



ITALIAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM

219 E Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002
admin@IALForum.org • www.IALForum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Briana Leone
Phone: 202-547-2900
E-mail: admin@ialforum.org

Initial plans announced by Italian American Leadership Forum (IALF) for the 500th Anniversary of Giovanni da Verrazzano

Washington, D.C., March 19, 2024 – The Board of Directors of the Italian American Leadership Forum (IALF), founded in 2023, recently announced plans for coordinating initiatives to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the arrival of **Giovanni da Verrazzano**, an Italian navigator and explorer who traveled under the flag of France in his voyages across the Atlantic. While there may be a good number of proposals as to an appropriate celebration of the noteworthy event, a modicum of organization has been necessary to register events and ensure a high level of coordination.

The IALF will be able to provide such through its website in the listing of events commencing on April 17, 2024. Various organizations are invited to register their respective programs, tributes and salutations of the historic event of April 17, 1542. **Michael G. Polo**, chair of the IALF, commented recently: “This Verrazzano Quincentenary provides us all as Italian Americans and those who know the history of the famous explorer with a great opportunity to come together and salute such a historic event. It will be a time to remind our youth, especially of the ‘Spirit of Discovery’ and its importance.

Giovanni da Verrazzano hailed from Florence and lived from 1485 and 1528. He is best known for being the first European to explore the Atlantic coast of North America between the Carolinas and Newfoundland. Among his honors is the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, which opened in 1964, and spans a tidal straight that connects New York Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean, connecting Brooklyn to Staten Island.

In addition to IALF’s coordinative efforts, the Consul General of Italy to New York, Fabrizio Di Michele, has expressed the full support of his office in ensuring the success of this memorable event as he will attend and address formal greetings.

Some of the preliminary plans will include: the creation of a commemorative poster, bookmark, citations of honor and legislative proclamations, a future dinner experience of the times of Verrazzano, a symbolic ferry ride to and from Manhattan to Staten Island, wreath-laying ceremonies (dates to be announced), symposia that relate to the Verrazzano’s travels and travails in reaching the America shores.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the history of Giovanni da Verrazzano

FOUNDING ORGANIZATIONS

Columbus Citizens Foundation
National Italian American Foundation
National Organization of Italian American Women
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, Supreme Lodge
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, Foundation
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, Commission for Social Justice
UNICO National
UNICO Foundation



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Planned Events

- 9AM Ferry Ride from Battery Park on the Staten Island Ferry led by the IHCC-NY, Inc.

- Post 9:30AM Ceremony at Borough Hall on Staten Island Hosted by the Borough President.

- Ferry Back to Manhattan with Ceremonial wreath to be laid at sea in front of Statue of Liberty.

- 12PM Wreath laying ceremony at Verrazzano Statue in Battery Park hosted by Italian American Leadership Forum (IALF).

- 1PM Stamp Cancellation at Verrazzano Statue in Battery Park hosted by the IHCC-NY, Inc.

- 5PM Premiere of Verrazzano Documentary by invitation only hosted by NIAF.

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