



COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joseph J. Plumeri to be Grand Marshal of the 67th Annual NYC Columbus Day Parade

*Philanthropist and Business Executive to Lead 35,000 Marchers
In World's Largest Celebration of Italian American Culture and Heritage*

October 10, 2011 on Fifth Avenue, Starting at 11:30 AM

New York, NY, July 19, 2011 – Philanthropist and business leader Joseph Plumeri, Chairman and CEO of Willis Group Holdings, will be the Grand Marshal of the 2011 Columbus Day Parade in New York City, Frank Fusaro, President of the Columbus Citizens Foundation announced today.

“We are delighted that Joe Plumeri will be Grand Marshal of the 2011 Columbus Day Parade and Columbus Celebration, which this year marks the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy,” said Mr. Fusaro. “Joe is one of the most dynamic, passionate, positive, and generous men I’ve ever met. Among so many other acts of kindness to worthy causes throughout his career in business of over 40 years, he honored his parents by funding the construction of the Samuel & Josephine Plumeri Wishing Place, the headquarters of the New Jersey Chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He honored his late son, Christian, through his generosity to the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York, which provided for the development of the school’s Christian Plumeri Sports Complex. As a global business leader who puts integrity first, he established new standards of transparency in the insurance industry and oversaw the development of The Willis Cause and Willis’s unique Client Bill of Rights. A man of great vision, compassion and character, Joe is a builder of communities and is devoted to helping others.”

“The Columbus Day Parade is one of America’s great celebrations of a people who helped create the United States as a nation of freedom and unprecedented achievement and innovation,” said Mr. Plumeri. “It is a privilege for me to be Grand Marshal and to honor my grandparents, who immigrated from Sicily, my parents, and the millions of Italian Americans who sacrificed and dedicated themselves to their families, their communities, and the United States of America.”

Part of the broader city-wide Columbus Celebration, the Columbus Day Parade is the largest celebration of Italian American culture and heritage in the world. The 2011 Columbus Day Parade will feature over 100 contingents, including virtuoso performances

of traditional Italian and Italian American music and dance, street performers, historical and contemporary floats, over a dozen marching bands, and national and international dignitaries. It is broadcast live on WABC-TV beginning at noon and internationally on RAI-TV.

About Joseph J. Plumeri

Joseph J. Plumeri was born in a blue collar neighborhood in North Trenton, NJ. He is the son of Josephine and the late Samuel J. Plumeri, Sr., a Trenton businessman, entrepreneur and community leader. His grandparents immigrated to the United States from Villalba, Sicily. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in history and education from The College of William and Mary and attended New York Law School.

Mr. Plumeri's corporate life started in 1968 at the small brokerage, Carter, Berlind & Weill. He worked with one of the partners, Sandy Weill, for over three decades as Mr. Weill's small investment firm transformed, becoming part of Shearson, then American Express, Shearson Lehman Brothers, the Travelers Group and, finally, Citigroup. In 1999, Mr. Plumeri headed the integration of the consumer businesses of Travelers Group and Citicorp after the \$70 billion merger of the two firms and served a year as CEO of Citibank, North America. In 2000, he became Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the London-based Willis Group Holdings at the request of Henry Kravis and his company, Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, which had just acquired Willis.

Mr. Plumeri transformed the long-established but sleepy Willis. He took it public, oversaw the construction of a new London headquarters and acquired competitor Hilb Rogal & Hobbs in a massive \$2.1 billion merger that doubled Willis's American presence and solidified its position as the world's third largest insurance broker. He also negotiated a long-term lease and naming rights to what had previously been Sears Tower, in Chicago, and which is now Willis Tower, the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere.

In 2004, Mr. Plumeri took the bold step of refusing to accept contingent commissions at Willis and oversaw the creation of Willis's Client Bill of Rights that ensured transparency in the company's operations and practices. A passionate champion of the insurance industry, Mr. Plumeri once said, "Insurance is the DNA of capitalism. Nothing would move, nothing would be built, nothing would happen without us."

Mr. Plumeri owns minor league baseball teams that are feeder clubs to the New York Yankees and Philadelphia Phillies. The Yankee team, the Trenton Thunder, plays in Samuel J. Plumeri, Sr. Field, which he named after his father.

Mr. Plumeri is an active philanthropist. He committed \$2 million to establish the Plumeri Awards for Faculty Excellence at the College of William & Mary, funded the Joseph J. Plumeri Business Scholarship and created the Joseph J. Plumeri Endowment Fund for baseball scholarships at the college. He provided the largest gift ever made to the Make-

A-Wish Foundation for the construction of the organizations New Jersey Chapter Headquarters, now named the Samuel & Josephine Plumeri Wishing Place. He also contributed \$1 million to the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York, for the development of the school's Christian Plumeri Sports Complex, which is named in honor of his late son.

He currently serves on the boards of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Mount Sinai Medical Center, the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, the Jackie Robinson Foundation, Carnegie Hall and American Friends of the Churchill Museum in London. He was Commissioner of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority from 1997 to 2004.

About the Columbus Citizens Foundation

The Columbus Citizens Foundation is a non-profit organization in New York City committed to fostering an appreciation of Italian-American heritage and achievement. The Foundation, through a broad range of philanthropic and cultural activities, provides opportunities for advancement to deserving Italian-American students through various scholarship and grant programs. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Foundation is providing just under \$2 million in scholarship assistance to over 500 students. The Foundation organizes New York City's annual Columbus Celebration and Columbus Day Parade, which has been held under the auspices of the Foundation since 1944.

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Please note: High resolution images are available upon request

Event: 67th Annual Columbus Day Parade

Parade route: Heading up Fifth Avenue from 47th to 72nd Streets, New York City

Times: 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Broadcast: WABC-TV New York, Noon to 3:00 PM

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