



## California Italian-American Task Force

### **Saving Columbus Day Network Alert: From Bill Cerruti, Chair, California Italian-American Task Force**

*Notre Dame University has decided to cover the twelve historic Columbus Murals...*

**The Issue:** Notre Dame University has decided to cover the 12 historic Columbus Murals that have been on display at the University since 1884. The murals depict the arrival of Columbus and commemorate the arrival of the Irish, Italian and other Catholic immigrants. A combination of Italian-American, Catholic and conservative campus organizations are protesting the decision. The decision was made due to pressure from campus Native American activists without notice to the Italian-American or other communities.

**False Accusations Against Columbus:** Columbus is an important historical figure. His voyage of discovery is one of the greatest events in world history and changed the course of history and led to the creation of America. The Columbus Murals depict his life and exploration and were painted during a time when his popular image was that of an American hero.

But he is also the subject of false and misleading accusations by those who seek to denigrate him and his accomplishments. The action by the University of Notre Dame supports the view that Columbus is responsible for the acts of those who came after him. Native Americans and the anti-Columbus forces accuse Columbus of being a symbol of slavery and you name it. Yet Columbus did not own Slaves. The African slave trade began over a hundred years after Columbus's death. Those who deny the contributions of Columbus miss the point of his story and the story of the many immigrants who arrived after him. That is a story the University should tell its students.

**Network Alert:** The attached Alert by the ISDA (*Italian Sons and Daughters of America*) contains a description of the issue and the **information on how to contact the responsible University officials by email or mail to protest the action**. This is another example of the attack on the Columbus heritage by native Americans who seek to denigrate the European roots of the United States.

**Action Needed!** The University should change its biased decision. Further, to avoid such biased actions in the future, the University should create a "**Italian-American Studies Program**" so that its students and university leaders are better informed about the Italian American experience and the importance of Columbus as a symbol of Italian American identity.

**Why Italian-American Studies Are Needed:** Young Italian-Americans need to experience their distinctive cultural roots as a positive force rather than a hurdle... [Click on button below to read the entire article on Italian-American studies.](#)

*Bill Cerruti, Chair  
California Italian-American Task Force*