



City of New Haven

Signature Copy

Order: LM-2025-0241

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File Number: LM-2025-0241

ORDER OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS DESIGNATING THE CORNER OF WOOSTER STREET AND BROWN STREET AS "FRANK AND FILOMENA PEPE CORNER" IN HONOR OF THEIR CREATION OF NEW HAVEN STYLE PIZZA AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WOOSTER SQUARE COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS OF NEW HAVEN.

WHEREAS, New Haven-style pizza, locally referred to as "apizza," originated in New Haven in 1925 at Frank Pepe's Pizzeria, 157 Wooster Street;

WHEREAS, Frank Pepe immigrated to America as a teenager in 1909;

WHEREAS, after returning to Italy for a few years to fight in World War I he returned to New Haven to work in a pasta factory and then in a bakery on Wooster Street;

WHEREAS, while working at the bakery, Pepe started making his version of the classic "apizza" pronounced A-beets, a style of pizza from his hometown of Naples;

WHEREAS, Frank Pepe began selling his "tomato pies" off a special headdress, walking through the Wooster Square market with several pies perched atop his head;

WHEREAS, he eventually saved enough money to buy a wagon and continued selling the increasingly popular "apizza;"

WHEREAS, in June of 1925, Frank Pepe took over the bakery's operation and established "Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana" on Wooster Street;

WHEREAS, the rest, as they say, is history;

WHEREAS, Filomena Pepe was a partner to Frank and his greatest supporter;

WHEREAS, unlike her husband, Filomena could speak and write in English, so she was invaluable in establishing and growing the business;

WHEREAS, she took care of all administrative tasks and other things requiring such knowledge;

WHEREAS, true to his humble roots, Frank Pepe's restaurant first sold just two types of

'apizza," one with tomatoes, grated pecorino cheese, garlic, oregano, and olive oil, and a second that also had anchovies;

WHEREAS, the original tomato pie is still offered today, and anchovy continues to be available as an added topping;

WHEREAS, like many small business owners of the day, Frank and Filomena lived in an apartment above the pizzeria;

WHEREAS, they had two daughters, Elizabeth and Serafina, parents and daughters worked downstairs at the pizzeria;

WHEREAS, active in his community, Frank Pepe became known as "Old Reliable" for his contributions to the neighborhood and for his unwavering love of his growing extended family;

WHEREAS, having established one of the first pizzerias in the country, Frank passed away in 1969; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1970s, Elizabeth and Seravina purchased the old bakery next door from the Boccamiello family and opened it as Frank Pepe's The Spot, an annex to the main building.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED by the New Haven Board of Alders that in honor of Frank and Filomena Pepe's contributions to the creation of New Haven style pizza, "apizza" the corner of Wooster Street and Brown Street is designated as "Frank and Filomena Pepe Corner" in perpetuity making their legacy in New Haven officially permanent.

This Order was Passed by the Board of Alders on 6/4/2025.

Attest, City Clerk 

Date 5/19/2025

Signed, City Clerk 

Date 6/11/2025

Signed, Mayor 

Date 6/13/2025