

# FOUNDATIONAL QUARTERLY

COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION

COLUMBUS CELEBRATION 2008





# President's Message

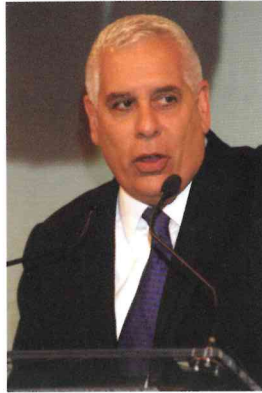
Louis A. Tallarini

Looking back on 2008, our Foundation enjoyed one of its most successful Columbus Celebrations ever. Friends of the Foundation from Italy again joined us for the exhibits in Vanderbilt Hall. We enjoyed an extremely successful collaboration with the United States Navy and told the story of The Great White Fleet, America's first major international humanitarian effort. And millions of New Yorkers and tourists visited our exhibitions and attended the Columbus Day Parade, the largest celebration of Italian-American heritage in the world.

We owe the success of the Celebration to our Foundation Members and particularly to our Committee Chairs: Angelo Vivolo, Columbus Celebration Chair; Alfred Catalanotto, Parade Chair; Anthony Giordano and Anthony Mallardi, Journal Co-Chairs; Frank Fusaro, Media Chair; Maria Bartiromo, Dinner Chair; Michael Pedone, Marketing Chair; Giuliana Ridolfi Cardillo, Italian Affairs Chair; and Maria Theresa Fauci, Silent Auction Chair. Our special gratitude this year goes to Hon. Richard Greco, Jr., who shared his knowledge about a wide range of subjects, from ancient art to naval affairs, and to Richard C. De Zego and Alfred T. De Maria, who took it upon themselves to help with our Maserati raffles. Once again, the Foundation staff worked tirelessly to help make the events a great success. I would like to thank Executive Director Christine Meola, General Manager John Boden, Controller Lisa LoRusso, Sue Plant, Anthony Sama, Stephanie Vano, Marianna Togli, Rosie Scavuzzo, Millie Aponte, and Cathy Adiutori.

And, as ever, Foundation Chairman Laurence Auriana provided critical guidance and expertise in many areas. For more than a decade, Mr. Auriana has worked tirelessly and selflessly as we have highlighted the positive contributions Italian-Americans have made to the United States and improved educational opportunities for thousands of Italian-American students.

During the past year, the importance of the Foundation's scholarship programs and the hard work put in by the members of our



scholarship committees was recognized by a number of people both inside and outside the Foundation. Member Leandro Rizzuto became the Founding Donor of the Foundation's President's Circle with an exceptionally generous donation. Scores of other donors made significant contributions that strengthen our resources in very trying times and will help us to continue to support deserving scholarship students in the years to come.

This year, our scholarship programs are supporting the education of nearly 800 students with financial aid totaling \$2 million. Almost all of the students, from the elementary school level through college, are from the Greater Metropolitan Area, and by helping them attend schools that would otherwise be out of their reach, we are benefitting our community and New York City and the country as a whole. Despite the current economic environment, we remain fully committed to creating a better future for our scholarship students, their families and our community.

The coming months will continue to present challenges for the Foundation. Last year, in anticipation of a shifting economy, we began implementing measures to reduce operating costs. We will look for further means of controlling and minimizing expenditures. I would like to thank Treasurer Marian U. Pardo for her keen oversight in these areas and her pragmatic recommendations and innovative strategies.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Townhouse throughout the winter and spring as our House Committee presents a robust series of events. Plans for the 2009 Columbus Celebration are well underway, and I look forward to announcing the events and honorees in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Louis A. Tallarini". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "L".

Louis A. Tallarini, President

## COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION

The Columbus Citizens Foundation is a non-profit organization in New York City committed to fostering an appreciation of Italian-American heritage and achievement. The Foundation, through a broad range of philanthropic and cultural activities, provides opportunities for advancement to deserving Italian-American students through various scholarship and grant programs. The Foundation organizes New York City's annual Columbus Celebration and Columbus Day Parade, which has celebrated Italian-American heritage on New York's Fifth Avenue since 1929.

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A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a dark plaid dress with a diamond-shaped patch on the chest, is the central focus. She is smiling broadly and has her arms raised high, holding two small flags on wooden sticks. The flags have green, white, and red horizontal stripes. To her right, a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark sleeveless top and a necklace, is also smiling and waving her hand. In the lower-left foreground, the head and shoulders of a young boy with dark hair are visible, looking towards the camera. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a building with windows. The overall atmosphere is festive and celebratory.

An exuberant young girl embodied the spirit of the 2008 Columbus Day Parade.



# The Culture of Reggio Calabria and U.S. Navy Heroics at Grand Central Terminal

Vanderbilt Hall became a tribute to the deep bond between Italy and the United States during the 2008 Columbus Celebration through a series of vibrant, interactive exhibits. The dynamic industry, vistas, food and ancient and contemporary arts of Reggio Calabria were presented in videos and displays. Hundreds of thousands of visitors left the exhibition entranced by the Region's history and thriving culture. In an exceptional presentation, casts of the legendary Bronzi di Riace – two bronzes of bearded warriors from the third century B.C. – were presented for their exquisite casting and artistry in Vanderbilt Hall's West Wing.

Vanderbilt Hall's East Wing became the site of a historical exhibition about America's Great White Fleet, which 100 years earlier had established the U.S. Navy's unparalleled reputation for humanitarian missions. The story of the Fleet was summarized by Hon. Richard Greco, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Foundation Member at the Gala. Secretary Greco's excerpted comments follow:

*In the early morning of December 28, 1908, a massive earthquake struck in the Strait of Messina. The 7.5 magnitude earthquake was deadly and destructive enough, but then, a few minutes later, a tidal wave 50 feet high crashed into the cities of Messina, Sicily and Reggio Calabria. The destruction was unimaginable. In Messina, a vibrant port city of 150,000 people, only 15,000 people survived. In Reggio, a city of 50,000 people, only 10,000 survived. It would take days before the true extent of the devastation was known.*

*Immediately though, President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched the 16 ships of The Great White Fleet, then off the coast of Egypt on their world wide tour, to Italy. In his letter to Congress, requesting relief aid, President Roosevelt wrote, "The immense debt of civilization to Italy, the warm and steadfast friendship between that country and our own, the affection for their native land felt by great numbers of good American citizens who are immigrants from Italy, the abundance with which God has blessed us, in our safety – all these should prompt us to immediate and effective relief."*

*And so America responded with money, supplies, flesh and blood. Under the command of Admiral Charles Sperry, the ships of the Great White Fleet sailed into Messina and Reggio, and under the leadership of the United States Naval Attaché to Rome, Reginald Belknap, our Sailors and Marines stayed in Italy for more than six months. They buried the dead, administered to survivors, built houses, hospitals, schools and entire villages. They earned the love and gratitude of a nation and the admiration of the world in what was to become our first major effort of human-*

*itarian assistance, so often repeated by our Navy throughout this subsequent hundred years.*

*For the Italian, the citizen of the country that gave the world the Renaissance, accounting, modern banking, the piano, and giants like Dante Alighieri, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Enrico Fermi, the earthquake was a moment of naked vulnerability, witness to the worst suffering imaginable for a human being, but also to the best qualities of man: courage and love of neighbor and love of God.*



*For the American, the citizen of a young country painstakingly built by immigrants from many nations, it was a moment of greatness, the ascendance of a nation to the word stage. A nation come of age not to conquer, not to dominate, not to colonize, but to serve as a beacon of liberty for all people wanting to be part of a grand and noble experiment of self-governance. It was a*

*moment of homage to the friendship between Italy and the United States that had roots in the very foundation of our nation. Italian philosophers Filippo Mazzei and Gaetano Filangieri, inspired Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin and even the Declaration of Independence with the words first penned by Filippo Mazzei, "All Men are Created Equal."*

*For the Italian-American, the story is a continuation of a centuries-old proud legacy of contribution to the world. As Italian-Americans, we are the heirs of artists and scientists, bakers and shoemakers whose inventions of hand and mind, art and science, flood the world's churches, town squares, shops, and libraries. We are the heirs of a creative genius that continues throughout the world wherever Italians are present and breathe the inspiration of sweat and tears of our mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, whose very act of immigrating to the United States – many penniless, orphaned and still in shock after the earthquake and tidal wave – was an act of courage, wisdom and humility.*

*For the American sailor and marine, it was a moment to demonstrate the charity and love of their nation. G.K. Chesterton once said, "The true soldier fights not because he hates what's in front of him, but because he loves what's behind him." The good, the truth and the beauty of America that lies behind our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines today, as they fight to preserve our freedom and administer to the victims of modern earthquakes and tsunamis is the same truth: good and beauty lay behind them and inspired their compassion 100 years ago in Italy. Throughout our Columbus Day Celebrations for 2008, at our exhibit at Grand Central Station, on The Great White Fleet and the earthquake, on the USS Nassau, at the Waldorf-Astoria, and at the parade, we say, "Thank you," to the sailors and marines of The Great White Fleet for the help they rendered to our ancestors in Sicily and Calabria 100 years ago. ❖*

This page: Members of the U.S. Navy Band Northeast performing in Grand Central Terminal. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Servicemen were among the guests at the opening of The Great White Fleet exhibition. Foundation Chair of the Media and Philanthropic Committees Frank Fusaro with Rear Admiral Terence McKnight, US Navy. A striking Maserati Quattroporte S on the floor of Grand Central before being raffled to benefit the Foundation's scholarship fund. Hon. Richard Greco, Jr. with Italian Consul General Francesco M. Talò. The Vanderbilt Hall storyboard that gave an at-a-glance view of 2008 Grand Marshal, Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr. (US Navy, ret.). Maria Galetta, interpreter for the Region of Lombardia, Enzo Lucchini, Vice President of the Regional Council of Lombardia and Foundation Chairman Lawrence Auriana. The Great White Fleet exhibition in Vanderbilt Hall East. Riccardo Strano, Director of the Italian Government Tourist Board, North America, Giuliana Ridolfi Cardillo, Italian Affairs Chair, and Hon. Eugene L. Nardelli.







# Tradition, Family and America Celebrated at Annual Gala

The 2008 Annual Gala, held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on October 11, 2008, brought together Foundation Members and guests, including scores of scholarship benefactors, for an evening that celebrated the timeless values of Italian-American culture. As she explained in her opening remarks, Dinner Chair Maria Bartiromo said, "During these frightening and difficult economic times, we are reminded of the simple truths in life. Not to take for granted the little things, those things that are actually most important: our family, our friends, health, and support for one another."

And what a celebration it was, an event where "ambassadors and admirals jostled thousands of Italian-Americans," reported the *New York Post*. In addition to the illustrious Foundation Membership, the gathering included Hon. Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy, Hon. Giulio Terzi, Italian Ambassador to the United Nations, Lidia Bastianich, Governor and Mrs. Mario Cuomo, Governor John Corzine, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, Hon. Francesco Talò, Consul General of Italy, and David Anthony Pope, the great-grandson of Foundation co-Founder Generoso Pope.

Celebrity guests included the newest *American Idol* judge – and BMI Songwriter of the Year award winner – Kara DioGuardi, a former Honoree, who gave a performance that brought down the house. Ms. DioGuardi was introduced by her fellow *American Idol* judge and award-winning recording artist and choreographer Paula Abdul, who flew in for the occasion.

Columbus Celebration Chair Angelo Vivolo noted that "this year will be one of the most successful celebrations in the history of the Foundation. This success is in every way the result of the most dedicated group of Foundation members, and the staff of the Foundation, who have selflessly given their time and energy." Mr. Vivolo thanked individually Ms. Bartiromo, Journal Chairs Anthony Mallardi and Anthony Giordano, who Mr. Vivolo referred to as the "A-Team," Parade Chair Alfred Catalanotto, Media and Philanthropic Committee Chair Frank Fusaro, Marketing Chair Michael Pedone, Italian Affairs Chair Giuliana Ridolfi Cardillo, Silent Auction Chair Maria Theresa Fauci, and Foundation Executive Director Christine Meola, General Manager John Boden, Controller Lisa LoRusso, Sue Plant, Anthony Sama, Stephanie Vano, Marianna Togliola, Rosie Scavuzzo, Millie Aponte, and Cathy Adiatori. He added, "I would be remiss if I didn't mention Richard De Zego and Alfred De Maria, who have been so helpful."

The evening's honorees, Louis Tallarini noted, were "Joseph Plumeri, a leader of American industry, Chairman of one of the largest insurance brokerage companies in the world; Joseph Tusiani, poet laureate; and renowned surgeon Dr. Thomas Sculco. What a great group of Italian-Americans!"

Among the many draws of the evening was Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., US Navy (Ret.), Grand Marshal of the 2008 Columbus Day Parade. Admiral Giambastiani, who served as NATO Supreme Allied Commander and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recalled his ancestors coming to America three and four generations ago. "I don't know of any other country in a world where a descendent of bakers, farmers, masons



Honorees Thomas P. Sculco, M.D., Joseph Tusiani and Joseph Plumeri with Grand Marshal, Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr. (US Navy, ret.)

and craftsmen could wind up, as in my case, serving 2.4 million service men and women, and wind up being second senior military officer in the country. This truly is a land of opportunity, but it is also a testament to all of you and your descendents, those hardworking Italian-Americans. Thank you to the Foundation and all of you tonight for your warmth, thank you for your legacy, thank you for taking care of our youth through your scholarships for you are building America's future. Thank you again, so much, for the honor you are bestowing upon me. I've been a Supreme, I've been a

Vice Chairman, but I will be most proud of being a Grand."

Joseph Tusiani, the first American to win, in 1956, the prestigious Greenwood Prize of the Poetry Society of England, became the first poet honored in the Foundation's history. Although the Prize was but one of many honors Mr. Tusiani has been awarded, he was gracious and eloquent in his remarks, which reflected on family. "You know, very well, that at the center of each of our Italian-American families there was something that I would like to call a pivot, a pivot around which everything revolved and its name was 'tutto per figli,' he said. "How indebted we are and should always be to our grandparents and parents for their boundless, countless sacrifices that enabled us to be where we are, that enabled us to achieve what they could not. Surely we are the bright light out of their darkness." In closing, Mr. Tusiani read from a poem he had written, "To a Child:"

*Never take the world for granted  
For your lesson trees were planted...  
You must give the things you are given,  
You must give through love and art,  
And from you, make others start.*

The distinguished Thomas P. Sculco, M.D., Surgeon-in-Chief and Korein-Wilson Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Hospital for Special Surgery, among other notable positions, recalled a grandfather who settled in Rhode Island from Calabria to work in quarries who also "made cheese for the population of some 500 masons that came over from Italy." He noted, "My daughter currently teaches in a public high school down on Broad Street, the Millennium High School. I visited her there a few weeks ago, and



there, in the entry hall, is a plaque commemorating a million dollar gift to the school from this organization, the Columbus Citizens Foundation. This great organization, with which I share so many values – a devotion to education, a commitment to family, and a celebration of Italian heritage – makes this a really special night for me. Many, many thanks for this wonderful honor.”

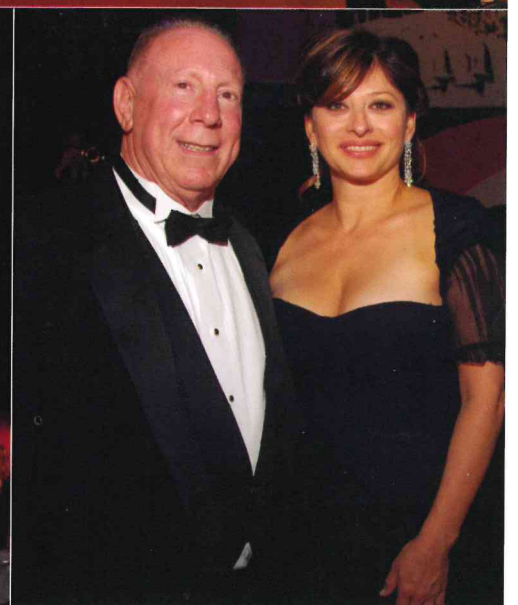
The evening’s other honoree, Joseph Plumeri, enjoyed a long career at Citicorp before becoming Chairman and CEO of Willis Group Holdings, a London-based insurance broker. Mr. Plumeri turned the company around and, having achieved significant success, reviewed a survey of former CEOs who regretted not taking more risks, not having more fun and not creating monuments they believed in. Mr. Plumeri realized he had taken risks and had certainly had fun, but he resolved to build monuments, which he has done through several substantial donations.

“I want you to know, ladies and gentlemen, that tonight is a monument to our Italian-American heritage, and we need to continue to build on that heritage,” Mr. Plumeri said. “We must continue that heritage in a positive way where people think of us as creative and bona fide contributors to this society. We should be building monuments to the Giambastianis, building monuments to the

Sculcos, building monuments to the Tusianis, building monuments to the Bartiromos, to the Scalias, to the Alitos and to the Cuomos, not to the Sopranos.”

“Our parents and our grandparents came here with great hope and optimism. They helped build this country because they believed in it. They were positive people. They showed great leadership. The leadership that we need today that is positive, that gives us hope for the resiliency of this country, the resources of this country, the greatness of this country. Italian-Americans need to be reborn the way our parents and grandparents were when they came here. That’s the leadership, that’s the legacy that we must provide – that is the greatness of this country. It’s positive, it’s optimistic, it’s full of hope. Together, we need to make this a defining moment. God bless you, buona notte!” ❖

Clockwise from top left: Award winning choreographer and performing artist Paula Abdul and fellow *American Idol* judge and BMI Songwriter of the Year winner, Kara DioGuardi, before Ms. DioGuardi’s riveting performance on the stage. The Waldorf-Astoria Grand Ballroom on the night of the Gala. Journal Co-Chair Anthony Mallardi with Dinner Chair and Parade broadcast co-anchor Maria Bartiromo. The US Navy Band Sea Chanters on the Waldorf-Astoria stage.





# Strength, Solidarity and Celebration in the 2008 Columbus Day Parade

The 2008 Columbus Day Parade brought out the annual fans of Italian-American heritage and culture, nearly one million strong – and then some. With the financial markets shifting unpredictably, additional viewers came out to share in the joy, history and tradition of an event that celebrates a people who helped build America and have contributed much to its society and place of preeminence in the world.

They were not disappointed. Held on October 13, the Parade featured over 100 floats and contingents and marchers 35,000 strong. Members of bands from the US Marine Corps, US Navy and the Italian Police set a shining example for over a dozen high school bands. Hundreds of dignitaries, elected officials, folk musicians, street performers and dancers who executed age-old dances and civil servants from all uniformed branches of city government participated in the Parade. It was a festival of pride and heritage enjoyed by participants and the throngs of spectators alike.

“We proudly say, Happy Columbus Day,” Louis Tallarini, president of the Foundation told the *New York Times*. In response to a battery of contentious questions involving the “discovery” of America and Columbus’s DNA (which the newspaper had a year earlier speculated might show Spanish ancestry), Mr. Tallarini spoke for millions of people around the world in saying, “Cristoforo Colombo was an Italian born in Genoa... We recognize Christopher Columbus as the great admiral that he was and as

a discoverer and as an Italian hero. We see him in heroic terms: as a heroic admiral who sailed across the Atlantic at great peril.”

The Parade followed the traditional Columbus Day Mass, held at St. Patrick’s Cathedral and attended by a capacity crowd of over 3,000 people. By tradition, the Mass was celebrated by Edward Cardinal Egan.

The day before, hundreds of people gathered at the Columbus Monument at Columbus Circle for the annual wreath laying at Columbus Circle. Organized by Joseph Guagliardo, president of the National Council of Columbian Associations in Civil Service, the wreath laying featured brief performances by the Italian Police Band and remarks by Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., US Navy (Ret.), Hon. Francesco Maria Talò, Consul General of Italy in New York; Hon. Richard Greco, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Mr. Tallarini, and Lawrence Auriana, Chairman of the Columbus Citizens Foundation. ♣

Clockwise, from top left: Members of the Italian Police Band at the annual wreath laying honoring Italian-American civil servants at the foot of the Columbus Monument, Columbus Circle. Students from New York’s only Italian-language academy, La Scuola d’Italia Guglielmo Marconi, joined the Columbus Day Parade festivities. His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan greeting Honoree Dr. Thomas P. Sculco following the traditional Columbus Day Mass, with Cynthia Sculco at right.



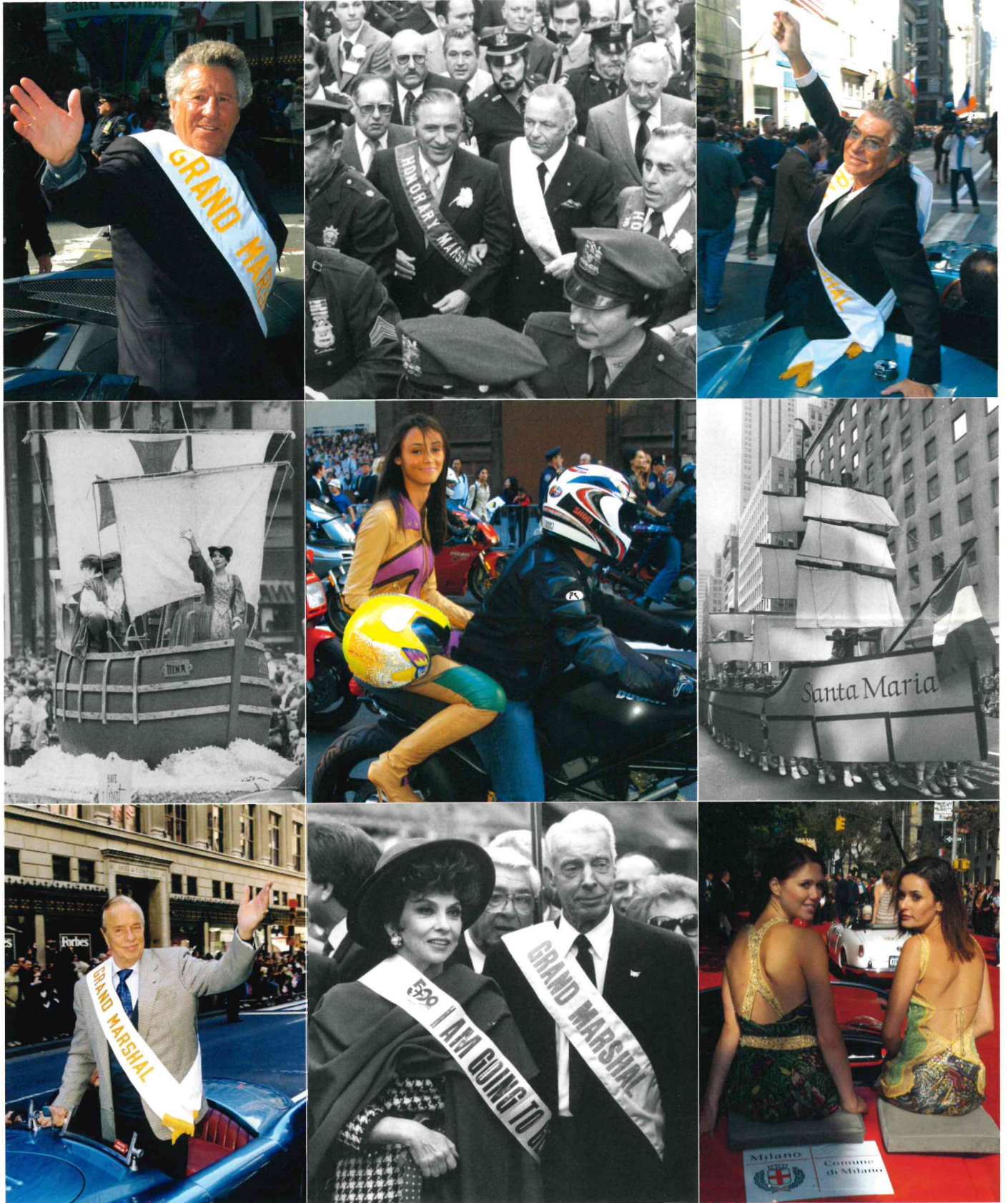




Clockwise from top left: The Committee Chairs of the Columbus Celebration marching up Fifth Ave. John and Connie Cioffi, at left, with Tom and Anna Ambrosiole. The Region of Lombardia celebrated its world-class arts with an elegant float. Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, Governor David Paterson and Mayor Michael Bloomberg were among the elected officials who turned out to join the celebration. The Fanfara "Città di Iglesias" traveled from Italy. A float bearing a replica of the USS Connecticut pays tribute to the Great White Fleet. Honoree Joseph Plumeri with Marketing Chair Michael Pedone. Foundation Chairman Lawrence Auriana, Grand Marshal Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr. (US Navy, ret.), past Grand Marshal, celebrity chef and world-renowned restaurateur Lidia Matticchio Bastianich and Columbus Celebration Chairman Angelo Vivolo.



# A Long Tradition



For nearly 80 years, the Columbus Citizens Foundation has brought joy and an appreciation of Italian and Italian-American culture to New York on Columbus Day through wonderful participants and memorable floats. Top row, from left: Grand Marshals Mario Andretti, Frank Sinatra and Roberto Cavalli. Middle row: Replicas of Christopher Columbus's Santa Maria flank a model astride a Ducati motorcycle wearing the latest fashion from Milan. Bottom row: Grand Marshal Franco Zeffirelli, Honoree Gina Lollobrigida with Grand Marshal Joe DiMaggio, and models wearing Italian designs on an Alfa Romeo coupe.



# Foundation Sponsors Sculpture's Restoration

By Jonathan Kuhn

Visitors to the home of the Columbus Citizens Foundation may be familiar with a marble bust of the Foundation's namesake located by the entryway to the Taverna. Yet they may not be aware that its fraternal twin can be found in D'Auria Murphy Park in the Bronx, a stone's throw from Arthur Avenue.

The bust was carved from white Carrara marble circa 1925 by Italian immigrant Attilio Piccirilli [see *Foundation Quarterly*, Columbus Week 2005 issue]. Piccirilli and his brothers settled in the Bronx, where they ran a famed art studio. Piccirilli was directly responsible for some of our greatest commemorative monuments, including the sculptures of Washington on the Washington Square Arch and the sculptural program on the Maine Monument in Columbus Circle. Nationally, his carving of Daniel Chester French's design for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. has stood the test of time.

In 2005 and 2006, the bust of Columbus in D'Auria Murphy Park was plagued by attacks from vandals, including several instances of graffiti that caused paint to imbed deeply within the porous stone. The sides of the sculpture were gouged and scratched. In addition, the effects of acid rain and general weathering had caused small fissures in several locations. The bust showed evidence of the "sugaring" of the surface typical of outdoor marbles, a process in which the outer layer of stone degrades and loosens.

In 2007, the Parks Department's Division of Art & Antiquities and its Citywide Monuments Conservation Program approached the Foundation for a grant to restore the Piccirilli sculpture. Founded in 1997, the privately-funded monuments program provides professional conservation services for the city's monuments while also serving as a training program. Each summer, under the direction of professional conservators, college and graduate students studying historic preservation or sculpture receive hands-on training in the care of outdoor art. If the City's parks art collection may be viewed as an outdoor museum, then the parks themselves may be viewed as the conservation laboratory, providing invaluable hands-on experience for those entering the profession.

The Columbus Citizens Foundation generously awarded a grant of \$6,600 toward the project. Additional matching program funds were provided by the History Channel, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the National Architectural Trust and Donna Karan.

A team of conservators and apprentices worked on the Columbus sculpture. The marble bust was first gently washed with water and non-ionic detergents. Graffiti "ghosts" were removed using a high-precision micro-abrasive cleaning system. Old mortar repairs were carefully removed by hand, and micro-fractures and gouges were repointed or filled with a lime injection mortar that is visually and physically compatible with the sculpture.

Following the mechanical repairs, the sculpture was treated with a chemical stone consolidant to minimize moisture penetration, arrest the sugaring of the sculpture, and prevent further decay of the surface.

While the sculpture will never look brand new, it is now clean, legible and protected from the elements. The Parks Department has placed a sign at the site acknowledging this successful collaboration that has renewed a community landmark that had languished. ❖

*Jonathan Kuhn is Director, Division of Art & Antiquities, City of New York/Parks & Recreation*

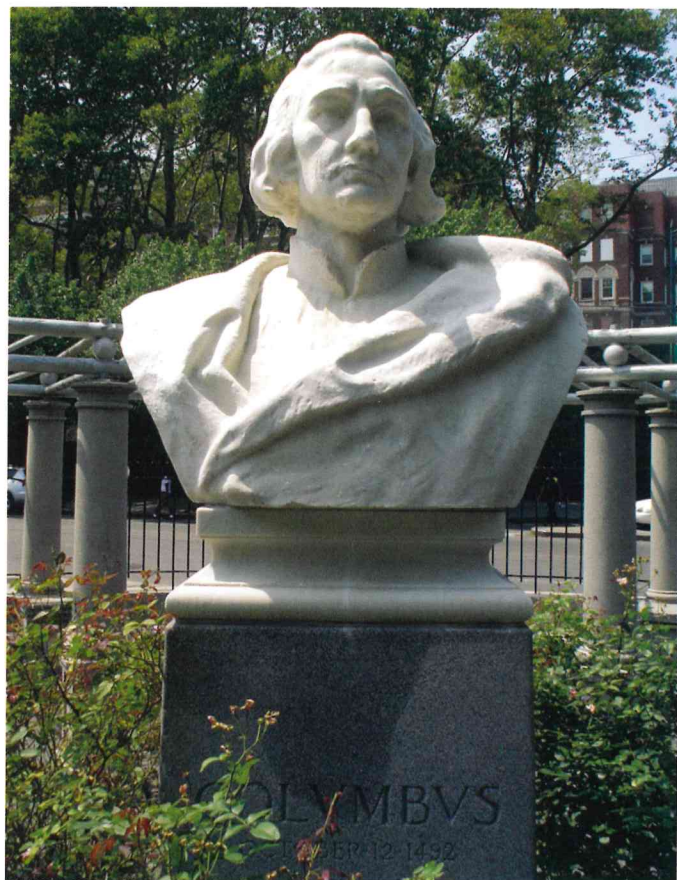


Photo: The Citywide Monuments Conservation Program, New York City Parks Department, Division of Art & Antiquities.

Attilio Piccirilli's Bust of Columbus, from circa 1925, following conservation by the Citywide Monuments Conservation Program, New York City Parks Department, Division of Art & Antiquities. Below: The sculpture had been defaced by vandals and had suffered the effects of weather and age that required repointing and injections of mortar.

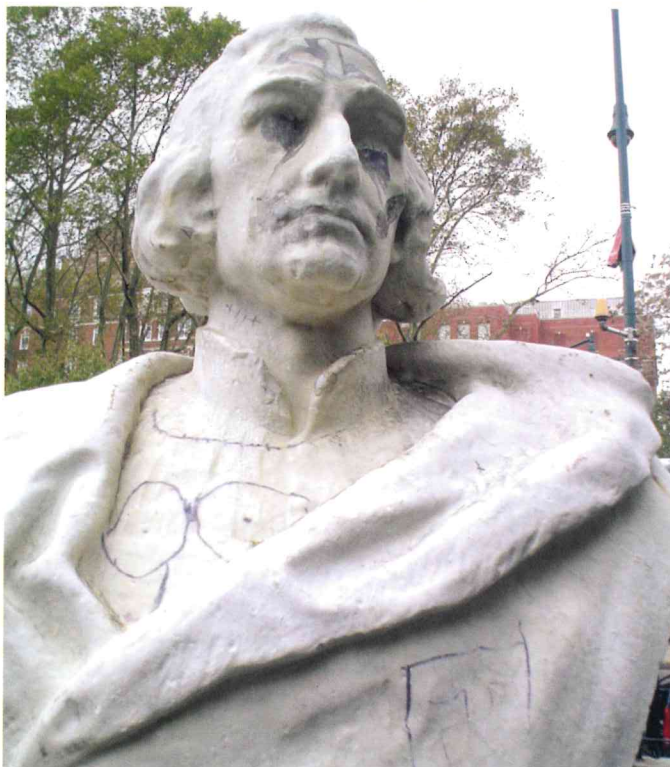


Photo: John Zimny for the CMCP



# Adopt-A-Scholar Program Breaks \$7m Mark Through Donations Large and Small

By Frank G. Fusaro

Seven years ago, the Philanthropic Committee launched the greatest fundraising initiative in the Foundation's history, the Adopt-A-Scholar Program. To date, we have received well over 100 donations that total more than \$7.5 million. The campaign – now halfway to its goal of \$15 million – works because of selfless donations and pledges made by our Members, their families and friends and a small but growing number of non-profit organizations.

Just consider a sampling of the remarkable range of recent donations: a little over \$2,000 from the mother of a Foundation Member that became of a \$25,000 gift; a \$100,000 pledge from a local foundation in recognition of the Foundation's work; \$500,000 from a long-standing supporter of the Foundation's scholarship programs who became the Founding Member of the President's Circle level of giving.

The smallest donation, which grew substantially, came from Frances Dolcemascolo, the 90-year old mother of Foundation Member Anthony Dolce. Mrs. Dolcemascolo celebrated her 90th birthday at the Foundation with dinner in the Oak Room. "We had a party there – around 90 people, all my friends that I made throughout the years," said Mrs. Dolcemascolo.

Mrs. Dolcemascolo said she was born in Italy and came here in 1921 "with my mother and father and my two sisters from Sicily, Lercara Friddi – a small, little island. I was only three years old."



Philanthropic Committee Chair Frank Fusaro, President Louis Tallarini, Richmond County Savings Foundation Director Mike Manzulli, and Richmond County Savings Foundation CEO and Member Joseph Ficalora.

At her party, she received presents totaling around \$2,000. "I donated all the money I collected. I figured those children need it more than I do – I'm 90 years old! I don't need more money."

Mr. Dolce will supplement his mother's birthday funds and create a \$25,000 high school scholarship. "We have two other scholarships – one a high school scholarship in memory of my father-in-law, Joseph Tesoriero, said Mr. Dolce. We created it to give something back – you can't always take things. When my late wife, Linda Tesoriero, passed, I created a college scholarship in her memory. My wife had felt so good when we set up the scholarship in memory of her father, it just felt like the right thing for her." The new scholarship, given through St. Francis Xavier High School, is in honor of Salvatore Dolcemascolo, Mrs. Dolcemascolo's late husband and Mr. Dolce's late father.



Leandro Rizzuto

On October 30, 2008 at a special evening presentation, a contribution to the Adopt-A-Scholar program came from a very different source. Michael Manzilli, President and CEO of the Richmond County Savings Foundation, Cesar J. Claro, Executive Director and Joseph Ficalora, a Director, made a perpetual Adopt-A-Scholar donation in the amount of \$100,000 to the Adopt-A-Scholar Program.

Richmond County Savings Foundation (RCSF) is based on Staten Island and is funded in part by the Richmond County Savings Bank a member of the

New York Community Bancorp, Inc. family of banks. RCSF made its grant to our Foundation as part of its mission to support charitable organizations whose programs and services advance educational opportunity, enrich cultural development and strengthen health and human services.

This year, the Foundation received the largest scholarship donation in its history from Leandro Rizzuto, a man who sacrificed his own education to create a business with his father. It was 1959 when Mr. Rizzuto withdrew from college and with his father, Julian, created Continental Hair Products, Inc. to make the fast-drying hair roller that Julian Rizzuto had invented. Within a decade, the company – Conair, since 1976, which is also the year Mr. Rizzuto joined the Foundation – had become the industry leader in a wide range of professional and home hair care products, including its pistol-grip hair styler-dryers, which revolutionized hair styling. (In the 1970s, Mr. Rizzuto's daughter, Babe, contributed to the company's fortunes as well. When she was 17, she suggested making the hair dryers in a range of colors that would appeal to teenagers, which led to the company capturing a new market.) The company has since acquired Waring Products and Cuisinart. Mr. Rizzuto is now Senior Vice President and CEO of Conair, which also enjoys the guidance of his son, Leandro Rizzuto, Jr., a Senior Vice President of Conair.

With his remarkable donation of \$500,000, Mr. Rizzuto has become the Founding Benefactor of our President's Circle. These are donations that provide perpetually endowed four-year scholarships. Just as Mr. Rizzuto's company and divisions have long been leaders in their industries, and as Mr. Rizzuto has quietly been at the forefront of his community, he has now set a precedent to inspire us all. The Foundation is grateful to him, to the Richmond County Savings Foundation, to Mr. Dolce and Mrs. Dolcemascolo, each of whom has recognized the pressing need found in segments of the Italian-American community and the unsurpassed work our Foundation does in providing opportunities for education.

As we are in uncertain economic times, our Board cannot project significant income from our corpus this year. And because our high school and college scholarships grants are four-year awards, we will have no choice but to reduce the number and amounts of scholarships awarded this year.

Now, more than ever, we need our Members and friends to help fill in any shortfall by endowing a scholarship in the name of a loved one. There is no better way to honor those we love so much than to create a scholarship in their name and perpetrating the most important work of our Foundation. Please contact either Christine Meola, our Executive Director, or myself for further information. ❖



## The Adopt-A-Scholar Program in Brief

Founded in 2001, the Adopt-A-Scholar Program enables benefactors to support students selected by the Foundation's scholarship committees in one of two ways. Annual scholarships are one-time, four-year grants that help underwrite a student's education for four years. Perpetual scholarships are awarded to underwrite the four-year high school or college education of a deserving student, and when the student graduates, funding is provided for a new student.

Benefactors may provide funding for students who will be attending a particular school. They may also name the scholarship award in honor of a friend or loved one.

Adopt-A-Scholar funds are held in a segregated account and function as the Foundation's scholarship corpus, or endowment.

The cost of creating these scholarships is as follows:

- President's Circle Perpetually Endowed Four Year College or High School Scholarship: \$500,000.
- Perpetually Endowed Four Year College or High School Scholarship: \$100,000.
- Annual College or High School Scholarship: \$25,000.

At the benefactor's option, scholarship contributions may be made in four annual payments.

**Tax Benefit:** Because the Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, all donations are tax deductible. Gifts of appreciated securities or real property could further reduce the after tax cost of the benefactor's generosity.

## Scholarship Recipient Mariangela Perrotta

**M**ariangela Perrotta, now a senior at Fordham University, became a Foundation scholarship recipient in 2004 and has been using her scholarship in exemplary ways. She will be graduating with two majors: one in political science, and the other is Italian Studies.

"In political science, I'm learning about electoral politics, political parties, how democracy works," Ms. Perrotta said. Her senior-year thesis in political science involves studying "public authorities, like the [Metropolitan Transit Authority], which is a combination of public and private groups. The MTA has one of those boards that is not elected but has an immense amount of power."

"In Italian studies, we're studying Italian politics and the period of unification," she said. "Studying Italian literature and history serves as a way for me to not only gain a more rounded knowledge of the circumstances that have produced modern Italy and its rich and influential cultural legacy, but also as a way for me to hone my speaking, writing and reading skills."

Her interest in Italy comes by way of her parents, Francesca and Antonio, who moved here in the 1970s. "My parents are from Benevento, a small town outside of Naples. My father, my mother, also, grew up in a poor area. His father was a farmer. They had come here to make life better for us. They got married young and came over young, and then they got married again just so it would be legal here!"

At Fordham, Ms. Perrotta has been involved in a number of volunteer programs. Among her favorites "is being a peer tutor for students who are having trouble with Italian, which lets me brush up on my grammar and gives me a chance to practice my Italian with other students." She is a member of C.I.A.O, the campus Italian Club, and works at Common Cause, where she serves as a policy and research intern. "My time at Common Cause has really given me a detailed look at the inner workings of the New York City and State governments and a chance to participate more actively in the political process," she said.

Looking ahead, Ms. Perrotta is interested "in pursuing a career in public service and urban government because I feel a real passion



Mariangela Perrotta introduces a shy Parade spectator to Grand Marshal Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr. (US Navy, ret.) at the 2008 Columbus Day Parade.

for being able to help communities mold policies that serve their needs. I view government as an extension of community – a city-wide community – and think it is incredibly important that citizens feel the same affinity and responsibility toward their government as they do to their neighborhood or other community. I really believe that public interest in government and the presence of qualified, accountable and dedicated public servants are essential to creating a great city."

Growing up in a large family, Ms. Perrotta wasn't sure she'd have the opportunity to go to college. "My mother was a stay-at-home mom, which was quite a job because there were five of us," she said. Her father, a retired construction worker, "worked hard – the work he did in construction was hard, physical labor," she said. "But he always said he's happy to have found a place where he can work and bring up a family and be secure."

"The scholarship, just in practical terms, along with other grants I've received, has made it possible for me to go to college," Ms. Perrotta said. "Getting a scholarship from the Foundation was important in another way. It's a sort of vote of confidence from this organization of successful people, and it's great to know that they think, 'Here's someone who we feel is going to do well, and we're willing to invest in her education.'" ❖



# Foundation Scholarships 2008-2009

At the Gala Dinner on October 11, 2008, Dinner Chair Maria Bartiromo invited seated Foundation Members and their guests to lift their bread plates. “Those of you that have a card under that plate, we ask you to please stand up,” Ms. Bartiromo requested. Chair after chair was pushed back, and soon nearly 800 people were standing. “Look around the room. Look around the room! Each and every person standing tonight reflects the Foundation’s commitment to education, as each card that you are holding has the name of a student for whom scholarship funding is currently being provided. A very special thank you to everyone in the room for making this possible.”

The dramatic and graphic illustration underscored a fundamental aspect of the Foundation. Although the non-profit organization has only 575 Members, it is supporting the education of nearly 800 elementary, high school and college students. The funds provided for their education totals \$2 million. For the record, during the 2008-2009 school year, the Foundation is providing scholarship funding for 337 college students, 287 high school students, 172 elementary school children, and two students of the arts through the Franco Zeffirelli Scholarship for the Arts.

Recipients must document financial need, and applicants for high school and scholarship funding must have performed community service and achieved a grade average of at least 85% or a 3.25 GPA.

“The members of the Columbus Citizens Foundation are proud, privileged and honored to support these hundreds of young men and women,” said Foundation President Louis Tallarini. “Each of them has chosen to make a commitment to their education, their future, and the future of their communities. We applaud their determination and effort and the work that their families or guardians have put in to steer them on a course to success.” ❀



Captions, from top: College Scholarship Co-Chair Peter Campanella, recipient Pamela Sabbio, and President Louis Tallarini. Philanthropic Committee Chair Frank Fusaro, recipient Kristen Marie Reynolds and High School Scholarship Committee Chair Vincent Toscano. The 2008 College Scholarship recipients at the awards ceremony.





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