo](#) [3] who marched with his daughter, Michaela, by his side, was particularly generous at greeting the public. The mayor, [Bill de Blasio](#) [4] was jumping out of his skin with excitement, waving his Italian Flag, wanting to reiterate, as if there was need to, his Italian-American pride.

At a fair distance behind also marched the republican [Rob Astorino](#) [5], the Westchester County



executive and Cuomo's contender for New York State governor, very unpopular in the canyons of the city where the governor had instead been acclaimed.

"The Italian American heritage in New York with the Columbus Day Parade," the mayor said, "reunites the people and projects the vast successes of the immigrant community. It was an honor for me to visit Italy with my family this summer and I want to express my gratitude to the people of Grassano, Sant'Agata de'Goti and Italy for the support and sincere best wishes. "

I'm grateful to the [Columbus Foundation](#) [6] for continuing their educational mission and their commitment to pass down the Italian culture that keeps the Italian spirit alive in our children and in all of our hearts."

Also, government representants like the comptroller Thomas DiNapoli joined forces with the City Council, represented by the Vallones' family, with Peter Senior the president for 27 years, his son Peter Junior already city councilman and currently assistant of the governor, and his other son Paul, that now sits in the council room.

There was also the senator [Charles Schumer](#) [7] that would like to be Italian, who for 7 years now has been participating in the Columbus Day Parade with a megaphone, screaming at the top of his lungs, "Today we are all Italian!", waving the Italian flag in his other arm.

At the head of the Columbus Day Parade there was the Grand Marshal [Frank Bisignano](#) [8], a leader recognized in the world of finance and in the community for his generous commitment to philanthropy, a modest man from a humble family, attributing his parents to his career success.

Frank Bisignano has practically spent all of his time on Fifth Avenue shaking hands with people, taking selfies with them, thanking the police and embracing the prelates on the churchyard of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Cardinal [Timothy Dolan](#) [9] was not there being in Vatican for the Holy Synod of bishops, but he wanted to reach Bisignano with a message that read, "While I am in Roma with The Holy Father, I desire to congratulate the Grand Marshal Frank Bisignano for his valued support and assistance in the restoration of the Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Even with scaffoldings around it, I am sure that his passing in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral will be honored."

The authors of the parade, the directors of Columbus Citizens Foundation - were all there: the president Angelo Vivolo, the chairman of festivities [Louis Tallarini](#) [10] and then [Lawrence Auriana](#) [11], [Lidia Bastianich](#) [12], Frank Fusaro, [Fucsia Nissoli Fitzgerald](#) [13] and the Honorees: [Richard and Barbara Naclerio](#) [14], the former police commissioner [Raymond Kelly](#) [15] and [Frank D'Amelio](#) [16] that had received the awards during Saturday's the gala at Waldorf Astoria.

To celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Columbus celebrations in New York, the Foundation and the General Consulate joined forces together on Park Avenue with their number one, [Natalia Quintavalle](#) [17], who responded to the greetings of the public, standing and waving from the roof of the Italian FIAT 500 from i-Italy.

In the parade, the State Police, the Carabinieri, the Bersaglieri, the Navy and the law enforcement agencies in the metropolitan area and the federal law enforcement were all represented, as well as a group of firefighters in a vintage fire truck, headed by commissioner [Daniel Nigro](#) [18].

Numerous representations of local Italian associations, of committees from New York and Connecticut and bands accompanied the parade of the 25 allegorical floats and 120 groups, which means that in total, almost 40 thousand people marched for at least 3 hours.

Just to give an idea of the magnitude of it all, when at the beginning of the 47th St bands and groups were still taking their positions, the head of the parade was just then reaching the official gallery on the 69th. This confirms the magnificence of this year's edition of the most colossal showcase of the Italian American pride, which has been broadcasted in the rest of the world by live television.



The Columbus Citizens Foundation has been in existence for decades. The organization of the annual parade became a milestone in the City. They distributed millions of dollars in grants and student scholarships to keep Italian American students that didn't come from wealthy families, so that they could continue their education.

In the evening, at the General Consulate at Park Avenue, there was a reception attended by Miss Chef Maria Antonietta Santoro, who worked behind the stove to satisfy the culinary desires of Mayor Bill de Blasio - avid appreciator of traditional Lucanian and Campanian dishes.

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