

New York State Commission for Social Justice
2023 Fall Plenary Session
Report

Brothers and Sisters, I am pleased to report to you on the activities of the Commission for Social Justice. CSJ has been working very hard to defend our heritage and continue with the positive programs during this period.

2023 CSJ Luncheon

This year's CSJ Luncheon will take place on March 17th and will be held at Verdi's. The honorees are Past President Anthony Naccarato and Italian American Museum founder and CEO Joseph Scelsa. We will be doing a tribute to Past President Michele Ment.

Attacks on Columbus and our Holiday

Queens Senator Ramos and Brooklyn Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes Continue their attack on Columbus

As listed in my last Plenary Report this continues to be an issue of concern. We have been staying on top of this but still feel we need to be proactive in fighting this legislation. As I urged last plenary....

Please take this threat and act immediately to fight this bigoted resolution. Call your State Representatives and let them hear your concerns. If any of your representatives are at a town hall meeting or attending a function in your districts approach them and urge them to vote this legislation down.

Syracuse

No update on the fight to save the Columbus Statue in Syracuse. The Mayor's Office appealed the decision of the lower court which ruled in favor of the Columbus Monument Association. We will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Syracuse in this fight.

Southampton

As I reported in my last report Southampton School District voted to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day. This decision came to us as a surprise we had no

heads up this was being discussed and voted on. Lesson learned here is we must remain vigilant and keep our ears to the ground. We will fight this for next year's calendar.

Philadelphia's Battle to Save the Columbus Holiday

With Philadelphia's victory regarding the Columbus Statue the remaining fight to keep the Columbus holiday in Philly. The mayor is continuing his fight to remove the holiday. We will support Philadelphia in any way necessary. The fight is currently in the courts and we are hoping for a positive ruling. I will keep you informed of any decision in this case.

Making vandalism of statues a hate crime in New York

We are continuing to have legislation presented to make vandalism of statues and edifices a hate crime. Whether the act was against any ethnic, racial or religious group. All groups need to have their symbols protected against those that continue to vandalize them.

I will keep you informed of any progress with this legislation.

The Pocahontas Project

This is an article by Rick Tatnall from the Richmond Times Dispatch. I want to thank Andy Illiano for catching this.

Reclaiming History, the fight for Indigenous People Has Just begun. This is as serious as it gets and should be an eye opener for our community.

An idea initially discussed at a United Nations conference in 1977 became reality on Oct. 10, 1992, 500 years after the "discovery" of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492. It was the first Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration held in the United States as an alternative to the Columbus Day holiday.

Thirty years later, that monumental break from tradition has become a movement of sorts, albeit a rudderless one, as a growing number of cities (130-plus), states (19) and

the District of Columbia have embraced the celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday in October.

In recent years, America's natural social progression of change from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day has been stalled by partisan politics, turning a national holiday that is supposed to be a celebration into an [annual confrontation](#). For the 2022 holiday, The Pocahontas Project successfully navigated the choppy political waters and held an educational public event in Richmond celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day at Mantle, the Virginia Indian tribute on the grounds of the Virginia State Capitol.

A new CSJ Project

A book of the month Review.

For some time now we have been concerned that books that we deemed important to our culture have not been reviewed and advertised. Some of these books we related to the Columbus fight that we have been dealing with while others are just feel-good books and periodicals. So, I am happy to report that I have appointed two CSJ members, Allision Vitucci from district 2 and Lisa Serafina from district 6 to serve as co-chairs of this committee. Their book review will be added to our Golden Lion Newspaper CSJ section.

Support for CSJ

I want to thank Robert Graham who set up a tool for people to donate to SCJ with just one click. We are using a protocol "Givebutter" and have a QR code to take on and make the donation. This is a great opportunity for CSJ to raise money from members and those that are not members. You will be seeing the QR Code in all our articles and correspondences.



In closing, I want to thank the CSJ Executive Board and our district liaisons and all my brothers and sisters for all their support for our CSJ. Please continue to keep your ears to the ground and should you hear something negative to our community, please notify me immediately.

Fraternally,
John