

Westchester County
Board of Legislators



Proclamation

Whereas

Westchester County is defined by a rich heritage of diversity imparted by its many ethnic and cultural groups, and

WHEREAS, among these groups are men and women from Hungary who settled in Westchester County at the turn of the 20th century, largely in and around the great city of Peekskill, and

WHEREAS, these industrious Hungarians contributed greatly to the region's industry, working in Peekskill's many prosperous factories such as the Peekskill Hat Factory, its largest single employer, which produced fashionable fur and fedora hats, and later, military hats for American soldiers in World War I, and

WHEREAS, these immigrants built their community around the Free Hungarian Reform Church of Peekskill on Kossuth Street and demonstrated their unselfish, civic commitment to others by founding social service organizations, including the Hungarian Sick and Benefit Society of Peekskill, to provide aid, comfort and education to new arrivals from their native land, and

WHEREAS, Peekskill is noted for numerous renown Hungarians and Hungarian families, including Governor George Pataki whose grandfather, John, served in the Hungarian Army and emigrated to the United States in 1908, and

WHEREAS, on October 23, 1956, a bold and courageous Hungarian people, yearning for freedom, rebelled against the tyranny of communist domination, demonstrating in the streets of Budapest, then spreading their actions to other parts of the country, and

WHEREAS, by the bloody revolution's end on November 4, 1956, thousands of these heroic "Freedom Fighters" had died at the hands of the Soviets who occupied their homeland and many more were jailed, all in the name of liberty, and

WHEREAS, today, the Westchester County Board of Legislators pays homage to the courage of the 1956 "Freedom Fighters" whose sacrifice and undaunted spirit marked the beginning of a 35-year battle that ultimately brought down communism and gave birth to the free and thriving Hungarian nation of today, and

WHEREAS, this Board further honors those Hungarian Americans from Westchester County and elsewhere who aided these Freedom Fighters, and rallying to the cry of "Free Americans for a Free Hungary," **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, that the members of the Westchester County Board of Legislators join their Chairman William J. Ryan in proclaiming that the month of November 2006 be dedicated to commemorating the outstanding contributions of Hungarians to the cause of liberty as well as to the wellbeing of Westchester County.

Given Under My Hand and Seal this 27th Day of NOVEMBER 2006

William J. Ryan
Chairman

[Signature]
Legislator