



COUNTY OF ERIE

CHRISTOPHER L. JACOBS

COUNTY CLERK

GA

April 15, 2012

The Honorable  
Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**Re: Closing Room Dedication in Memory of Joseph C. Vispi**

Dear Honorable Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of a group of local real estate attorneys who have contacted my office personally requesting that the Office of the Erie County Clerk pay special tribute to Joseph Vispi by naming the Closing Room in Old County in his memory.

Mr. Vispi was a prominent real estate lawyer for over 60 years and worked every day until he recently passed away at the age of 91. In speaking with staff, they all knew Joe and held him in high regard. Attached is a copy of a letter I received from one of Joe's colleagues requesting that we honor Mr. Vispi for all his years of dedication to a field he so loved and did so much for.

Since Old County Hall is an asset of Erie County and this action is outside the purview of this office, I respectfully ask that the Erie County Legislature consider this resolution renaming the "Closing Room" as the "Joseph C. Vispi Closing Room" in his memory.

Should your honorable body require further information, I encourage you to contact me directly at 716/858-8865. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher L. Jacobs  
Erie County Clerk

CLJ/mjc  
Enclosure

8E-23

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Erie County Clerk Christopher L. Jacobs  
**Re:** Room Dedication in Memory of Joseph C. Vispi  
**Date:** **April 15, 2012**

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### **SUMMARY**

It is recommended that the Erie County Legislature authorize the "Closing Room", in the Clerk's Office, located in Old County Hall, be dedicated in memory of Joseph C. Vispi and renamed in his honor as the "Joseph C. Vispi Closing Room".

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Mr. Joseph C. Vispi was a prominent real estate lawyer in Erie County for over sixty years, until he died at the age of 91. Joe was elected president of his law school class, was a Director of the Bar Association of Erie County, President of the Lawyers Club of Buffalo, and the Justinian Legal Society. In speaking with staff, they all knew Joe and held him in high regard. Attached is a copy of a letter I received from one of Joe's colleagues requesting that we honor Mr. Vispi for all his years of dedication to a field he so loved and did so much for.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Joe Vispi was a preeminent attorney in his field; he would always share his knowledge with other lawyers, title searchers, and filing clerks and also mentored many young lawyers.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

Honorable recognition of Mr. Joseph Vispi's service and dedication to the practice of real estate law will not be given.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

An official ceremony will be conducted in the Erie County Clerk's "Closing Room", where it will be renamed the "Joseph C. Vispi Closing Room" and witnessed by invited family, friends and colleagues.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
ERIE COUNTY CLERK CHRISTOPHER L. JACOBS

**RE: Room Dedication in Memory of  
Joseph C. Vispi**

WHEREAS, Joseph C. Vispi was a prominent real estate lawyer in Erie County for over sixty years, until he died at the age of 91 years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Vispi worked out of Old County Hall's "Closing Room" every day and was known to everyone who practiced in the field of real estate law, by every recording clerk, cashier, title searcher and attorney; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Vispi was elected president of his law school class, was a Director of the Bar Association of Erie County, President of the Lawyers Club of Buffalo, and the Justinian Legal Society; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Vispi was so loved and respected and considerate of his fellow lawyers, that the Bar Association of Erie County awarded him one of its highest honors in 2009 with the Civility Award; and

WHEREAS, Joe Vispi was a preeminent attorney in his field, always willing to share his knowledge with other lawyers, title searchers, and filing clerks and he also mentored many young lawyers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the "Closing Room", in the Clerk's Office, located in Old County Hall be dedicated in Mr. Vispi's memory and renamed in his honor as the "Joseph C. Vispi Closing Room;" and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Erie County Clerk, the County Attorney, Justice Paula Feroletto, Administrative Judge, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Mr. Scott Schwartz of Lipsitz, Green, Scime, Cambria and to the Vispi Family.



# Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria LLP

Attorneys at Law

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February 3, 2012

## PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Christopher Jacobs  
 Erie County Clerk  
 25 Delaware Avenue  
 Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

Congratulations on your new position of Clerk of the County of Erie. I have been a practicing attorney for 37 years and although my practice is in personal injury, I grew to know and love a lawyer who spent his whole life practicing real estate law in our county. Joseph Vispi recently died at the age of 91 years. Joe was known by every person who practiced in the field of real estate law, by every recording clerk, cashier, title searcher and attorney.

Let me tell you a little bit about Joe, Joe served in combat during WWII. He was in Germany, Italy, France and Belgium. He was one of 162 GIs with two years of college and outstanding service records to be chosen to attend Oxford, which he did, then allowing him to go straight to law school. Joe was elected president of his law school class, was a Director of the Bar Association of Erie County, President of the Lawyers Club of Buffalo, and the Justinian Legal Society. Joe was the untitled, but undisputed "dean of the real estate bar".

Though Joe was the preeminent attorney in his field, he wasn't selfish with his knowledge – he would share, if asked, whatever he knew with any other lawyer, title searcher, filing clerk, and they often did, he was a mentor to many young lawyers. He would help however he could and he dealt with everyone he came into contact with, with civility and respect. So loved and respected and considerate of his fellow lawyers was Joe, that the Bar Association of Erie County, 3,800 lawyers strong, in 2009 awarded him its Civility Award – one of its highest honors.

Joe Vispi, in good times and bad times, when he was feeling well and when he wasn't, would never complain, even though it meant trudging over to Erie County Hall at 90 years of age, in February, in the snow, in the cold, because people were counting on him to write a title policy or close a real estate transaction. Joe made his way to the Hall for over 60 years, and in his last years, the Court Officers would give him a seat to catch his breath when he finally made it into the building. I honestly don't believe that you can find anyone who's practice or work involved real estate, and who spent any time in the closing area at the Erie County Hall, who would tell you that they knew a more knowledgeable lawyer in his practice, or a finer person.



Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria<sup>LLP</sup>

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Christopher Jacobs  
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Toward that end, it is my hope that you will consider naming the Closing Room at the Erie County Hall, the Joseph C. Vispi Closing Room and perhaps erect a very small plaque designating it as such. If you have any doubt as to the measure of this man, I would encourage you to speak to some of the people on the floor in the real estate section. I would bet that every single one of them would join in this request, if asked.

Very truly yours,

Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria LLP

By: Scott M. Schwartz

SMS/ldb

cc: Erie County Legislator, Thomas Mazur

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