



## **Fiorello LaGuardia** **By Daniele LaRosa**

During a time in which midtown Manhattan was not only the center point of the United States, but of the whole world, progressiveness and a cleaning of the swamp was necessary in order to perfect the optics and living conditions in the Big Apple, and through a determined leadership and forging a relationship with the federal government Fiorello La Guardia was able to do just that, serving as a great source of inspiration for cities across the country. His bold ideas followed by the ability to gather political and financial resources allowed him to rejuvenate the city and modernize the infrastructure and landscape, which resulted in the place becoming synonym with United States of America.

“The Little Flower” was born in New York, son of an Italian mother native of Trieste. While not inheriting the principles of his culture from his region of origin, La Guardia relied on his family’s teachings and his situation to go down in history as one of the best NY mayors and a true patriot. The lifelong reform agenda originated and evolved from experiences in an Arizona military base in which his father was a maestro. The west thought him rational lessons about the neglect for Native Americans and the exploitation of workers with the railroad companies of the time. A hate for corruption developed through papers and was solidified through his father's death as bad meat was sold to the military by dishonest merchants.

The experiences at the age of 18 in Hungary as part of the American Consulate allowed him to learn six languages and improved the medical inspection system for immigrants. This confirmed his generosity for the powerless and oppressed, a known Italian characteristic that he had to get all on his own. New York was his family and he suffered seeing part of it left to fend for themselves; because of this, he decided to obtain a law degree from NYU attending at night and working during the day. There is nothing more important to an Italian man than family, and the sweat and tears spend on his goal to help it out proved his heritage and served as a steppingstone to not only his legacy, but also the entire country’s beliefs.

La Guardia's leadership was hand-on and personal, once again leading back to his roots. He supervised everything and cared about everybody as he believed there was no republican or democratic way of cleaning the streets. He rushed to fires, conducted orchestras, and moved laws and principles through the veins of New York, but also gave advice over radio, wrote letters to children, and supporting women suffrage movements and taking over court cases.

La Guardia's legacy is easily one responsible for reshaping the social infrastructure of the country, and the effects can be seen and felt to this day with many cities creating welfare programs inclusive of all classes and minorities.