

City of San Jose Celebrates 202nd Anniversary of Greek Independence with Flag Raising Ceremony



SAN JOSE, CA – On Wednesday, March 22, 2022, at 5:00 pm, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), the Daughters of Penelope (DOP), and the Maids of Athena (MOA) commemorated the 202nd Anniversary of Greek Independence with a special Greek Flag Raising Ceremony at San Jose City Hall Plaza. San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan hosted the ceremony, graciously stepping in for Councilmember Pam Foley of District 9 who usually coordinates this annual celebration. The event featured distinguished guests, including His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos and His Grace Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, Alexander Mallas, AHEPA Supreme Governor, Region 8, Alicia Frangos, DOP District 21 Governor, Chris Frangos, AHEPA District 21 Governor, Ms. Daphne Vitsikounaki, Economic and Commercial Affairs Officer at the Greek Consulate in San Francisco, and Nicolaos Theophanous, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cyprus.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos addressed the attendees, saying, “It is a joy to be with you to celebrate this important day in our history as Hellenes and as Greek Orthodox Christians. On March 25, 1821, our ancestors stood together after nearly 400 years under Ottoman Rule and proclaimed ‘Freedom or Death’, thus

marking the War of Independence and a new beginning for the people of Greece. This was not an event without sacrifice, as thousands of lives were lost, but it was for a good and noble cause, and one that resonates today not just for the people of Greece, but the entire world. Let us remember with great fervor the foundation of our liberty, and let it serve as a wellspring of hope."

To commemorate Greek Independence Day, Mayor Matt Mahan was joined by Councilmembers Arjun Batra, Rosemary Kamei, and Bien Doan who presented the proclamation signed by the full council in honor of the occasion. 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. Let us remember with great fervor the foundation of our liberty, and let it serve as a wellspring of hope.

Although Councilmember Foley was unable to host the event this year, she expressed her excitement for the annual ceremony, saying, "The Greek American community makes San José a stronger City with a more vibrant culture by adding Greek restaurants, churches, art exhibits, festivals and bringing honorable values and ideals into our society."

Distinguished local Greek-Americans attending included Dr. George Zioulas, AHEPA Silicon Valley Chapter 251 President and Past District 21 Governor, Joanna Dunn, DOP Daphne #29 President, and Marianna Frangides, President of the Maids of Athena Ismene #163.

"On behalf of the Order of AHEPA family of District #21 and Reno, I would like to thank Mayor Mahan, Councilmember Foley and the City of San Jose for the proclamation recognizing Greek Independence Day, and for flying the Greek flag outside city hall. It was a very inspiring event and continues the tradition of recognizing the sacrifices of our Greek forefathers," said Chris Frangos.

"Acknowledging Greek Independence Day is a significant tribute to our cultural legacy," remarked Alicia Frangos who was unable to attend and sent Linda Belba, Daughters of Penelope Past District 21 Governor. "As Greek Americans, we take immense pride in the fact that our forefathers led the charge for democracy. We respect and pay homage to their determination and sacrifice in paving the way for the freedom of the modern Greek nation."

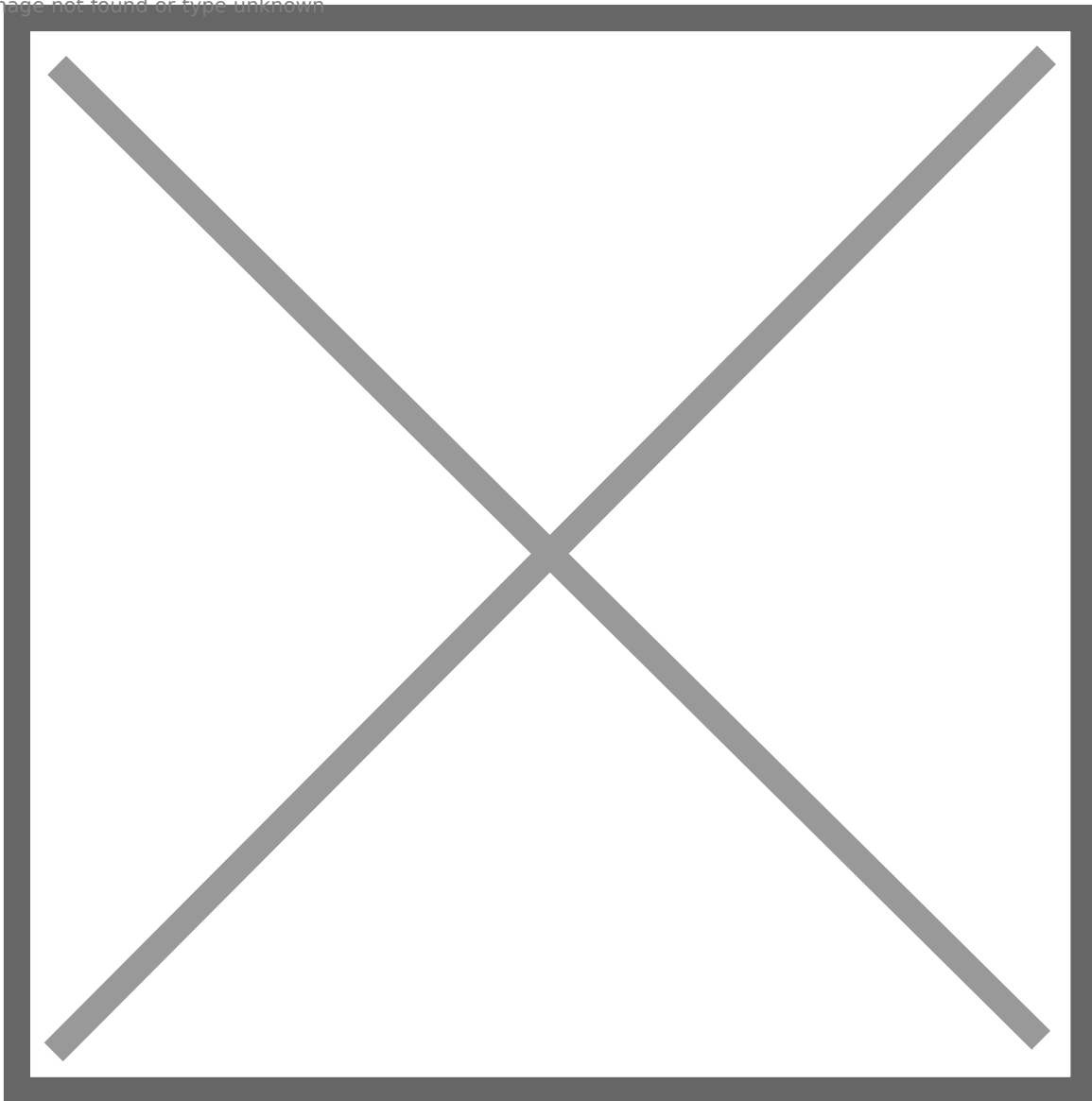
Maids of Athena President Frangides added, "Celebrating Greek Independence Day through community events is important in remembering our heritage and nurturing

a deeper appreciation for our local communities.”

The Greek Orthodox community was well-represented at the ceremony, with Reverend Fathers Nebojsa Pantic and 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, delighting the audience with their graceful movements.

“We dance in honor of those who fought for our freedom and those who made the ultimate sacrifice,” said Sofia Nicolaou, Vivian Tavernakis, and Angeliki Pries, members of the Saint Nicholas Dance Ministry Council. “Through our dance, we carry on the legacy of our ancestors and pass on our cultural heritage to future generations.”

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