The Landmarks of Federal Hill: Biography of Judge Luigi DePasquale and the nomenclature of DePasquale Avenue

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The Landmarks of Federal Hill

By Comm. Joseph R. Muratore (C) 1979

"Judge Luigi DePasquale - A forceful but compassionate Judge"

DePasquale Avenue was named in the mid '40s for a resident of Federal Hill who had distinguished himself by the unusual punishment with which he metered in his court and by his compassionate handling of difficult matters during difficult times.

DePasquale Avenue, as we know it today, was previously Arthur Avenue.

In mid '30s during the Chicago World Fair, Marshall Italo Balbo of Italy, a pioneer in aviation, successfully completed a trans-Atlantic flight from Italy with a squadron of airplanes. This was an unusual feat at that time, as air travel, especially in military formation, was difficult for such a long distance.

Italo-Balbo was received as a hero in America and in Italy. Many streets and squares throughout America were named in his honor, however, with the advent of World War II and Italy's participation and classification as a belligerent, any street, square or product that was named for either an Italian or a contemporary Italian leader fell in popularity and the names were

on Dec. 13, 1892 in Providence. He was the son of Antonio and Marie (Vitale) DePasquale, who were born at San Marco La Catola, Province of Foggia, Italy, and Santa Croce Del Sannio, Province of Benevento, Italy, respectively.

His favorite charity over the years developed into Boystown of Italy.

Those close to his family remember how he would purchase, from personal funds, hundreds of pairs of sneakers. His daughters and wife would spend days on end wrapping and packing them so they could be shipped to Italy.

Later, as many may remember, he held an annual venison dinner at the Club 400. The proceeds from these annual dinners were donated entirely to Boystown of Italy.

The judge was an avid reader, loved music and traveled extensively with Mrs. DePasquale. He would refer to his outstanding achievement in life as having been able to raise three "jewels" for children.

He was bilingual and was in constant demand as a speaker for many functions where discussions were carried on in English and Italian.

Coincidentally, just prior to the renaming of Balbo Avenue to DePasquale Avenue, there was a home between Kenyon Street and Broadway which was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Corrozza. Mr. Corrozza was a local funeral director and his wife was the organist and soloist for many years at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

When DePasquale Avenue was extended to Broadway by the removal of the Corrozza home, the DePasquale home instead, at 232 Broadway directly

that day in his court as it was St. Joseph's Day. He would then close his court session and St. Joseph's Day would be celebrated with his attendance somewhere throughout Rhode Island.

Many may also remember the directness and unusual punishment which he would meter out to young people. If any young man appeared in his courtroom without a tie, he would ask them if they realized that they were in a courtroom and that a courtroom was a place for justice and respect to be shown.

He would send the young man home with instructions to put on a necktie and return promptly or he would send the police for them: And depending on the infraction of the law that they had committed, he would impose on them 30 days of cleaning and washing the blackboards of their classroom.

He would expect their teachers to give a report at the end of the month as to whether the boards were satisfactorily and punctually cleaned.

If a youngster would skip the washing of a blackboard for reasons which were not sufficiently valid, he would extend the punishment for an additional 15 days.

Many may also remember when people appeared before his court and he would impose a minimal fine of $5.

The person appearing before him sometimes did not have the money for the fine so DePasquale would adjourn the court, as his sheriff or clerk to visit him in his chamber and would personally give the clerk or sheriff the $5.

They were instructed to give the money to the person appearing before DePasquale with instructions that the money be returned as soon as possible to the sheriff.

He would then reopen court and bring before him whomever had been charged with an infraction.

He would say to them, "Your fine is $5. Please pay it to the clerk and don't appear before my court again or you might be sorry."

In many instances, the youngsters never again appeared before him and in all instances the money that had been loaned through the sheriff or the clerk, was returned.

Many remember the punishment and fines that this compassionate judge metered out to those who appeared before him, but everyone knew that if they appeared before him with flagrant violations or with poor attitudes toward the police or the court, the penalty would be severe and that he would impose it.

Judge DePasquale died at age 65, on May 3, 1958. Mrs. DePasquale died on February 24, 1957. They are buried in St. Francis Cemetery in Cranston.

Judge DePasquale is survived by three children: Marie, Beatrice, and Eva. There are now eleven grandchildren and one great-grandchild, of whom I am sure the judge would be most proud of today, is Joey Paolino, councilman for the 13th ward.

Whenever hearing of DePasquale Avenue, always remember that it was named for a local resident who distinguished himself as a jurist and a charitable man.
Consequently, in the early '40s Balbo Avenue was renamed DePasquale Avenue.

Italo-Balbo, after his return to Italy and his further participation in military activity, fell in his favor with Mussolini and met with his death under unusual circumstances. It appeared that his misfortune was planned.

DePasquale Avenue was appropriately named for a young man who had been extremely active on Federal Hill and whose years of service had made his name a household word throughout Rhode Island. Luigi DePasquale was born in 1892, was an eloquent speaker, both in Italian and in English; was an active member of numerous fraternal and charitable organizations, he is remembered by many, for his compassionate justice conducted in his courtroom.

Luigi DePasquale was Associate Justice of the District Court of the 6th Judicial District of Rhode Island. He was born in Providence in 1892, was an eloquent speaker, both in Italian and in English; was an active member of numerous fraternal and charitable organizations, he is remembered by many, for his compassionate justice conducted in his courtroom.

This home was built about 1890, is an excellent 2½ story Late Victorian-Queen Anne house, with a hip roof and cross gable. It has a corner turret with dormers and a variety of windows. This home was sold by Dr. Hoye in 1938, to Judge Luigi DePasquale, and it became the DePasquale homestead until 1960, when it was sold. It faces DePasquale Avenue.

Luigi DePasquale was Associate Justice of the Democratic National Convention in New York, in 1924; and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Houston, Texas, in 1928.

One can see his popularity and the respect he had gained from his colleagues.

In 1934, he was elected to the Senate of Rhode Island and on June 21, 1935 he was appointed Associate Justice of the 6th Judicial District Court for the State of Rhode Island.

All of these positions, he achieved in a short period of 15 years.

During his entire busy and full life, he devoted much time to charitable organizations.

On St. Patrick's Day, he had great numbers of green carnations on hand everywhere that he went and would pass them out to all his Irish friends.

On St. Joseph's Day, he would enter the court room with white gloves, open court sessions and declare that there would be no business conducted faced DePasquale Avenue.

The DePasquale homestead was purchased in 1938 from Doctor Hayes and remained the DePasquale homestead until 1960.

Many may remember the individuality of Judge DePasquale. He was truly a very colorful man.