



PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL OFFICE OF COUNCILMAN-AT-LARGE DAVID OH

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Promoting Philadelphia By Land and By Sea

*"Councilman David Oh Continues to Build the Profile of the City by Declaring
Gazela Primeiro as the Official Tall Ship of Philadelphia"*

Philadelphia, PA – June 1, 2012, City Councilman At-Large David Oh is preparing for another event to continue promoting the profile of Philadelphia. On April 19, 2012, Councilman Oh introduced a resolution to declare *Gazela Primeiro* as the Official Tall Ship of Philadelphia.

"*Gazela Primeiro* has called Philadelphia her home since 1971 and has been the "unofficial" Tall Ship of the city, and it's about time to make it official," said Councilman Oh. "This ship sails the Eastern Coast of America, participating in a variety of events and is a fantastic opportunity to promote Philadelphia."

On June 15, 2012, the official ceremony will take place aboard *Gazela Primeiro* at Penn's Landing where members of City Council and other representatives from the City along with other elected officials will attend to declare *Gazela Primeiro* as the Official Tall Ship of the City of Philadelphia.

Gazela Primeiro is believed to be the oldest, wooden square-rigged ship still actively sailing in the United States. Since 1988, she has been owned, maintained and sailed by the members of the Philadelphia Ship Preservation Guild. The guild's president, Eric Lorgus, noted that "*Gazela Primeiro* is known throughout the world because of her remarkable history, her age, and because she is still sailing. She has long been regarded as "Philadelphia's Tall Ship", and indeed, was owned by the city during the 1980's. She has sailed for 40 years along the Eastern seaboard representing Philadelphia as its Goodwill Ambassador, but has never been officially designated as the Official Tall Ship of Philadelphia until now."

Gazela Primeiro was built in Sebutal, Portugal in 1901 and is the oldest, square-rigged tall ship actively sailing in the United States. The ship was once owned by the City in the 1980's and is now owned and operated by a volunteer organization called the Philadelphia Ship

Preservation Guild. Last week, *Gazela Primeiro* participated in OpSail Parade 2012 in New York Harbor and later in the summer will be visiting the ports of Norfolk/Portsmouth (VA), Baltimore, Newport (RI), Bath (ME), and in Nova Scotia the ports of Halifax, Port Hawkesbury, and Pictou where she will be seen by thousands of tall ship enthusiasts in each of these ports.

“By designating *Gazela Primeiro* as the Official Tall Ship of Philadelphia, she will remind all who see her of Philadelphia's rich maritime history, and its prominence as one of the major ports on the Eastern seaboard,” said Councilman Oh. “*Gazela Primeiro* is more than a ship that will help spread the word about Philadelphia, she is a source of pride to the Portuguese American community in our city and a link between Portugal and the City of Philadelphia.”

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Gazela Primeiro as it is known today was built in Setubal, Portugal in 1901 and is the oldest wooden, square-rigged tall ship still actively sailing in the United States. Gazela Primeiro was built to carry fishermen to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, where every spring she would leave Lisbon, laden with as many as 35 dories stacked on deck like drinking cups, a crew of 40 men, and in her hold would be 90 tons of salt, which would be used to preserve the cod fish that were caught. Upon the retirement of Gazela Primeiro in 1969, the ship was purchased by philanthropist William Wikoff Smith for the purpose of displaying it at what is today the Independence Seaport Museum. On May 24, 1971, with a crew of Americans (including one former Gazela engineer), the ship left for its new home in Philadelphia, tracing Columbus' route via the Canary Islands and San Juan, Puerto Rico and on Thursday, July 8th, made her first entrance into Philadelphia. When not sailing and participating in events, Gazela Primeiro is docked at Penn's Landing as a tourist attraction.

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The Philadelphia Ship Preservation Guild is 99% managed and manned by volunteers from all ages and walks of life. The guild has only one employee, who supervises the preservation work performed by the guild's members on both the historic tall ship Gazela Primeiro and the historic 1902 tugboat, Jupiter. Those same members then take turns forming the crew that sails these two historic vessels to ports along the Eastern seaboard. Most of the members of the guild have life-changing experiences, and many of these stories have been collected in the recently published book, "The Heart of a Ship -- Stories from the Crew of Gazela Primeiro". The guild offers opportunities to new members for either helping with its administration and fundraising, or for working on the vessels themselves. For more information, please visit www.gazela.org or call 215-238-0280.

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