

City of San Jose recognises Greek Independence Day with annual flag raising ceremony



On Monday, 25 March 2024, at 5:00 pm, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), the Daughters of Penelope (DOP), and the Maids of Athena (MOA) gathered to commemorate the 203rd Anniversary of Greek Independence with a special Greek Flag Raising Ceremony at San Jose City Hall Plaza.

Hosted by Councilmember Pam Foley of District 9, the event welcomed esteemed guests, including Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, alongside Linda Belba, DOP Grand Governor Zone IV, Alicia Frangos, DOP District 21 Governor, and Chris Frangos, AHEPA District 21 Governor.

In his address, Metropolitan Gerasimos reflected on the significance of the event, stating, "We stand here today, prepared to raise high the flag of the United States, a country founded on democracy which was given to us by the ancient Greeks, and also honor the people of Greece by saluting their majestic blue and white flag. As we gather in unity to honor the bravery of our forefathers in their fight for independence, let us also call to mind the many struggles for freedom that still exist in our world. We must be vigilant in prayer for peace, for safekeeping, and for the protection of God's beautiful creation that surrounds us. We all need to do our part, and like when a single pebble is thrown into the water, the ripples that are created spread far and wide. Thus it should be for us as we seek to live in a world

of harmony and unity."

To commemorate Greek Independence Day, Council member Foley presented a proclamation signed by Mayor Matt Mahan and full council in honor of the occasion. Additionally, a state proclamation from Assemblymember Diane Papan of San Mateo was read by Joanna Dunn, DOP Daphne #29 President.

"I am proud to recognize and proclaim March 25th, as Greek Independence Day in the City of San José. Greek Independence Day is not only a celebration of past achievements but also a reminder of the importance of freedom, democracy, and national sovereignty. The celebration of Greek Independence Day is a time to come together to honor Greek history, heritage and foster a sense of pride and unity among Greek Americans," said Councilmember Foley.

As a further tribute, San Jose City Hall's iconic glass rotunda and tower are being illuminated in the colors of the Greek flag for seven days. This symbolic gesture serves to celebrate and recognize the importance of Greek heritage within the community

Distinguished local Greek-Americans attending included Dr. George Zioulas, AHEPA Silicon Valley Chapter 251 President and Past District 21 Governor and Marianna Frangides, President of the Maids of Athena Ismene #163.

"On behalf of the Order of AHEPA family, I would like to thank Councilmember Pam Foley and the City of San Jose for the proclamation recognizing the 203rd Greek Independence Day, and for raising the Greek flag outside city hall. It is a very inspiring event and continues the tradition of recognizing the sacrifices of our Greek forefathers in bringing freedom and democracy back to Greece," said Chris Frangos.

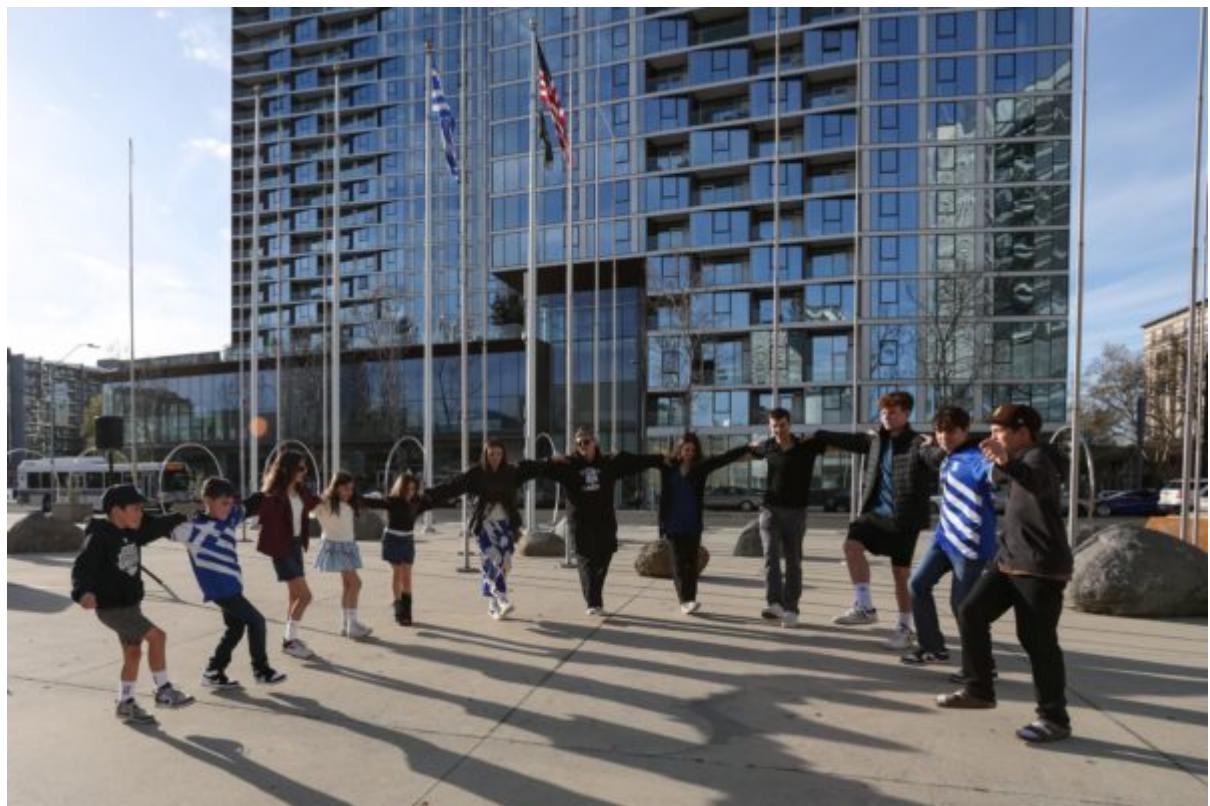
"Greek Independence Day holds such significance for Greek Americans, as we proudly honor the bravery of our ancestors who established the ideals of democracy, and who fought long and hard for their sovereignty as a nation," remarked Alicia Frangos. "We appreciate Councilmember Pam Foley and her colleagues at the City of San Jose who acknowledged this important day and helped us pay homage to those who paved the way to freedom for the modern Greek nation."

Maids of Athena President Frangides added, "This event is vital for passing on our pride in Greece to future generations. I want my children to share the same love and pride we hold for Greece's independence. Continuing this tradition at City Hall ensures Greece's legacy endures for generations to come."

The Greek Orthodox community was well-represented at the ceremony, with Reverend Fathers James Kumarelas and Nebojsa Pantic alongside a sizeable group of parishioners from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in San Jose in attendance. Adding to the celebratory atmosphere, a group of talented St. Nicholas dancers showcased traditional Greek folk dances, captivating the audience.

"We honour the legacy of our ancestors by preserving traditions through dance and celebrating our language through song, embodying the spirit of Greek Independence Day," said Maria Halatsis, a Saint Nicholas Dance Director. "By passing our culture down to future generations, we pay homage to those who fought for centuries to protect our cherished heritage."







Photos: Panayiota Good

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