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Media: Contact: Jacqui Argyres
Phone: (408) 891-9419
Email: jargyrescreativecomm@gmail.com

City of San Jose Marks Greek Independence Day with Flag Raising at City Hall

SAN JOSE, CA – On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 5:00 pm, the City of San Jose held a Greek Flag Raising Ceremony at City Hall Plaza to commemorate the 205th anniversary of Greece's independence. The event, hosted by San Jose Vice Mayor and District 9 Councilmember Pam Foley, brought together the Greek-American community and local leaders to honor this historic occasion.

Organized by the **American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA)** and the **Daughters of Penelope (DOP)**, the event featured distinguished guests including **His Eminence Metropolitan Tarasios of Rhodopolis**, Hierarchical Proistamenos of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church, and **Alicia and Chris Frangos**, Past District 21 Governors for the DOP and AHEPA, respectively.

To commemorate the occasion, **Vice Mayor Pam Foley** presented a proclamation from Mayor Matt Mahan and the San Jose City Council recognizing March 25 as Greek Independence Day.

"It was an honor to host the Greek Independence Day Flag Raising at City Hall and celebrate with San José's vibrant Greek community," said Vice Mayor Foley. "Greek Americans have long helped shape our city's culture and economy, and their contributions continue to enrich our community. We are proud to recognize and celebrate the enduring legacy of Greek heritage and the core values of freedom and democracy it represents."

Reverend Father James Kumarelas, of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, spoke on the event's deeper significance, connecting Greek history to the Orthodox faith. "Our celebration of Greek Independence is a spiritual, cultural, and universal festival, joined together with our Greek Orthodox Church's feast of the Annunciation," stated Father James. "It is fitting that we reflect on this 'announcement' to the world, as it reminds us where our roots of Democracy are planted, of Hellenism, embodied in the ethos of the Greek people, and of the fight for freedom, of which we here in America can all understand."

As a further tribute, the iconic glass rotunda and tower at San Jose City Hall are being illuminated in the colors of the Greek flag for seven days, serving as a symbolic gesture of the importance of Greek heritage within the city.

Distinguished local Greek Americans in attendance included **Dr. Vassilis Zarifis**, AHEPA Silicon Valley Chapter 251 President; **Joanna Dunn**, Daughters of Penelope Past Daphne 29 President; and current chapter President **Jacqui Argyres**.

Dr. Zarifis emphasized the significance of the occasion, stating, "We are proud that AHEPA commemorates Greek Independence Day each year, celebrating freedom, democracy, and the global impact of Hellenism through this flag-raising event. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of the City of San José and Vice Mayor Pam Foley, whose unwavering commitment has helped sustain these celebrations. Seeing the American and Greek flags

flying side by side reminds us of the strong and historic bonds between our two nations—bonds that fill us with pride and optimism."

Joanna Dunn added, "For over 90 years, the Daughters of Penelope have worked to ensure that our Greek heritage isn't just a memory, but a living part of San Jose. Raising this flag at City Hall is a powerful reminder that the values our ancestors fought for in 1821—freedom, education, and service—are the same values we practice in our community every day."

The Greek Orthodox community was well represented by **Reverend Fathers James Kumarelas and Nebojsa Pantic**, along with a large group of parishioners from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in San Jose. The celebratory atmosphere was enhanced by a performance from the **St. Nicholas dancers**, who showcased traditional Greek folk dances, and the **Greek and American National Anthems**, performed by the students of the **St. Nicholas Greek School**.

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