

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 43RD LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
1 CHARLES III, 2023

Bill 81

An Act to proclaim Croatian Heritage Day

Ms D. Skelly

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading March 20, 2023

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



An Act to proclaim Croatian Heritage Day

Preamble

For more than a century Canadians of Croatian heritage have made incredible contributions to business, politics, medicine, science, sport and culture in Ontario.

Croatian immigrants escaping the oppression of the Communist regime began arriving in Ontario in the 1920s seeking a better life. They worked in steel mills in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie, in mines in northern Ontario and on construction sites across Ontario. They established vibrant communities across the province, including in Windsor, Welland, Hamilton, Mississauga, Toronto and further north in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

Today, Ontario is home to over 100,000 people of Croatian descent, the largest Croatian population in Canada.

The contributions of Ontarians of Croatian descent have been numerous. For example, Robert Herjavec, best known for being an investor on *Dragon's Den* and *Shark Tank*, came to Ontario with his family destitute and is now living the "Canadian dream". Scientist Asaf Durakovic was an expert in nuclear and radiation medicine.

Athleticism is an important part of the Croatian identity. This dedication to sport has given Ontario world-class athletes. Boxer George Chuvalo was a five-time Canadian heavyweight champion who is best known for having never been knocked down in his 93 bout professional career, including in fights against Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman.

Brothers Frank and Peter Mahovlich, who grew up in Timmins, played for the National Hockey League (NHL) and became Stanley Cup winners. Matt and Marty Pavelich, who were raised in Sault Ste. Marie, also made their mark in the NHL, and Oakville's Tony Mandarich played 7 seasons in the National Football League (NFL).

Figure skaters Sandra and Val Bezic were a sister and brother team from Toronto who won Canadian figure skating championships in the 1970s and who represented Canada at the 1972 Olympics.

People of Croatian heritage have helped build Ontario into one of the best places in the world to live. By proclaiming May 30 as Croatian Heritage Day, the Province of Ontario recognizes the remarkable contributions of Ontarians of Croatian descent, as well as the values they bring and the important role they have played in shaping the identity of Ontario.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Croatian Heritage Day

1 May 30 in each year is proclaimed as Croatian Heritage Day.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Croatian Heritage Day Act, 2023*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims May 30 in each year as Croatian Heritage Day