

## **A Celebration of Italian Heritage at City Hall!**

*Council Member Vallone and Speaker Corey Johnson honor NYC leaders at City Hall*

October 11, 2018 -- **City Hall** – On Wednesday night, **Council Member Paul Vallone** was proud to co-sponsor A Celebration of Italian Heritage in observance of National Italian American Heritage Month. Within the City Council Chambers, Council Member Vallone honored two local leaders with New York City Council Proclamations for their outstanding character and service to the community. The first honoree — **Linda DeSabato** of Vallo Transportation — was born in Brooklyn and currently resides in Bayside. She and her family, who share roots in Sicily and Naples, have been involved in the transportation business in New York for over 50 years. Linda has been at the helm of Vallo Transportation, which is located in Whitestone, since its inception 35 years ago. In 2013, she decided to expand on the company’s safety mission and developed an anti-bullying campaign. Now in its fifth year, the campaign has reached over 20,000 students, parents and educators. Vallo has also donated bus transportation to many local events, including the Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks at Fort Totten, and sponsored a free movie night in Whitestone this summer.

**Tom Ferrugia**, the second honoree, has served as the Director of Governmental Affairs for The Broadway League since 2007. Under the leadership of President Charlotte St. Martin, the League helped bring nearly 14 million people to Broadway last year and remains committed to serving the varying needs of the theatrical industry in New York and across the country. In his capacity at the Broadway League, Tom helps guide the organization's policies and objectives involving local, state, and federal activity. He is a New York native who currently resides in Forest Hills with his family. Council Members Justin Brannan and Mark Gjonaj, who co-sponsored the event, presented former president of the Morris Park Community Association Al D’Angelo and the Federation of Italian American Organizations of Brooklyn with Proclamations.

Council Member Vallone also honored community leaders Leonardo Saputo, Joseph Di Benedetto, Anthony Lemma Sr., Andrew Rocco, Giuseppe Pirreca and John Zullo with New York City Council Citations of Honor.

Consul General of Italy in New York, the Hon. Francesco Genuardi, delivered remarks at the event, and Joseph Sciamè, President and Chairman of the Italian Heritage & Culture Committee of New York, presented his organization’s annual poster for Italian Heritage month, themed “A salute to Italian women in America.” Victoria Pinto, a Junior Vocal Music Major at LaGuardia Arts HS, performed the American and Italian National Anthems and the Landrum School of Performing Arts gave a spirited dance performance.

“I am deeply honored to receive this Proclamation from Council Member Paul Vallone, to whom we are grateful for his support of Vallo and our community initiatives over the years,” said Linda DeSabato, President of Vallo Transportation. “I proudly accept it on behalf of everyone at Vallo, who join in helping to better our communities and raise awareness of important issues. Receiving this prestigious honor at the Italian American Celebration is tremendously heartwarming, as our company was built on ingenuity and the strong traditions and values of my family. Thank you so very much for this distinct recognition.”

“I was delighted to be part of the Italian American Cultural Celebration at City Hall,” said Tom Ferrugia. “Growing up in an Italian family, I was taught the importance of community, and I greatly appreciate the City Council’s dedication to making the City a better place for all of us. As a native

New Yorker and life-long resident, it was my privilege to receive a proclamation for my small contributions to this great City.”

“For centuries, Italian Americans have helped shape the course of our nation’s history,” said Council Member Paul Vallone. “Earlier this week, Governor Cuomo honored Italy’s strong roots in the state when he announced that the Board for Historic Preservation listed New York City’s Central Park monument to Christopher Columbus on the State Register of Historic Places. I’m proud to co-sponsor the Italian Heritage Celebration at City Hall and recognize all of the event’s honorees for their immeasurable contributions to the borough of Queens and the City of New York!”