



Staten Island Advance

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8 honored at Wagner College DaVinci Society's annual scholarship dinner

by CAROL ANN BENANTI

Wagner College's DaVinci Society launched its observance of Italian Heritage Month by hosting its annual scholarship dinner Wednesday evening in Nicotra's Ballroom at the Hilton Garden Inn, Bloomfield.

Dr. Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner College; former Borough President Dr. Ralph J. Lamberti; and Eleanor Conforti, former chairwoman of Community School Board 31 and a Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement; co-chaired the event, a major fundraiser for the scholarships presented to Staten Island Italian-American students attending Wagner College, Grymes Hill.

To date, the DaVinci Society has awarded more than \$1,000,000 to students at Wagner College.

In addressing the crowd of nearly 400, Dr. Guarasci noted, "I am so honored to be here this evening on this most joyous occasion. You are all part of a wonderful organization and I am so appreciative of the work you do through the DaVinci Society," before introducing former Borough President Dr. Ralph J. Lamberti, who he called "the driving force behind the DaVinci Society."

Dr. Lamberti, who was awarded an honorary doctorate from the college, thanked those present who've gone above and beyond to support the organization.

"I received letter from a Wagner College student thanking the society and explaining she would have never had the opportunity to go to Wagner if it weren't for her scholarship. And to quote George M. Cohan, she added: 'My mother thanks you, my father thanks you and my sister thanks you as well.'"

Conforti, a fervant supporter of the organization, explained: "This is one of the largest audiences we have ever had and it perpetuates a positive image of the DaVinci Society and of Italian-Americans."

Community Service Awards were presented to: Dr. Stephanie Famulari '04, Lucy Ferreri, Rosario A. "Roy" Iraci, Peter Maniscalco, Borough President James Oddo and Ed Wiseman.

The Renaissance Award went to to Amar Malla and The Lifetime Achievement Award to Warren Procci '68.

MORE ABOUT THE 2016 HONOREES

Dr. **Stephanie Famulari** is a practicing podiatrist on Staten Island. A 2004 Wagner College grad, she earned her doctorate from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine in 2009. She is the podiatric physician in Eger Health Care & Rehabilitation Center and Harbor House, Egbertville and New Vanderbilt Rehabilitation Center, Clifton.

Dr. Famulari gives her time to Camp Good Grief, Richmond University Medical Center and Workman's Circle Nursing Home in the Bronx, as well as at Bishop High School, Graniteville.

Lucy Ferreri, the proud daughter and granddaughter of Italian immigrants, was born Lucia DiSerafino in Egbertville, the fourth of six siblings.

After graduating from New Dorp High School in 1941, she went to work as a draftsman in a Staten Island shipyard building. Following the war, she married Army veteran Joseph Victor Ferreri and the couple raised three sons.

Following her husband's sudden death in 1980, Ferreri became an active part of the management of White House Enterprises Laundry & Dry Cleaning Supplies, a company founded by her father-in-law and built up by her husband and his brother, and now run by her son, Joseph Ferreri. Ferreri served as the company's president until her retirement in 2010.

A devout Roman Catholic, Ferreri has been an active, life-long parishioner of Our Lady Queen of Peace R.C. Church. She advocates for various charities and did volunteer work and fund-raising while a member of the Mothers' Clubs of St. John Villa Academy and the Augustinian Academy. Her support of worthy causes was evidenced by her generous contributions to the capital campaigns for a new emergency room at Staten Island University Hospital, a new church for St. Joseph & St. Thomas Parish, and renovations at her home parish.

Rosario A. 'Roy' Iraci is a Brooklyn-born, second-generation Italian. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps during the Iran hostage crisis and was discharged with a Good Conduct medal at the rank of sergeant.

Currently a McDonald's board member, Iraci bought a McDonald's franchise in 1993 that now includes restaurants in Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Jersey City, N.J. He served as the New York franchisee group president from 2006 to 2014. Roy and his wife Lisa are the parents of daughters Lisa and Ashley.

Certified public accountant **Peter Maniscalco** is the principal of Maniscalco & Picone, CPAs. Since 2002, he has been an active member of the board of trustees of Eger Lutheran Homes and Services. He is also a board member at the Richmond County Country Club, where he serves as treasurer, and has given his time to many other charitable organizations over the years.

Peter Maniscalco and his wife Sarah have been married for 40 years. They have three children and four grandchildren.

James Oddo, the 15th borough president of Staten Island, was elected to that office in November 2013. He had previously served, since 1999, as a New York City Councilman representing the 50th district. He also served as the New York City Council's minority leader from 2002 to 2013. Oddo was responsible for turning the abandoned Farm Colony site into a senior citizen community.

As borough president, he has focused on securing aid for Staten Islanders affected by Hurricane Sandy. He is also committed to bringing a waterfront development project on Staten Island's North Shore to reality.

In 2008, **Ed Wiseman** became the executive director of Historic Richmond Town, which was founded as the Staten Island Historical Society in 1856. He tripled museum attendance, created large-scale events and reconnected his organization with the greater Staten Island community.

A graduate of NYU School of the Arts, Wiseman led his own production company and formed important partnerships with entertainment corporations, winning eight Emmy Awards for directing and producing. Today, he continues to work on special projects in film and television that make a difference.

Born, raised and educated in India, **Amar Malla** is a naturalized American citizen who lives in Kew Gardens, Queens, and has excelled in the areas of design, construction and management during his 35 years as an architect.

Among his designs are features of the Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, and the leopard enclosure and carousel at the Staten Island Zoo. At present, he is a senior project manager in the cultural unit of the New York City Department of Design and Construction.

He has served as executive vice president and chairman of the New York City Society of Indo-American Engineers and Architects.

Warren Procci graduated summa cum laude in 1968 from Wagner College with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He earned his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin, where he completed his residency in psychiatry. He holds a diploma from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Procci has served on the Wagner College Board of Trustees since 1999, where he presently chairs the executive committee. In addition to his private practice, Procci's career includes a 42-year history of scholarship and service at both L.A. County/USC Medical Center and Harbor/UCLA Medical Center.

ABOUT THE DAVINCI SOCIETY

Wagner College's DaVinci Society was established to promote greater understanding of Italy, Italian culture, and the contributions of Italian Americans. It awards scholarships to Italian-American students at the Grymes Hill campus who are worthy and in financial need.

In partnership with the Columbus Citizens Foundation, the society awards a four-year Wagner College scholarship to a Staten Island student of Italian heritage who has demonstrated academic excellence and financial need.

It also donated funds toward the placement of a full-time Italian-language professor at Wagner College.