We should reassess the Columbus Day holiday

To the editor:

When Christopher Columbus and his crew were discovered on Oct. 12, 1492, by Indigenous people on the shores of Guanahani Island, they were lost, confused and the crew had threatened Columbus with mutiny.

In the subsequent four years, Columbus and his men rewarded their rescuers by raping, slaughtering and deporting as slaves tens of thousands of these gentle and hospitable people who became known as the Taino Indians of Hispaniola.

In the next few generations, all of the Taino Indians, totaling in the hundreds of thousands when Columbus arrived, disappeared. Ultimately, many millions of the original inhabitants of what is now North America perished due to disease (introduced largely by Western Europeans), slaughter, starvation, war, slavery and deportation.

Nonetheless, Columbus is honored each year, while those who paid the dearest price are forgotten. Should not Columbus Day at least be shared and renamed Columbus and Indigenous Peoples Day?

Perhaps Columbus Day should be abandoned and that day set aside to memorialize the millions of Indigenous people who lost their lives protecting their lands. After all, Columbus was not the first adventurer to journey to the "New World" nor, for that matter, was he a humanitarian.

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