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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



Leif Erikson Day, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the year 1000, Leif Erikson, charged by King Olav to convert the Nordic settlers in Greenland, set sail to the west. A terrible storm forced his vessel off course, and he came upon lands of which there was no previous knowledge. He found "fields of self-sown wheat" and a country rich with grapes and timber. His early explorations are a tribute to the indomitable and inquisitive spirit so characteristic of the Nordic peoples.

Leif Erikson could not have known at the time of his voyage how intermingled the fate and fortune of the Nordic peoples and the new land would become. During the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth, millions of Erikson's descendants would join the great current of European migration to the United States. Brave pioneers from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland helped push the American frontier to the west, building communities and farms and enriching American life and culture. Others worked long and hard contributing to the great industries of the Northeast. Their accomplishments constitute a proud monument to the Nordic-American heritage and to the development of our country. Democratic ideals, an abiding faith in the value of ingenuity and hard work, and a deep belief in the sanctity of the individual are among the many values and principles we share. Because of the extensive commerce and exchange of ideas and people between the United States and the Nordic region, we have enjoyed friendship, understanding, and appreciation for each other.

To commemorate the courage of Leif Erikson and in recognition of our long and fruitful relationship with the Nordic peoples, the Congress of the United States, by joint resolution approved September 2, 1964 (78 Stat. 849, 36 U.S.C. 169c), authorized the President to proclaim October 9 in each year as Leif Erikson Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate October 9, 1984, as Leif Erikson Day, and I direct the appropriate government officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings that day. I also invite the people of the United States to honor Leif Erikson by holding appropriate exercises and ceremonies in suitable places throughout the land.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan