

Rocco DiPaolo  
Italian Immigrant  
February 12, 1955



Let me start by saying that this is a very historical and emotional day for me. It is through Pier 21 that as a little boy, in 1955, I began my new life in this beautiful country. I was born in a small "paese" in Italy called Montelongo. Our family was very, very poor and the effect of the Second World War left our village in ruins and desolation. My parents were farming people and worked extremely hard in trying to rebuild our life after the war. During this time, Canada was inviting immigrants to come and live in a land of unlimited opportunities for hard-working people. Needless to say, my parents accepted the challenge and decided to come to Canada

My dad, my two brothers and my oldest sister had immigrated in the early 1950's through Pier 21. My mom, younger sister and I followed afterwards on February 12, 1955. Our journey from Naples to Halifax was stormy and gray. Huge waves would rock the Greek ship during the trip. I remember vividly as our ship approached the Bay of Halifax how excited we were to reach our port of destination and at last meet with the rest of our family. Our ship anchored for 2 to 3 hours and finally 2 tug boats escorted us to Pier 21. After customs verification, we were to board a train to Montreal.

Once inside Pier 21, I tightly held my mother's hand as I stared all around the pier with fear and confusion in my heart. I asked her: "Mamma, where are we?" She replied, "Figlio mio, this is Canada, a country where flows milk and honey. Here we will be able to build a good future and live our dreams." As usual, Mamma was right. Canada has offered me a better quality of life, a good education, and a great career as a manager with a great Canadian company.

Pier 21 stands as the main vine to this country with extended branches across the continent where every landed immigrant resides and contributes in building our great nation, Canada. Special thanks to Mrs. Ruth Goldbloom and the society for having revived the spirit of Pier 21. It is my desire that through your works, the voice of Pier 21 will reach the ears of every Canadian across the land in the years to come.

