



Coccia Foundation

Preserving Italian Culture



Volume 5 Issue 1

Passing the Torch

Summer 2009

Ambassador Terzi Lectures at MSU



Consul Andrea Barbaria, Ambassador Giulio Terzi, Mrs. Terzi, Consul General Francesco Talo, and Provost Dr. Willard P. Gingerich.

On March 31, 2009, the LeBoff Lecture Hall at Montclair State University was both crowded and hushed—evidence of the extraordinary depth and compelling interest of Ambassador Giulio di Sant'Agata's lecture. Ambassador Terzi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, illustrated in detail the consistent role that Italy has played in the defense of human rights. A particular focus of this exceptional historical overview was the Ambassador's uniquely informed perspective on the Italian diplomatic delegation's pursuit toward reform of the Security Council.

Amb. Terzi di Sant'Agata was joined at the podium by Dr. Willard P. Gingerich, Provost and Academic Vice President of MSU, who shared our speaker's truly impressive biography with the students, faculty, and community members in attendance. Entitled "Responsibility to Protect – Toward a more compassionate international action: Italy's past, present and future role," this 45-minute lecture was

followed by an outstanding "Q & A" session skillfully moderated by Dr. Claire Taub, Dean of MSU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Ambassador addressed even the most challenging questions with attention and a compelling reply.

To further highlight the significance of the occasion, we welcomed MSU Consul General of Italy in New York Min. Francesco Maria Talo, as well as the Consul of Italy in Newark, Andrea Barbaria.

When interviewed by Riccardo Chioni, journalist for *America Oggi*, the leading Italian language daily in the United States, Amb. Terzi observed that not only was he impressed by the extremely friendly reception he had received at MSU, but he was also particularly "struck by the amount of interest that his audience demonstrated towards such complex issues of international politics."



Students and faculty from several other universities had been invited to share this extraordinary educational experience. As observed by *i-ITALY* journalist Marina Melchionda. "The profound silence in the

auditorium demonstrated the audience's intense interest in the subject." In a post-lecture interview, Amb. Terzi described to Ms. Melchionda the message he wanted to communicate to the American students in this way: "I want new generations to understand that Italy's purpose in foreign policy is to safeguard international security through the wide and extensive protection of human rights. Today, Italy has a global responsibility. Historically, our country dominated the Mediterranean, but it is now time to re-establish the area's influence. Thanks to the privileged relationship we have with the United States, we can support our neighbors in their struggle for human rights."

The lecture was followed by an elegantly prepared Italian reception in the Ambassador's honor and held in MSU's lovely University Hall Conference Center. Thanking him again on behalf of the academic community and our special guests from the Italian and Italian American community, Provost Dr. Gingerich, Cav. Joseph Coccia, and Jacky Grindrod (District Director for Rep. Bill Pascrell) presented Amb. Terzi with commemorative gifts representative of MSU, the Italian American experience, and the state of New Jersey. While over the course of his career, Amb. Terzi has frequently delivered lectures at Italian universities and centers of diplomacy, it was our great fortune and honor to have been the site of his first formal lecture at an American university since he ...

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Looking Ahead Broadening Our Horizons



Founders Joseph and Elda Coccia

The 2009 year, already well underway, has proven to be one of development, activity, and excitement here at the Coccia Foundation.

Together with my wife Elda, the Trustees, and the Executive Board, we have chosen an official logo that will serve as a symbol of our organization's mission. As you will see in this newsletter, we have adopted the TORCH – a brightly burning flame representing the Italian legacy that we wish to pass on to future generations. As you know, we at the Coccia Foundation believe that younger generations are the key element in the preservation and protection of our heritage and culture. It is the youth who will carry on the language, traditions, and values of our ancestors, as we “PASS THE TORCH” to them and they in turn “PASS THE TORCH” to future generations.

One of our major developments this year brings us to the southern United States. Our Amici della Cultura Italiana Italian club network is currently in the process of expanding to include Clemson University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hopefully, our influence in this region of our nation will ensure continued interest in all things Italian for those students (many of whom Elda and I met during our trip to the south) who already exhibit an intense interest in Italy and its people. [Read more about our southern expansion on page 10.](#)

In keeping with our plans for continued growth, we are also making progress toward another regional network of Amici della Cultura Italiana groups in our neighboring State of Pennsylvania. On March 21, we held our first regional meeting at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, where the Coccia Foundation's committee was met with much enthusiasm. With the continued dedication of students and the committee, it is our hope that the new region will become as active as our New Jersey and New York Amici groups. [For more on this initiative, see page 11.](#)

I am also happy to report that in my recent travels I have ...

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“TANTE GRAZIE”

To our sponsored scholarship supporters.
Your partnering with our Foundation's efforts to continue
student's studies of Italian Culture and Language in —

“PASSING THE TORCH”

Elda and Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr.

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“Passing the Torch”

Visit our website: www.cocciafoundation.org

FOUNDATION

Inserra Endowed Chair Established at MSU



UNICO NATIONAL President Kathleen Strozza, Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr., and MSU President Dr. Susan Cole.

The establishment of the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies at Montclair State University was celebrated on February 18, 2009, in the University Hall Conference Center. The Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in American provided support for the evening's festivities that were hosted by MSU President Dr. Susan Cole and Provost Dr. Willard Gingerich.

Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr., President of Inserra Supermarkets, Inc., provided the naming gift to the University as a lasting tribute to his parents, Theresa and Lawrence. Also contributing to the campaign to raise the \$1.25 million needed for the chair was UNICO NATIONAL under the leadership of past presidents Frank Tidona, John Alati, Frank Caperino, Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr., Michael Mariniello, Jr., and current President Kathleen Strozza.

MSU President Susan A. Cole, noting that the university has the fourth-largest Italian program

in the country, underscored that the establishment of the chair will continue to insure that distinction. Praising the generosity and vision that made it happen were many of the distinguished speakers, among them: including: Willard P. Gingerich, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs at MSU; Kathleen Strozza, President of UNICO NATIONAL; Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr., founder of the Coccia Foundation and

Coccia Institute and Past President of UNICO; Andrea Barbaria, Consul of Italy in Newark; Ambassador Gian Lorenzo Cornado, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy - United Nations; Joseph Agresti, UNICO Immediate Past National President; and Richard Bilotti, Chairman of NJ Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission.

Among those present to commemorate the establishment of the chair were representatives from the NJ

Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission including: Richard Bilotti, Chairman; Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Vice-Chair; Tina Segali, Vice-Chair; Michael Genevrino, Acting Director; and Commissioners Nancy Carnevale, Marisa Trubiano, Domenico Tancredi, Angelo Morresi, and Carmelo Corallo. Other distinguished guests included former state Assembly Majority Leader Paul DiGaetano, Coccia Institute Trustee Ralph Contini, UNICO NATIONAL Past Presidents Michael Mariniello, Jr., Frank Tidona, John Alati, and Salvatore Mangano.

To underscore just one aspect of the rich Italian cultural heritage, a musical program of Italian songs and arias was performed by students from the John J. Cali School of Music under the direction of Professor Jeffrey Gall. Among the singers were Gregory Voinier, Annamaria Borelli, Rebecca Tarantino, Catherine Shelley, Emmanuel Cruz, and Andrea Covais. Piano accompaniment was provided by Steven Ryan.

Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr., Past National President of UNICO NATIONAL and National Director of the Italian Studies Chairs and Fellowships during the years of 2000 and 2003, and his hard-working committee were instrumental in getting the project off the ground. This night was a testimonial, not only for UNICO, but also for the hard work of the above-mentioned committee.



Joseph Agresti, Frank Tidona and John Alati, UNICO NATIONAL Past Presidents; Kathleen Strozza, National President; Amb. Gian Lorenzo Cornado; Dr. Andrea Barbaria, Consul of Italy in New Jersey; Cav. Joseph Coccia Jr, Founder of The Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute at MSU and Coccia Foundation and UNICO NATIONAL Past President.



COCCIA



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FOUNDATION

2009 Italian Studies Golf Classic Honoree

Comm. Peter Caruso was born April 4, 1927, in Ferruzzano, a tiny mountain village on the Ionian coastline of the Italian peninsula. He was raised by his mother, Teresa, and an older brother, Vincent, in a one-room stone house.

In order to help support his fatherless household, Peter became apprenticed to the village tailor at the age of 9. By 1941, Peter had mastered the art of needle and thread, but the economics and political climate of the time made the tailor's art a luxury few villagers could afford. Being industrious and open to new challenges, Peter offered to work as a courier for the local pharmacist. Traveling North to Milan and other industrialized areas Peter, then 14, routinely boarded a train in Ferruzzano with two empty suitcases. If he was lucky and wasn't robbed by thieves along the way, he would return carrying the bags filled with sorely needed medicine and medical supplies.

In 1945, Peter moved to the northern port city of Genoa where he could find steady work in his chosen profession. During the day, he worked as a custom tailor for an exclusive men's clothier. In 1947, he earned a degree in fashion design.

Having secured a decent livelihood, it was now time to start a family. As a teenager, Peter fell in love with a beautiful 'calabrizella', a distant cousin whom he had known all his life. He courted Carmela Victoria until they wed in September of 1950, in Ferruzzano. The newlyweds immediately set up a household in Genoa where Peter continued to work as a tailor. It was there that they had their first son and daughter.

Constantly striving to excel, Peter uprooted his family when the opportunity to emigrate to the United States presented itself. Like countless Italians before them, they set sail aboard the Andrea Doria on

March 29, 1956, bound for the United States of America. It was to be the Italian steamship's last docking in New York when it entered New York Harbor 8 days later.

The Caruso family settled in Jersey City, NJ in a rented 2 bedroom apartment on Duncan Avenue. The exploitation of immigrants was common, and Peter's experience was no exception. As a precondition to renting his tenement apartment, he was obligated to take out the trash for every one of the six families living there — a task he performed without question, twice a week for two years. Wasting no time, Peter found suitable work in the garment center of New York City.



Commendatore Peter Caruso

His ultimate goal was to open his own custom tailor shop. In relentless pursuit of his dream, Peter worked two jobs, 14 hours per day. Seeing his children awake was a treat he seldom allowed himself. His tenacity and drive bore fruit in September of 1957 with the opening of his first shop, Marileather Fashions in Passaic, NJ. The company, started with \$2,000 of his savings, opened its doors less than 18 months after

his arrival in the U.S. Beginning with hand-stitched, custom made leather gloves, Peter soon put his creative talents into designing and manufacturing a line of high-quality, custom made, fashion leatherwear at a time when leather garments were reserved almost exclusively for motorcyclists.

By 1972, Peter's shop employed 60 people and manufactured suede and leather garments for a number of retail chains. In 1974, his status within the leather garment industry was confirmed by his receipt of the "Designer of the Year" award from the Leather Industry Council.

During the next decade, Peter Caruso Leatherwear, Inc., maintained two facilities in Passaic, New Jersey, employing approximately 145 people and producing leather outerwear as well as cloth suits and coats.

While seeing to the responsibilities of running his business, Peter still found time for charity and community work. He served on the "Comitato degli Italiani all'Estero" and as the committee's commissioner of Youth Sport. He is a trustee of the Italian American Political Action Committee, a member of the Lodi Chapter of UNICO NATIONAL, a founding member of the "Ferruzzano Club of America", a consultant to the Calabria region, the U.S. representative of the "Calabresi del Mondo", has served as Dinner Chairman of the 50th Anniversary fundraising dinner-dance for Boys' Towns of Italy, and serves on the Board of Trustees for the Mott Foundation, which provides merit scholarships for college students of Calabrese decent. He is the President of Calabria Tours, Inc., through which he develops itineraries and hosts annual fall junkets to explore the history and culture of the land ...

[Continued on page 17...](#)



ITANJ's Student Italian Heritage Day

Each year, the Coccia Institute looks forward to co-sponsoring with ITANJ (Italian Teachers of New Jersey) a truly enjoyable, as well as unique, signature program. As characterized by ITANJ President, Commissioner Catherine Vignale, "Student Heritage Day is a day of fun and enjoyment for Italian students across New Jersey which showcases what they have learned about the Italian language and culture, along with their fellow students." Students' treatment of last year's theme -- "LoSport" -- was a hard act to follow; but, follow it splendidly they did!!

Held on April 3rd in the Student Center at Montclair State University, this year's program was entitled "Le maschere e I loro dialetti nella Commedia dell'Arte." Three intermediate schools and nine high schools developed and presented a delightful selection of original skits, songs, dialogues and dances evocative of the various regional characters and themes of the Italian comedic art form referred to as "Commedia dell'Arte."

In a nutshell, these humorous theatricals were performed by professional troupes of players who criss-crossed Italy between the 16th and 18th centuries and delighted audiences with characters such as Arlecchino, Capitano Spavento, Pulcinella, Scaramuccia and Colombina and Il Dottore.

An unprecedented 300+ students and their teachers participated in this year's program. They hailed from:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| COLUMBIA HS, Maplewood, NJ | Domenico Tancredi |
| HAWTHORNE HS, Hawthorne, NJ | Annette D'Amato |
| | Karen McSherry |
| LONG BRANCH HS, Long Branch, NJ | Angela Borelli |
| MATAWAN/ABERDEEN HS, Cliffwood, NJ | AnnaMaria Fricchione |
| MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP HS, Montville, NJ | Jennifer Rubino |
| NO. VALLEY REG. HS, Old Tappan, NJ | Josephine Altherr |
| OCEAN TWP. INTERMEDIATE, Ocean, NJ | Susanna Fischer |
| | Denise Amato |
| PARSIPPANY HILLS HS, Parsippany, NJ | Vita Morales |
| PASSAIC VALLEY HS, Little Falls, NJ | Carmela Monzo |
| | Maria Papaleo |
| ST. PETER'S PREP HS, Jersey City, NJ | Rosalie Romano |
| UNION CITY HS, Union City, NJ | Letizia Nagy |
| WR SATZ INTERM SCHOOL, Holmdel, NJ | Elizabeth Malolepszy |

Keeping things moving smoothly in a delightfully engaging way was Long Branch High School teacher Angela Borelli, who was not only an outstandingly efficient "program director," but who also punctuated the performances with informative and entertaining tidbits on the history of Commedia dell'Arte and its array of stock characters.

A traditional component of this annual ITANJ — the Joseph & Elda Coccia Institute collaboration is the participation of students from Montclair State University's AMICI Club. The costumed club members, ably supported by Professor and fellow actor Barbara Carbon, presented a series of well researched and documented skits in Italian from "Commedia dell'Arte" to the enthusiastic applause of an energized student audience.

Continued on page 8...



FOUNDATION



Amici della Cultura Italiana celebrated its 6th annual Una Serata Elegante on Friday, April 17 at Ravello in East Hanover, NJ. Una Serata Elegante is a special occasion for university students and alumni Italian organizations to celebrate their dedication to the preservation of Italian culture and their Italian clubs' successes of the past year. The event also serves as a reminder of the Coccia Foundation's efforts to establish alliances between students and its support of educational and cultural programs for the youth of the Italian and Italian American community.

The evening began with a few opening remarks by Toni Anne Corsi of Drew University, who served as Chair of the event. This year's Una Serata Elegante was unique because it was organized entirely by students, thus highlighting the Foundation's accomplishment of fostering relationships among young people who share a sense of pride in their heritage. Three committees were created to organize the evening's entertainment, program, and decorations which were led by Vincent Calabresi of NJIT, Nick LaCorte of FDU Teaneck, and Lauren Iacono of FDU Madison respectively.

After a delicious four course meal, Garfield Chapter of UNICO President Shawn Cochrane presented Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr. with a donation to the Foundation's fund to help the earthquake victims in L'Aquila, Italy. After a few words of encouragement to the students by Mr. Cochrane, Cav. Coccia and

Amici della Cultura Italiana

Student Liaison Phil Sergio presented the newly named Amici Awards with the theme of "passing the torch" to a few outstanding students for their efforts in preserving the Italian culture. Eugenia Serratto, President of Il Club Italiano at WCC, was honored to present an award to Nicole Gadaleta who was a second-time recipient of the award for best fundraiser. Toni Anne Corsi received an award for her passion and leadership in her role as President.



Student Eugenia Serratto, President of Il Club Italiano at Westchester Community College, Valhalla, NY, speaks of cultural achievements such as the Classical Music concert.

A special moment for the students was when Phil Sergio was given an honorary and much deserved award for his hard work and dedication to the Foundation and members of Amici della Cultura Italiana.

The night continued well after midnight with dancing to the latest American hits, as well as to some of the most popular Italian music artists like Tiziano Ferro and Eros Ramazzotti. The students even dedicated a song to Cav. Coccia and Mr. Sergio to show their appreciation and thanks for their continued support. The evening closed

with students receiving well-earned awards for outstanding achievements.

The members of Amici della Cultura Italiana would like to thank everyone for their support over this past year, especially to all those businesses that advertised in the Una Serata Elegante Commemorative Journal.





COCCIA

ITANJ's Student Italian Heritage Day (continued)

Continued from page 6...

Reflecting on the day, newly elected President of the AMICI della Cultura Italiana Club (herself a student participant when at Hawthorne High School), Victoria Buchner remarked, “[Club] members showed a great passion for the Italian language and culture. Each of them took great pride and effort to make their portion of the show run smoothly and without flaws. We graciously thank Professor Barbara Carbon for her undying enthusiasm and support... and we can't wait for next year!”

For her part, Prof. Carbon noted: “Working with the MSU Amici Club students was a unique opportunity for me to know each one of them outside of the classroom. During the rehearsals of the skits I felt just like a student, sharing with them both the fun and the anxiety for representing Montclair State University in front of many high school students. Though they may have not realized it, I didn't give up entirely my role of teacher, because while learning the play, I taught them the correct pronunciation of dialect words, their meanings, and I guided them into the right sentence stress. On their side, they taught me how to memorize my scripts, and where to hide the words in case I would forget. Their performance was a splendid accomplishment: A+ to each and all of them!”

A special treat during this year's Heritage Day was the participation of Montville High Schools' “School of Rock” who entertained the students with a selection of Italian popular songs (instrumentals and vocals). Special thanks to band director and computer teacher, Anthony Sia.

An intermediate school led lessons in the tarantella and a medley of romantic Neapolitan favorites by Commissioner Domenico Tancredi, a teacher of Italian at Columbia High School, rounded out the day.

Very special thanks, are due to three of the Italian faculty members at Montclair State for their Awareness Contest—Design of the annual Cultural and Language: Enza Antenos-Conforti, Barbara Carbon and Catherine Viscomi. It was indeed a pleasure for Cav. Joseph Coccia, founder of the Coccia Foundation and Coccia Institute at MSU, to present the awards to the outstanding winning teams: Montville Township HS (1st place), St. Peter's Prep (2nd place), and Parsippany Hills HS & Passaic Valley HS (tied for 3rd place).

Last but certainly not least, the Coccia Institute acknowledges and congratulates the outstanding ITANJ Organizing

Committee for Heritage Day: Program Chair Lisa Manfre, Silvana Berardo, Maria Papaleo, Annette D'Amato and PRESIDENT ITANJ Catherine Vignale.

Due to the success and growth of the program over the last few years, a larger venue on MSU's campus has already been secured for next year's program, on March 26th, 2010, to accommodate even more schools and students in this celebration of Italian language and culture. We eagerly await the selection of “Theme 2010” — another challenge to meet and beat this year's terrific student presentations!!

For a photo slideshow of the students in action, please access the Coccia Institute website at: www.montclair.edu/coccia/institute/ Click on “Student Italian Heritage Day” under “Coccia eNewsletter.”



FOUNDATION

CIRCOLO dei AMICI 2009 Sponsored Scholarships Congratulations to all!

The Coccia Foundation Trustees and members of the Executive Board are pleased to share some news about our newest and most exciting scholarship initiative to date!

The annual Sponsored Scholarship Program, launched earlier last year with the help of several important supporters, is now active and has already aided six deserving students who are pursuing Italian Studies at the university level. These new scholarships are sponsored by generous donors who have pledged annual gifts in the amount of \$2,000 each, which will be presented to students at universities of the donors' choosing.

The Coccia Foundation is proud to announce that our sponsors are now members of an exclusive group known as "CIRCOLO degli AMICI." Known as valued advocates for both the mission of the Coccia Foundation and Italian culture in the United States in general, members of the "CIRCOLO" are reaching new heights among respected philanthropists within the Italian American community. Their continued dedication to our cause is highly appreciated and continuously recognized.

We are looking forward to welcoming additional benefactors to the "CIRCOLO" in the coming year and well into the future. Help us in "PASSING THE TORCH" to future generations. You are invited to join our esteemed list of current Sponsored Scholarship donors, all whom are listed on this page and our website:

www.cocciafoundation.org

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Crystal Badalamenti and Mark Hoffman received \$1,000 each from the Anna and Angelo Soriano Memorial Sponsored Scholarship and will continue their Italian studies in Italy.

Arianna Fognani, Marino Forlino, and Samantha Costanzo were awarded the Clementina and Joseph Coccia, Sr. Memorial Sponsored Scholarship to continue their Italian Studies research projects.

Francesco Chillemi, a Ph.D. student, was awarded \$1,000 for a special research project in Rome, from the Coccia Foundation.

Tiziana Briscese, a recent graduate of Rutgers graduate school of Education, has been awarded a \$1,000 Award through the Coccia Foundation by the Federation of IT-AM Societies of New Jersey.

ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY – PHILADELPHIA, PA

Philip Dachille was awarded \$2,000 from the Ciro and Maria Daidone Memorial Sponsored Scholarship which will be used to pursue his career in becoming a teacher of Italian. Read Mr. Dachille's comments for this award on page 13.

DREW UNIVERSITY – MADISON, NJ

Toni Anne Corsi, '09, Co-President of C.I.A.O.'s AMICI Group, received the \$2,000 Paragano Family Foundation Sponsored Scholarship Award and will be attending St. John's University in Rome, Italy.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY – MONTCLAIR, NJ

Valeria Ruggeri '09 and Rosa Russo '09 were recipients of \$1,000 each from the Maria Manzetti Memorial Sponsored Scholarship and will be studying in Italy.

Jessica Bautista, Robert Campana, Joanna De Los Santos and Stephanie Ozuna were recipients of Clementina and Joseph Coccia, Sr. Memorial Sponsored Scholarship to continue their graduate Italian Studies.

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY – SOUTH ORANGE, NJ

Nicole Pedewas was the recipient of the \$2,000 Nicastro Family Sponsored Scholarship to continue her Italian studies.

NOTE:

Bimonte Family Sponsored Scholarship at Fairleigh Dickinson University—Madison will be awarded this fall.

WISH TO SPONSOR A SCHOLARSHIP ???

Please visit www.cocciafoundation.org for more information or contact Cav. Joseph Coccia Jr. directly at 201-712-1010 or joseph@cocciafoundation.org to discuss scholarship options.





Italian Culture Enjoys Growth in the South

After visiting Clemson University and the University of Mississippi, Cav. and Mrs. Coccia traveled to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – home not only to the champion Tarheels, but also to one of the premiere Italian programs in the southern U.S. While the history and beauty of the UNC campus are undeniable to all who visit. The founders of the Coccia Foundation were particularly awed by the enthusiasm and the academic aptitude of the students studying Italian language, culture, and history there.

With more than 17,000 undergraduate students and over 10,000 enrolled in graduate programs, the University of North Carolina boasts 72 degree programs. Interest in Italian Studies at Chapel Hill has dramatically escalated in recent years, and the number of students taking Italian language classes has thus grown exponentially, along with a marked increase in Italian majors and minors. The University's most popular study abroad program is located in Florence. The Italian department's close ties with Florence, as well as to an award-winning educational program in Bologna, ensure that students' interest in Italian culture continues well after they return to the United States.

After arriving at Chapel Hill, Cav. and Mrs. Coccia met with Italian lecturer and Italian Club Faculty Advisor Dr. Amy Chambless, along with alumnus Brandon Essary, who recently completed his Master's in Italian Studies at UNC and will begin the school's Ph.D program in the fall. Dr. Chambless and Mr. Essary served as the Coccias' hosts throughout their visit. During this time, they met Italian department faculty, students, and members of UNC's Italian Club and Italian House.

Among the Italian Club's most exciting initiatives is an Italian conversation hour. The weekly meeting brings together a diverse group of individuals, from current students to local professionals and community members of all ages and ethnicities, who have a passion for all things Italian. The existing Italian Club officers are already planning for new programs and events in the coming year, including an Italian cultural month that will include an Italian dinner, film screening, musical evening, and a dramatic performance.



Excited about their new relationship with the Coccia Foundation, the Italian Club has adopted the AMICI della CULTURA ITALIANA™ banner, linking the Chapel Hill club with a continuously growing network of other student-run Italian clubs on college campuses along the east coast.

The Italian Studies community is now hoping to create an organized system of contacts that will aid other individuals in North Carolina who wish to make similar associations with Italian American and Italian interest groups throughout the country. In keeping with the idea of expansion and community relations, a UNC Italian

Club alum is currently developing a website that will catalogue all Italian-related cultural events that take place throughout the state, including lectures and seminars, cooking classes, film festivals, performances, and more.

Three professors from the Chapel Hill Italian Department took the time to meet with Cav. and Mrs. Coccia during their visit to the University. Dr. Dino Cervigni and Dr. Ennio Rao, Directors of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, respectively, along with Dr. Federico Luisetti, were gracious enough to provide a detailed overview of the courses and students of the Italian program. Together, these three educators have witnessed remarkable growth in their scholarly discipline. In the fall of 2008, more than 640 undergraduate students were enrolled in UNC's Italian classes and 18 graduate students taught language and culture courses.

After observing the University of North Carolina's immense appreciation for Italian people, history, and culture and meeting with some of the most enthusiastic and dedicated members of its Italian department, Cav. and Mrs. Coccia pledged the Coccia Foundation's whole-hearted support of UNC at Chapel Hill. Before their departure, the couple presented a financial donation that will help fund the Italian program, to Dr. Larry King, Chair of the Department of Romance Languages. They also committed a \$1,000 gift in support of an Italian language ...

[Continued on page 11...](#)

FOUNDATION



Continued from page 10...

... dramatic play to be performed during the 2009 Fall Semester.

"I am confident that our collaboration will flourish in the future," says Cav. Coccia. "I also hope that our Foundation will be able to provide aid to other deserving students in the 'Tarheel State'."

The official school colors of UNC are light blue and white, dating back almost as far as the university itself; but, from the caffè downtown to the classrooms of Dey Hall, any visitor to this prestigious university will sense the same pride in three other colors that was felt by Cav. and Mrs. Coccia during their visit... Green, white, and red, the colors of the tricolore. These colors are apparent in the voices, the values, and the futures of all those pursuing Italian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Brandon Essary
Assisted by Julie Essary

New Regions Approved

In addition to the New Jersey/New York regions of the Amici della Cultura Italiana Groups, the Board of Trustees of the Coccia Foundation has approved as it's newest region, Philadelphia, PA. This region, currently, includes the Universities of St. Joseph's, Drexel, LaSalle, and Temple. Dr. Kristen Grimes of St. Joseph's has volunteered to be the region's facilitator.

The Trustees also approved the new Southern Region. This region includes the Universities of Clemson, Ole Miss, and UNC at Chapel Hill, NC.

Drexel U's Competition

You're invited to the...

Drexel University Italian Students Organization's

BOSS OF THE SAUCE COMPETITION



Held On
Monday, May 18
at 3pm in the
Drexel University Korman Quad

(Rain Date: Tuesday, May 19 at the same time and place)

Ralph's Italian Restaurant, Dante & Luigi's, Cucina Forte, and La Scala's will be competing to see who makes the best marinara sauce in Philadelphia. FREE pasta and sauce for anybody interested in tasting and voting! Lorraine Ranalli, Philadelphia radio and TV personality, will also be signing copies of her book, Gravy Wars: South Philly Foods, Feuds, & Attitudes, at this event.



Contact ISO@drexel.edu for more information!

Drexel Students Receive T-Shirts



Drexel University students hold the Coccia Foundation t-Shirts presented to them by Founder Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr..

Clemson University International Food Festival



Kimberly Frogge, Tess Falabella, Miranda LaBone, and Allender Stewart man the Italian food booth.



Looking Ahead...

Continued from page 2...

discovered an increased interest in Italian language and culture - not only on college campuses, but in high schools and middle schools throughout New Jersey. My hope, is the continued drive to create Italian Studies programs for students at the grade school level will help ensure that the Advanced Placement Italian program remains in our high schools and continues to benefit those students who wish to pursue the study of Italian as they move on to college and beyond.

As our horizons along the East Coast and throughout the States continue to broaden, I am observing a major change within the Coccia Foundation itself. Many universities are expressing interest in joining our Amici della Cultura Italiana.

An increasing number of Italian American community and academic leaders are lending their respective expertise to our mission, and our volunteer numbers are steadily rising. In fact, our activities and events are now garnering interest from major corporations. PSE&G and the Financial Network are just two firms that are joining us in our mission of "PASSING THE TORCH." Sponsors like these are vital to the Coccia Foundation's continued growth.

To all who have gotten involved so far in 2009, thank you for your participation... With your continued support, I hope to employ our first paid administrative assistant by the end of 2009.

To those who wish to join us but haven't yet, you can begin your involvement by becoming an active member of the Coccia Foundation.

For the first time since our inception in 1994, my wife Elda and I, along with the Trustees and the Executive Board, are launching an official Coccia Foundation Membership.

As we continue to grow and expand, I believe that it becomes increasingly important for our most significant participants and interested friends to be kept up to speed on our many happenings - hopefully, as they occur!

Please see Page 19 and enjoy all the benefits of membership.

In fact, this issue is the final installment of our public newsletter. Future issues will only be available to members. If you would like to keep up with us, please fill out a membership form, mail back to Coccia Foundation and join us in "PASSING THE TORCH" to future generations.

NJ SENATE APPROVES BILL DESIGNATING OCTOBER AS "ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH"

Italian American groups throughout New Jersey thanked their Legislators for their overwhelming affirmative vote designating the month of October as "Italian American Heritage Month."

The passage was the culmination of a seven year effort initiated in 2002 by the UNICO NATIONAL Columbus Day Committee chair Ralph Contini, a Trustee of the Coccia Foundation. Groups that worked in collaboration over the years include UNICO NATIONAL, the Italian & Italian American Heritage Commission, and the Coccia Foundation. While waiting for this historic bill to pass these groups successfully obtained, from three

separate NJ governors, proclamations that designated October as "Italian Heritage & Culture Month."

Due to the groundwork and persistence over this time and after numerous meetings at the Governor's office, and lobbying with numerous Senators and Assembly members, the Italian Legislative Caucus led by Bill Sponsor Assemblyman Scalera and Senators Bucco, Vitale, and Sarlo, was successfully passed officially establishing October as "Italian Heritage and Culture Month." New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine will be signing the resolution prior to October formally establishing October as "Italian Heritage & Culture Month."

Mr. Contini stated, "Governor Corzine, by signing this historic bill establishing the month of October as 'Italian Heritage and Culture Month,' honors the heritage of Italian-Americans in our state and our nation."

The Coccia Foundation and the Coccia Institute at Montclair State University founder, Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr. said, "Finalmente, members of the New Jersey legislature are to be applauded for recognizing our Italian forefathers and the Italian Americans who came before us and brought so much to the State of New Jersey; enabling it to become what it is today."

FOUNDATION



2009 AMICI Scholarship/ Study Abroad Awards

DREW UNIVERSITY – MADISON, NJ

Frank Sedita, Co-President of C.I.A.O.'s AMICI Group received \$2,000 to study abroad in Venice, Italy, over the summer.

FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY – MADISON, NJ

Danielle Durando, an active member of P.I.S.A.'s AMICI Group, was awarded \$2,000 and will attend the University's Study Abroad Program in Alesso, Italy.

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE – VALHALLA, NY

Vanessa Campo was awarded \$2,000 and will be attending a study abroad program in Italy over the summer.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Franco Civileto was awarded study abroad funds and will attend the University's Study Abroad Program in Urbino, Italy.

RAMAPO COLLEGE – MAHWAH, NJ

Danielle McCartan and Karen Cardinal received \$1,000 each and will study abroad in Italy.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY – MONTCLAIR, NJ

Gregory Merendino and Ileana Moyano were awarded \$1,000 each to study abroad in Italy over the summer.

Vincent Ricco Jr., an Honors Student at John J. Cali School of Music, was awarded \$1,100 for music theater program fellowship in Ugento, Italy.

Victoria Buchner, Rosanna Caggiano, Marta DeCandia and Lauren Schock, were recipients of the Saddle Brook UNICO Excellence in Italian Scholarship. (supported by the Coccia Foundation)



Recipient's Comments

Philip Dachille

Philip's intention is to continue his graduate studies with the goal of becoming an Italian teacher. To this purpose, he has applied for an M.A. in Education at St. Joseph's University, Phil., PA.

As Philip wrote in his application: "When I see Italians and Italy, I see the birthplace of science and modern astronomy; I see the first telephone; I see the founding of the Americas; I see the birth of humanism; I see the first place to practice modern forensic medicine; I see the first Trans-Atlantic radio transmission. It is with this in mind, that I would like to continue perpetuating the excellence of the Italian culture."

As Dr. Kristen Grimes noted, and we all agree, Philip's essay "reflects a true understanding of the mission of the Coccia Foundation. He would use the Daidone Scholarship toward a degree in teaching, which he will use it to preserve Italian culture." Our most sincere thanks to the Daidone family and the Coccia Foundation for benefiting the SJU students.

Vincent Ricco, Jr.

I've thought of this "thank you" note extensively and have concluded, that I cannot find sufficient words to fully express my gratitude for your grant. While I've been working a lot, my finances for my impending trip were not yet covered until your donation, and so – I say very honestly – "you've allowed me a kind of dream come true."

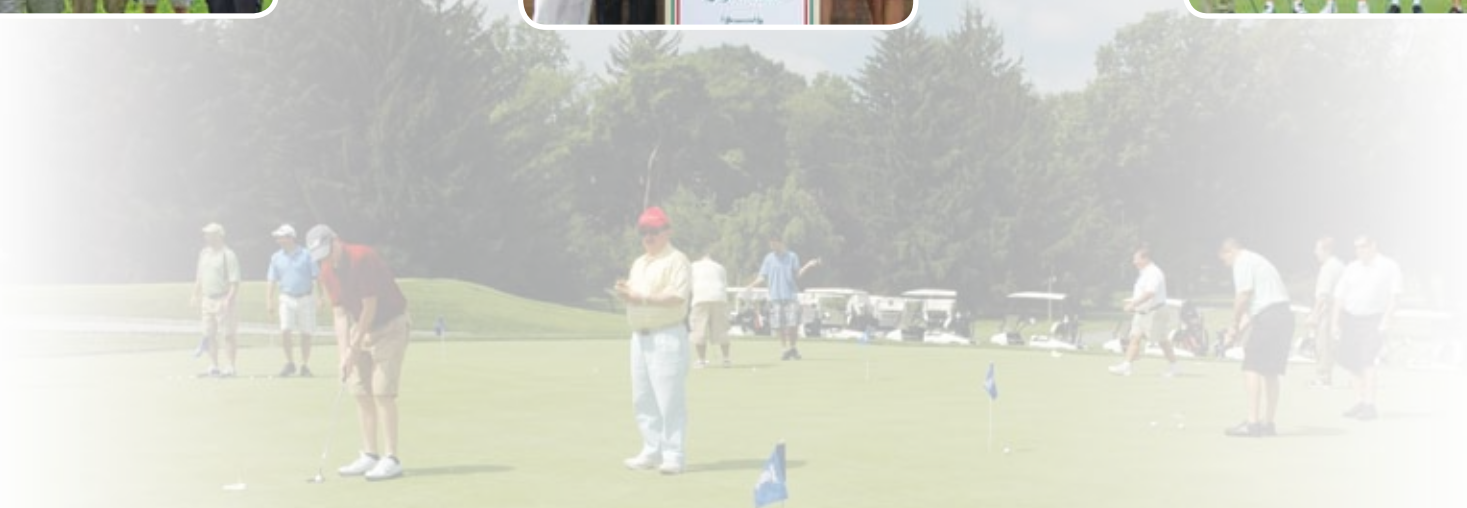
Thank you so much. I would love to share with you the details of my trip and the production upon my return. Thank you again, and God bless you.



Palermo Turino Brescia
 Cosenza Siena Perugia Reggio Emilia
 Milano Roma Firenze

COCCIA

Eighth Annual Italian Studies Golf Classic Surpasses All Expectations



It was a great day for golfers, but more importantly, it was a great day for students of Italian. The annual Italian Studies Golf Classic was held in June at White Beeches Country Club in Haworth, New Jersey, and it proved to be the Coccia Foundation's most successful fundraising event to date thanks to the hard work and dedication of Co-Chairs Ralph Contini and Thomas Daidone and our hardworking committee.

For the eighth year in a row, golfers and friends with an interest in the preservation of Italian culture hit the fairways under a beautiful, sunny sky. A record 144 golfers came out to support students who are pursuing the study of Italian language, culture, and history as they enjoyed breakfast and the golf tournament complete with contests and prizes. A great showing was made by golfer Tom Triolo, who missed taking home \$10,000 on

a 50-foot putt.

"I'd like to thank all the golfers and their friends and families for joining us on the links," says Cav. Joseph Coccia Jr. "Everyone who participated should be proud that they are helping in 'PASSING THE TORCH' to young people who have an interest in Italy and its people. We're looking forward to seeing you at our June 2010 event!"



FOUNDATION

Eighth Annual Italian Studies Dinner-Reception Honoring Commendatore Peter Caruso



Droves of Italian Studies supporters enjoyed a fabulous evening at the Estate at Florentine Gardens in River Vale following the Coccia Foundation's annual golf outing. Delicious Italian cuisine was just the beginning for the Coccia Foundation's more than 300 guests, including representatives from the Financial Network Investment Corporation, who graciously sponsored the event — the previous Golf

Classic sponsor was PSE&G.

An eloquent address by the event's honoree, Commendatore Peter Caruso, was a highlight of the evening. Comm. Caruso is well-known as a successful businessman and devoted philanthropist, his presence was especially appreciated.

Guests also enjoyed a comedic presentation by Italian-American favorite Uncle Floyd Vivino, vocalist Nicole

Nicastro and an "Almost" Silent Auction that included chances to take home a Bermuda vacation, plane tickets to Italy, and a gourmet dinner for twelve in your home by In Thyme Catered Events, of River Vale, New Jersey.

Keep up with us by filling out a membership application found on Page 19.





i-Italy Introduction...

We are very fortunate at the Coccia Foundation to have made new friends at i-Italy who share our passion to preserve Italian heritage and culture. Dr. Ottorino Cappelli, Project Coordinator, and Letizia Airos Soria, Executive Editor, have shown us tremendous support, and we are grateful.

i-ITALY (subtitled “The Italian/American Digital Project”) is the first and largest online meeting point for Italian Americans as well as a bridge to meet Italian friends in Italy and abroad. It offers both a rich social network and a multimedia web magazine.

WWW.i-ITALY.US is the fastest-growing online network specifically dedicated to Italian Americans and to everybody who loves Italy, the Italian culture, and the Italian way of life. **You can join it for free and create your own personal page**, start up your blog, participate in forums and discussion groups, tell your stories, post pictures, music and videos, and share them with your friends and family.

An AMICI della Cultura Italiana group has been already created on i-Italy by Victoria Buchner, of Montclair State University: (<http://www.i-italy.us/group/>

amicidellaculturaitalianamsu). Here you will be able to mingle with your closest friends before you venture to explore the whole network. In addition, you are invited to open and run your own groups for people based in your school or college.

Come join us and our 800 registered members to see how simple and fun it is!

In addition to the social network, i-Italy offers the first and only multimedia web magazine dedicated to the Italian American experience.

WWW.i-ITALY.ORG is a professional web magazine run by a group of young journalists and academics with the help of a host of young interns coming from both Italy and the US. Here you can read articles, view videos and slide shows, and post your comments and opinions. You are also welcome to submit your own articles for publication and -- even better -- visit i-Italy’s headquarters in Manhattan and meet the people who work there.

i-Italy is hosted at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, CUNY, 25 West 43rd Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10036.



i-Italy student interns Danielle Ministeri, Simona Florio, Marta Donatone and Francesca DiFolco with Coccia Foundation Student Liaison Phil Sergio.



Coccia Foundation Founder Elda Coccia is joined by i-Italy.org’s Executive Editor Letizia Airos Soria at Hofstra University’s AMICI della Cultura Italiana student meeting.



President Pasquale Meola presenting \$1,000 scholarship to Tiziana Briscece. Looking on are Elda and Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr.

Forging New Partnerships



Coccia Foundation V.P. Elisa Coccia presents a check to Lisa Altman.

Partnerships are the wave of future, especially for non-profits and there are certain relationships that have an innate fit, such as Italian Culture and opera. Opera New Jersey is thankful to the Coccia Foundation for its generosity and equally proud to have a new friend. We look forward to seeing our friends again in the near future, perhaps when Opera New Jersey moves north to NJPAC in a partnership presentation with NJ Symphony Orchestra and NJPAC for Bizet’s “Carmen” on Friday, February 12, 2010.

FOUNDATION



Ambassador Terzi Lecture

Continued from page 1...

assumed his position as Permanent Representative of Italy at the United Nations.

Reflecting on the significance of the day for the extended university community, Provost Gingerich concluded: "The Ambassador delivered an enlightening and highly educational overview of Italian foreign policy of the past two decades and provided our students with an understanding of Italy's influence, from the Balkans to Iraq to the U.N., simply unavailable to them in the U.S. media."



Honoree Caruso...

Continued from page 5...

called "Magna Grecia."

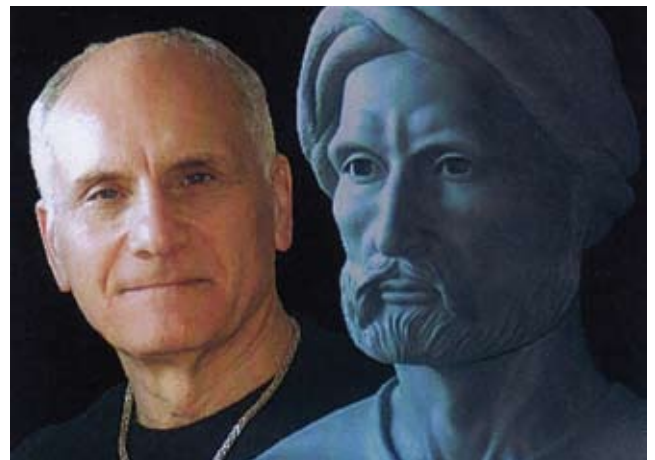
For his dedication and commitment to the benefit of Italian American relations and his exemplary career, he was honored by the Republic of Italy as a Cavaliere in June 1986, and in 1994, was "promoted" to the rank of Cavaliere Ufficiale.

Comm. Caruso lives in Clifton, NJ with his wife, Victoria. They have six children and five grandchildren.



Commendatore Peter Caruso displaying the commendation received from the Italian Government to Cavaliere Giulio Piccoli.

Sculptor Patrick Morelli



Sculptor, Patrick Morelli, and life-size clay model for bronze bust of Ibn Khaldun. Others works include "Eagle Rock September 11th Memorial" and ten-foot "Behold" Monument to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Coccia Institute Presents Awards To...



Dean Claire Taub
FAREWELL TRIBUTE

Mario Milelli
COMPLETED TERM

Ralph A. Contini
COMPLETED TERM

Coccia Institute at MSU Calendar of Events

September 2009: “Italian Immigration to Latin America ”

A lecture in honor of Hispanic Culture Month—For students, faculty and the community [Montclair State University]

October 2, 2009: “Teaching Italian Symposium/Workshop: Meeting II: Writing”

Professional Development Conference for Teachers/Faculty of Italian language K-16 University Hall, [Montclair State University]

October 20, 2009: “Gravitation: From Galileo to Einstein and Beyond”

Co-sponsored with MSU’s CSAM (College of Science and Mathematics) The SOKOL Lecture by Dr. Eugenio Coccia, Director of the Gran Sasso Laboratory, Assergi, L’Aquila, Italy. In honor of Galileo Galilei and the International Year of Astronomy [Kasser Theater, Montclair State University]

November 4, 2009: “A Showcase of Italian Short Films on Immigration”

A short presentation by curator Edward Bowen, Indiana University at Bloomington. In honor of Italian Heritage Month--For students, faculty and the community. [University Hall, Montclair State University]

November 2009: “Italy Today and its Relationship to the Tri-State Area”

A lecture by Consul General of Italy in New York, Min. Francesco Maria Talo’. For students, faculty and the community. [University Hall, Montclair State University]

March 26, 2010: “Italian Student Heritage Day”

Co-sponsored with ITANJ—For Intermediate and High School Level Students and Teachers of Italian Language and Culture. [University Hall, Montclair State University]

May 1st through 4th, 2010: La Scala di Seta (The Silken Ladder) by Gioacchino Rossini

Opera from the John J. Cali School of Music in collaboration with the Coccia Institute. MSU Opera Workshop—Director, Jeffrey Gall; MSU Symphony Orchestra—Director, Paul Hostetter [Kasser Theater, Montclair State University]

For further information, please visit: www.montclair.edu/coccia

FOUNDATION



BY POPULAR DEMAND

Cari Amici,

The Coccia Foundation's inaugural MEMBERSHIP DRIVE has begun! As we anticipate that over the next several years the Coccia Foundation will emerge as one of the nation's foremost Italian-American organizations, we invite our families, friends and supporters to join us in "PASSING THE TORCH." For the first time since our inception in 1994, the Coccia Foundation is offering open membership to all those who wish to actively participate in preserving, protecting, and perpetuating the Italian culture and heritage for the benefit of future generations.

As an official member of the Coccia Foundation, you will be the first to learn about our newest and most exciting programs. You will be eligible to attend Coccia Foundation-sponsored music and stage performances, lectures and seminars, and other cultural events held throughout the year. You'll also receive up-to-date information on how you can support various causes that are close to the heart of the Italian-American community. And because the Coccia Foundation now maintains a presence in more than 20 universities in several states through our "AMICI della CULTURA ITALIANA" network, you can be assured that the support we receive through your annual membership—both financial and participatory—will directly benefit young people who are pursuing a course of Italian study.

We know you share the ideals of the Coccia Foundation and are interested in assisting us as we continue to work toward our mission of "PASSING THE TORCH." Please join us! Membership will be effective within a few days from the day your initial dues are received, which will include membership for the balance of 2009 and for the entire 2010 calendar year.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____ PHONE # _____

SPONSOR _____

_____ FAMILY	\$ 55	_____ ORGANIZATION	\$ 125
_____ DONATION		_____ CORPORATE	\$ 250

Make checks payable to: COCCIA FOUNDATION
And mail to: 23 Leswing Avenue
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

For additional information, visit our website: www.cocciafoundation.org
or call our office at 201-712-1010

COCCIA FOUNDATION

Call for Continued Support to Rebuild Abruzzo



The Coccia Foundation continues to collect funds to assist in the ongoing rebuilding efforts in the Abruzzo Region of Italy. For further information contact the Coccia Foundation at: (201) 712-1010 or visit our website at: www.cocciafoundation.org

Coccia Foundation

"preserving Italian culture"

Foundation Office
23 Leswing Avenue
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

Benvenuti...

To our AMICI and supporters.

Thank you for bringing our rich Italian Culture and Heritage into your home.

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