



**UNICO National
Columbus Day
October 12, 2020**

Columbus Day Message

Ralph A Contini

Second National VP and Columbus Day Chair

Serving as Columbus Day Chair for UNICO National, I'm especially proud of the work we have done through the years to Preserve, Protect, Showcase, and Defend Columbus Day. We truly believe Columbus Day is a "Great American Holiday" proudly celebrated by Italian Americans.

In a normal year, the Columbus Day Parade is UNICO's national flagship parade and the world's largest celebration of Italian-American culture. Sadly, due to the pandemic, the traditional Columbus Day Parades and festivities will not take place this October. I shall miss marching in Columbus Day parades, but we will all be there in spirit. The feeling of pride that we get out of marching each year is impossible to put into words. We love our heritage, we love being Italian-American, and will miss the thrill of marching with our members, family and friends showing pride in our heritage.

On a more positive note, I am working with the *Columbus Citizens Foundation* in NYC, in developing plans for a Virtual Columbus Day Celebration for 2020. On Monday October 12th starting at 12:30 P.M., a 90-minute broadcast special will air on ABC7/WABC-TV New York and Stream Live at abc7ny.com, abc7NY App and abc7NY Connected TV Apps on Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, Apple TV and Roku. The special will feature pre-taped segments as well as live elements.

The broadcast special will honor the Italian and Italian American journey through historical vignettes that will showcase a proud heritage and rich cultural traditions. Featuring in-depth interviews with some of the most well-known Italian and Italian American figures across the country, the special will also highlight previous Parade moments that include paying tribute to many of the parade's former Grand Marshals, including celebrity chef Lidia Bastianich,

renowned broadcaster Maria Bartiromo, championship race car driver Mario Andretti, fashion designer Roberto Cavalli, and last year's Grand Marshal, Massimo Ferragamo, the chairman of Ferragamo USA.

As UNICO National has been such a key part of the Parade in years gone by, we are hoping that President DeFrank and I will be taking part in an on-air segment where we will speak and present our feelings on what the Parade means to us and what we associate with Italian-American culture. It would also be an opportunity for us to spotlight UNICO's name on television and other media to a national, and perhaps a global audience.

I urge all Chapters and members to hold or participate in outdoor ceremonies honoring Christopher Columbus, an iconic man to the Italian American Community. Italian flag raising, wreath laying, or erecting a street banner are actions to consider. Obviously, we need to follow any local regulations or restrictions there may be on social gatherings.

Join us in celebrating "Columbus Day, a Great American Holiday" and October as "Italian Heritage and Culture Month!"

Ciao for now and Andiamo "Sempre Avanti"

Cav. Ralph A. Contini