

NATURALIZATION CEREMONY TO ATTRACT 125 NEW CITIZENS

The North Carolina 4th of July Festival will conduct its 16th annual Naturalization Ceremony on July 3rd on the Ft. Johnston Garrison House lawn beginning at 4:00 PM. The annual feature of the Festival will be preceded by a band concert by the Brunswick Concert Band. It is anticipated that approximately 125 new citizens from all around the globe will be administered the oath of citizenship by an official from the Citizenship & Immigration Services Office in Durham, NC, a part of the United States Department of Homeland Security. Also participating will be United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina in Wilmington, the Honorable Robert B. Jones, Jr. Judge Jones has served in his Wilmington position since 2007.

This year's key note speaker will be Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, himself from an immigrant family. Although Mr. Saffo is a native of Wilmington his mother, Mrs. Des Saffo immigrated from Greece through Ellis Island, NY on her way to Wilmington as a young girl. She, along with many of the Saffo family, have become United States citizens. Mrs. Saffo still resides in Wilmington with her husband Dokey where they have watched Bill serve on the Wilmington City Council since 2003 and as Mayor since 2006. Bill feels one of the great things we can do in our lives is to give back through public service. Ever since graduating from Hoggard High School and UNC-Wilmington he has followed his feelings. He serves on many boards and commissions in addition to his Mayoral duties.

Other participants in the ceremony will include the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard; the Southport Community Choir; the Southport Historical Society; US Army Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point; St James Fire Department Fire Police; local singer and disc-jockey Rodney Axom; and the Brunswick County Board of Elections will provide voter registration opportunities. The Brunswick Town Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) will provide United States flags to all new citizens and host a reception in their honor at the Southport Community Center building immediately after the ceremony.

Submitted By: Ted Carlsen
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NC 4th of July Festival Committee