

To: Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D., Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission

From: Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA

Re: Columbus Statue

Please share the following with the Art Commission for consideration.

Recall that I* was responsible for the submission of the application for the Christopher Columbus statue's historical designation. My labor and costs were entirely funded by myself, and not from any individual or group which now are parties in on-going litigation before the Court. Be advised that since mid-June, I have been contacted by at least three(3) attorneys (not the Plaintiffs'), and we discussed how there are no legal issues meriting cause for suit.

The weaknesses in the present cases before the Court have been supplemented since mid-June by a constant news media campaign initiated by defeated mayoral candidate, George Bochetto, the Plaintiffs' attorney who represents parties who did not support the Columbus statue's nearly six-month move to its historical designation on March 10, 2017. The same Plaintiffs and groups, along with opposing groups, also did not participate in the recent proceeding on "Columbus Hall" where the statue was proposed, funding collected and determined to be a gift to the City in 1876. These proceedings coincided with the preparation and filing of litigation now centering on the Columbus statue's removal from Marconi Plaza, its second location on City-owned land.

The Commissions should be reminded of the "Rocky" statue's case and how unsettled its moves were. Public polling was not overly favorable and the Columbus statue's popularity likely will be less than the approximate 50% towards the "Rocky" work.

* I am not of Italian ethnicity; my family is not from Philadelphia, but Montgomery County and New York City. I am a 40 year resident of Philadelphia.

Now, the Columbus statue's historical designation has suddenly become the Plaintiffs' issue, after Plaintiffs' attorney--for weeks prior to the signing of the Monuments Act--publicly informed the news media that the Columbus statue had "federal" designation. Counsel for the non-participants in the Columbus statue's real and only historical designation contended that the statue's former position in West Fairmount Park enabled it to derive this "federal" historical status when Fairmount Park became listed on the National Register in 1972. From 1975 to 1977, the Columbus statue and many others were relocated from the Park. (Refer to Bach's Public Art in Philadelphia. 1992.)

Plaintiffs' counsel seemed to defeat HIS issues raised before the Court with his public claims on this "federal" designation which did not prohibit the Columbus statue's relocation or others. Moreover, another issue brought before the Court by the Plaintiffs concerns the plywood "box" now protecting the Columbus statue: Plaintiffs' lawyer contended that "...the statue must remain visible because of its historic (sic) certification." ("Inquirer," June 17, 2020) Bochetto's unsubstantiated claim of the "federal" designation should dismiss this issue on the "visibility" of the statue he has said is indeed removable from its present location and view from the public.

By letter emailed to radio station 990 AM on or before July 9, 2020, I challenged Plaintiffs' counsel to produce proof of the "federal" designation because he had diminished my work on the statue's successful historical designation, as well as the work of this Historical Commission which he tried to tie to funding from the Interior Department. ("Inquirer," June 19, 2020) In his July 13, 2020 radio interview on the same radio station,

Bochetto never mentioned the "federal" designation or the statue's previous position in Fairmount Park, (which Bochetto still considers as state or Commonwealth jurisdiction.)

There was no record on why Marconi Plaza became the second location for the Columbus statue; thus, I did not include any relationship to the statue with that site. IF any of the Plaintiffs had attended or participated in the Columbus statue's proceedings before the Historical Commission, perhaps they could have stated a cause or reasons why the statue should remain at Marconi.

The Plaintiffs include an ad hoc Friends of Marconi Plaza, the "1492 Columbus Day" group and others who were silent about the importance in their "Italian culture" of the Columbus statue and the equally important Columbus Hall which was approved by the Historical Commission on June 12, 2020. I have been met with hostility by the statue's "defenders" because of my submissions to the Historical Commission. I have been asked, "Why do these people (i.e., the "defenders") hate you?" In the past, the "1492" group has barred vendors to work on City-owned property during the Columbus Day activities. I was one, with my best-selling book, *The Philadelphia Italian Market Cookbook*. (1999) which included more history among the 150-some recipes from those of Italian ancestry. Of the thirteen or so, Commonwealth (official) historical markers^{*} specifically on "Italian" subjects, none of the Plaintiffs supported or attended the dedications presided by a representative of the Governor. Please consider these facts.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA

* I am responsible for 45 (official historical markers as well as commissioned (private) markers at "Palumbo's," "Piazza" at the 9th Street Market and "Pat's Steaks."