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IL CAVALIERE

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT

50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION SPECIAL EDITION



The 50th Anniversary ASILM Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony was held at the Essex House in New York on February 25, 2016. (L to R) Cav. di Gran Croce Dr. Lucio Caputo (ASILM President) with the “Grand Award of Merit” recipients: Mrs. Priscilla Ratazzi, Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli, Uff. Min. Plen. Natalia Quintavalle, Cav. Daniel A. Nigro and Dr. Antonio Bernardo. Toastmaster Laura Savini is at far right.

The American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit hit a major milestone on February 25, 2016, as it hosted the 50th Anniversary of its Gala Dinner Dance and Awards Ceremony in New York City. Traveling from across the United States and Italy to attend this black-tie elegant event, hundreds of Cavalieri of all ranks, diplomats, consuls, journalists and distinguished Italian and American leaders mingled, dined and danced in the Grand Ballroom of the Essex House, enjoying an evening full of cheers and celebration.

For 50 historic years, the ASILM Gala has highlighted the best of Italian excellence and the Society’s many outstanding members. The event paid tribute to this milestone by featuring influential and renowned award recipients, a cocktail reception, exceptional cuisine, live music and a new, majestic venue.

One of the most important highlights of the evening was the warm message provided by the President of the Italian Republic, Hon. Sergio Mattarella, who granted his high patronage to the event. In his message, President Mattarella congratulated the Society on reaching this significant milestone, and extended his warmest greetings to the “illustrious participants” at the Gala. He also thanked the Italian community in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut for the reception held in his honor at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on February 10, 2016. (See the President’s full message on page 3)

Further enriching the evening, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio also paid tribute to the ASILM Gala’s 50th anniversary with a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

February 25, 2016

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to welcome everyone to the 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony of the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit.

For centuries, New York has welcomed immigrants from all over the world, including millions of people from Italy seeking new freedoms and opportunities. These individuals have shaped and enhanced every sector of the five boroughs, ensuring that Italy's rich heritage remains a vital part of the beautiful tapestry that defines our great city. I have always been proud of my Italian roots and all of the customs and traditions that come with them. I commend the Society for its fifty years of efforts to promote Italian culture, foster civic engagement and strengthen the ties between our two countries. Grazie mille! As you gather to celebrate this historic milestone, I look forward to both ASILM and our Italian-American community making invaluable contributions to our city for many years to come.

On behalf of the City of New York, please accept my best wishes for a memorable evening and continued success.

Sincerely,

Bill de Blasio
Mayor



ASILM

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE
ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT

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Il Presidente della Repubblica Italiana

ROMA, 25 FEBBRAIO 2016



CAV. DI GRAN CROCE
DR. LUCIO CAPUTO
PRESIDENTE
“AMERICAN SOCIETY OF THE ITALIAN LEGIONS OF MERIT”
NEW YORK

DESIDERO SALUTARE CALOROSAMENTE TUTTI GLI ILLUSTRATI PARTECIPANTI AL “GALA DINNER” PER IL 50° ANNIVERSARIO DELLA FONDAZIONE DELL’ASILM E COLGO L’OCCASIONE PER RINGRAZIARE TUTTI VOI PER AVER OSPITATO IL MIO RECENTE INCONTRO AL GUGGENHEIM CON LA COLLETTIVITÀ ITALIANA DEGLI STATI DI NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY E CONNECTICUT.

È STATO PER ME OCCASIONE DI FORTE ORGOGLIO. LA STORIA DELL’ASILM E DEI SUOI MEMBRI, INSIGNITI DI UN’ONORIFICENZA DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA È LO SPECCHIO DI UN LEGAME, QUELLO TRA GLI STATI UNITI E L’ITALIA, UNICO AL MONDO. UN LEGAME CHE TROVA LA SUA FORZA E LA SUA LINFA NEL VOSTRO OPERATO E NELLA DETERMINAZIONE E PASSIONE CON LA QUALE AVETE COLTIVATO IL VOSTRO RAPPORTO CON L’ITALIA E VISSUTO LA VOSTRA IDENTITÀ, AMERICANA E ITALIANA AL TEMPO STESSO.

È IN QUESTO SPIRITO CHE RINGRAZIO LEI, SIGNOR PRESIDENTE, E TUTTI I MEMBRI DELL’ASILM, PER I RISULTATI RAGGIUNTI NEGLI SCORSI 50 ANNI E CHE VI AUGURO ALTRETTANTO SUCCESSO NEL FUTURO.

SERGIO MATTARELLA

Translation:

I wish to provide my warmest greetings to all of the illustrious participants at the 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner of the ASILM, and I take this opportunity to thank you all for having hosted my recent meeting with the Italian community of the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut at the Guggenheim.

It was, for me, an occasion of strong pride. The history of the ASILM and of its members, recipients of the decorations of the Italian Republic, is the mirror of a tie between the United States and Italy that is unique to the world. A tie that finds its strength and its lymph in your actions and in determination and passion with which you have cultivated your relationship with Italy and lived your identity, American and Italian at the same time.

It is in this spirit that I thank you, Mr. President, and all the members of the ASILM for the results achieved in the past 50 years and we wish you success also in the future.



50TH ANNIVERSARY ASILM GALA DINNER DANCE & AWARDS CEREMONY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Hundreds of Cavalieri, diplomats, consuls and friends of the ASILM joined in the 50th Anniversary Gala celebration.

written message commending “the Society for its 50 years of efforts to promote Italian culture, foster civic engagement and strengthen the ties between our two countries.” (See the Mayor’s full message on page 2)

This year, the Gala honored several distinguished leaders of Italian excellence with the “Grand Award of Merit”: Dr. Antonio Bernardo, Director of the Surgical Innovations Laboratory at Weill Cornell Medical College; Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli, President of the Associazione Cavalieri di Gran Croce in Rome; Cav. Daniel A. Nigro, Commissioner of the New York City Fire Department; Cav. di Gran Croce Susanna Agnelli (presented In Memoriam), Italian politician and philanthropist; and Min. Plen. Uff. Natalia Quintavalle, Consul General of Italy to New York.

In addition to the distinguished awardees, the event drew the participation of some of the most important officials, including Gr. Uff. Amb. Sebastiano Cardì, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN; Uff. Min. Natalia Quintavalle, Consul General of Italy to New York and one of the event’s award recipients; Dott. General Roberto Frangione, Vice Consul General; Dott.ssa Isabella Periotto, Consul; Mrs. Chiara Saulle, Consul; Dott. Maurizio Forte, Italian Trade Commissioner; Dott. Romano Baruzzi, Deputy Trade Commissioner; Amb. Juan José Gomez Camacho, Ambassador of Mexico to the US; and Mr. Alberto Milani, President of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce. Officials from the United Nations (in addition to Amb. Cardì) also participated in the Gala’s 50th Anniversary event: Maj. Gen. Marcello Mazzuca, Capt. Daniele Romano, Cav. Valeria Biagiotti, Cav. Paolo Campanini, and Comm. Pier Luigi Zamporlini.

Also joining the Gala were members of the Associazine Cavalieri

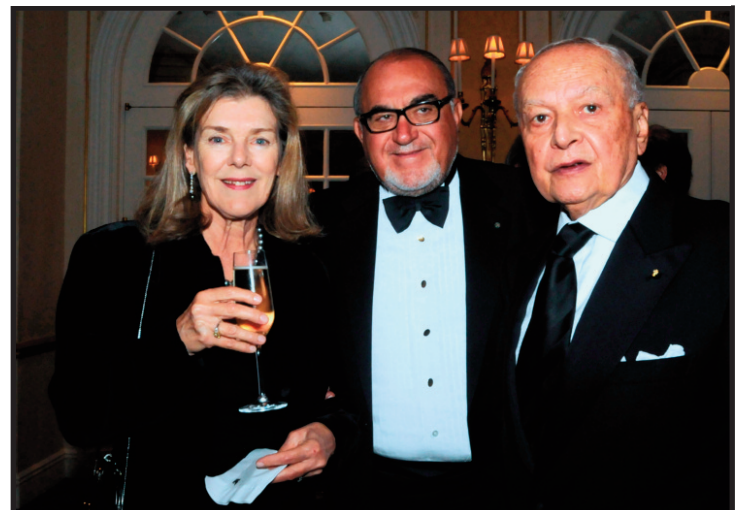
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



(L to R) Mr. Frank Savino, Cav. Vivian Cardia, Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Dominic R. Massaro and Mrs. Frances Massaro arrive at the reception.



(L to R) Comm. Salvatore Salibello, Mrs. C. Marie Mangin, Mrs. Carol Maurer and Mr. Doug Maurer.



Mrs. Loyse Paradiso with ASILM Board Members Cav. Berardo Paradiso (Center) and Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli.



(L to R) Mr. Paolo Mastrolilli, Ms. Letizia Airos and Cav. Lav. Claudio Del Vecchio pose together at the Gala.



(L to R) Cav. Daniel A. Nigro, Mrs. Lynn Nigro, Uff. Min. Natalia Quintavalle and Amb. Alberto Cumillo mingle at the reception.



(L to R) Mrs. Michela Ragazzi, Capt. Daniele Romano, Ms. Angelina Freitas and Dr. Antonio Bernardo in the Petit Salon of the Essex House.



Mr. Paul Chapman and Ms. Alessandra Rotondi enter the Petit Salon for the reception.



(L to R) Cav. Charles Stanziale and Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Frank J. Guarini celebrate the Society's 50th anniversary.



(L to R) Msgr. Hilary Franco, Gr. Uff. Nicholas Di Marzio, Rev. Msgr. Ronald Marino gather together at the event.



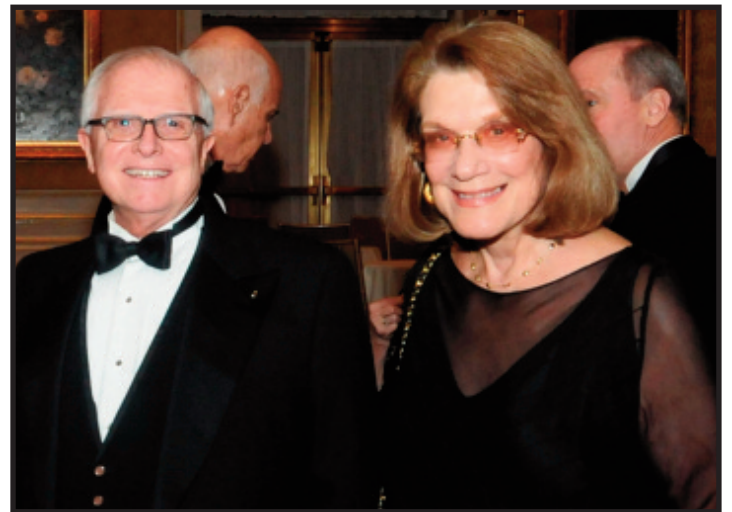
Mrs. Janet Vitale and Mr. Paul Vitale at the ASILM Gala reception.



Board Member Gr. Uff. RoseMarie Gallina-Santangelo (left) and Ms. Kim Brizzolara.



Beatrice Bondi ("Si Italia TV") interviews Italy-America Chamber of Commerce President Alberto Milani.



Mr. Robert Vanni and Prof. Elizabeth Defeis pose with each other at the Gala.



(L to R) Mr. Noel Lateef and Cav. Daniel A. Nigro at the 50th ASILM Gala in New York.



Ms. Ornella Fado ("Brindiamo TV") with her guest at this special anniversary, black-tie dinner.



Left: A delegation of Cavalieri di Gran Croce Associazione attend the 50th ASILM Gala to show their support and strengthen the two organizations' ties. (L to R) Mrs. Margheritha Bulzacchelli, Cav. di Gran Croce Stefano Vannucci, Cav. di Gran Croce Carlo Varni, Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli (President of the Associazione), Cav. di Gran Croce Dr. Lucio Caputo, Cav. di Gran Croce Gianfranco Antognoli, Mrs. Piergiovanna Perioni and Mrs. Carlo Varni.



Cav. di Gran Croce Dr. Lucio Caputo, president of the ASILM, gives the toast to President Obama and President Mattarella.



Guests stand for the toasts and national anthems.



Msgr. Hilary Franco of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See performs the invocation at the Gala.



Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli and Gr. Uff. Amb. Sebastiano Cardi socialize over dinner.



50TH ANNIVERSARY ASILM GALA DINNER DANCE & AWARDS CEREMONY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

di Gran Croce: Cavalieri di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli, Gianfranco Antognoli, Simone Puccioni, Pietro Pudocchi, Stefano Vannucci and Carlo Varni, all of whom travelled from Rome to attend.

The Cavalieri di Gran Croce Associazione--whose members have all received the highest decoration of the OMRI--promotes friendship and solidarity among all honored with the title of Cavalieri di Gran Croce OMRI, and liaise with other agencies and Italian and foreign organizations with similar or related purposes, among the association's many other activities. Gala attendees offered a warm welcome to the members of the association, further strengthening the friendly bond between the ASILM and the Cavalieri di Gran Croce Association and increasing their cooperation.

Showing their support for the Society, the ASILM Board arrived at the event with their decorations worn proudly: Cav. di Gran Croce Dominic R. Massaro, Immediate Past President and Honorary Chairman), Uff. Hon Eugene Nardelli (Executive Vice President), Cav. di Gran Croce Lawrence Auriana (Secretary), Cav. Vivian Cardia (Director), Cav. Berardo Paradiso (Director), and Comm. Stefano Acunto (Director), Joseph M. Mattone, Sr. (Past President of the ASILM), Cav. Rev. Msgr. Ronald Marino, Gr. Uff. Nicholas DiMarzio, Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Frank J. Guarini, Cav. Charles Stanziale, to name a few.

Some of the most distinguished members of the Italian community in the U.S. and friends of the Society joined in the celebration, including: Ms. Cristina Fontanelli, Cav. Lav. Claudio Del Vecchio, Msgr. Hilary Franco, Mr. Noel Lateef, Amb. Alberto Cutillo, Dr. Paolo Andreoli, Dr. Antonio Maniscalco, Mr. Gabriel Monzon-Cortarelli, Judge William Martini, Mr. Giovanni Spinelli, Alessandra Rotondi, Mr. Paul Chapman, Mr. Enrico Bonetti, Mr. Giancarlo Bruno, Mr. Robert Vanni, Dr. Maria Palandra, and Dr. Francesca Verga.

Members of the media in attendance to cover the Gala were: Jim Maters (PBS), Letizia Airos, Ugo Caltagirone (ANSA), Francesco Forcella, Liliana Faccioli Pintozi, Tiziana Ferrario (RAI), Giovanna Botteri (RAI), Francesco Semprini (La Stampa), Paolo Mastrolilli (La Stampa), Frederico Rampini (La Repubblica), Silvia Berzoni (Il Sole 24 Ore), Andrea Bonini (SkyTG24) Angelina Freitas (Revista Viver Brazil), Serena Di Ronza (ANSA), Giampaolo Pioli (Quotidiano Nazionale), Ornella Fado (Brindiamo TV), Stefano Santoro and Beatrice Bondi (ItalyAmerica TV), Maurita Cardone and Giada Gramanzini (LaVoce di NY) and Jon Haggins (Globetrotter TV).

During and immediately following the event, guests spoke enthusiastically about the striking Grand Ballroom of the Essex House, a celebrated five-star hotel whose marked prestige, international fame and scenic location opposite Central Park made it the perfect place for an elegant and unique celebration of the ASILM Gala's Anniversary Dinner. The hotel is known for being the venue where celebrities, politicians and royalty flock, attracted by its luxurious interior and outstanding reputation as one of the best hotels in New York City.

In addition to a new, classic location, this year's special anniversary Gala treated its guests to a dinner featuring Butter Poached Lobster and Braised Lamb Ossobuco, paired with Pighin Pinot Grigio DOC, 2014, and Chiarlo, Tortonian Barolo DOCG, 2010, respectively. For dessert, Mocha Chocolate Mousse Cake topped with a "50" chocolate coin (referring to the Gala's anniversary) was served, much to the guests' delight.

Guests discovered a surprise awaiting them that was purposely not included in the menu: an enormous chocolate cake illuminated by 50 candles which was carried into the Grand Ballroom by the staff who had prepared the dinner and dessert, including Chefs Achilles Poliviou and Andrew Burriesci and Pastry Chef



Dr. Antonio Bernardo is presented with the "Grand Award of Merit" for his many medical achievements.



Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli accepts the "Grand Award of Merit" during the ceremony in the Grand Ballroom.



Tommy Doh. As Panorama Music played a classical spin on the Happy Birthday song, the Toastmaster of the event, Laura Savini, of Untamed Hair Productions, blew out the cake's 50 candles, resulting in much clapping and cheering from the audience for this unexpected, joyous touch to the evening's celebration.

The award ceremony for distinguished honorees was another highlight of the evening. Now a tradition of the Gala, the honorees were presented with the "Grand Award of Merit," the highest honor of the Society, in recognition of their activities to spread Italian excellence throughout the United States. Every year, this prestigious award is given in recognition of those who have dedicated themselves to improving the daily lives of the public with their contributions in diverse fields, including the arts, medicine, banking and finance, business, politics and jurisprudence. These distinguished personalities thus represent Italian excellence in every sense.

The "Grand Award of Merit" recipients of the 50th ASILM Gala were: Dr. Antonio Bernardo, Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli, Cav. Daniel A. Nigro, Cav. di Gran Croce Susanna Agnelli (presented *In Memoriam*), and Min. Plen. Uff. Natalia Quintavalle. Upon being presented with their awards, the recipients offered some memorable remarks for the guests.

Dr. Antonio Bernardo is a highly accomplished, award-winning neurosurgeon whose expertise in skull-base surgery has changed the field of neurosurgery. Through his pioneering efforts to expand the use of innovative 3D technology for brain surgery across the U.S., he has saved countless lives and enriched the field of medical technology as a result. Accordingly, there are few professionals more deserving of the "Grand Award of Merit" on the occasion of the Society's 50th anniversary dinner.

"We are very proud," remarked Toastmaster Laura Savini to the audience, "that an Italian doctor has accomplished so much in a difficult, specialized field and received high recognition for his work. It also makes us proud that one of the most important American institutions, the Weill Cornell Medical College, specifically created a high-technology center for him to research, operate and teach new technology."

Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli is President of the highly prestigious Associazione Cavalieri di Gran Croce in Rome, for which he is in charge of developing relations with other countries. The Association's members include some of the most distinguished and influential leaders in Italy. Throughout his industrious career, he has worked closely with and consulted to a number of Prime Ministers: he served as Economic Consultant for Prime Minister Prodi at Palazzo Chigi, was the head of the Economic Department under Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, and served as head of the Local Development Department at Prime Minister Amato's Office.

Cav. Daniel A. Nigro is the 33rd Commissioner of the FDNY. In fact, he is only the sixth individual to hold every rank in the depart-



Cav. Daniel A. Nigro, the 33rd FDNY Commissioner, receives the "Grand Award of Merit."



Mrs. Priscilla Ratazzi accepts the "Grand Award of Merit" on behalf of her mother, Cav. di Gran Croce Susanna Agnelli.



Uff. Min. Plen. Natalia Quintavalle is presented with the "Grand Award of Merit" in recognition of her many accomplishments as Consul General of Italy.



ment in the agency's history. He was appointed as a firefighter in 1969, rising through the ranks to the top uniformed position as Chief of Department on September 12, 2001. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, he was appointed Chief of Department with the death of Chief Peter J. Ganci, Jr. Cav. Nigro was responsible for overseeing all rescue and recovery operations at the World Trade Center site and the beginning of the unprecedented rebuilding of the department.

"He is a 9/11 hero, a distinguished member of the ASILM, and a person of great character," remarked Toastmaster Savini during her introduction of the commissioner.

The "Grand Award of Merit" was presented In Memoriam to Cav. di Gran Croce Susanna Agnelli, and accepted on her behalf by her daughter, Priscilla Ratazzi. The granddaughter of Giovanni Agnelli, the founder of FIAT, Susanna Agnelli began her political career in 1974, when she served as mayor of Monte Argentario for ten years. The experience inspired her to enter national politics. She went on to serve in the European Parliament and later joined the Senate. In 1983 she was named Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs. In 1995 and 1996, Ms. Agnelli served as Foreign Minister. In addition to her political career, she is also well known for her philanthropy, which centered on education and the environment. In 1990, she was responsible for establishing Italy's annual research-funding charity telethon, The Telethon Foundation, which is dedicated to conducting the best research possible to find cures for aggressive genetic diseases. The Telethon Foundation is the primary beneficiary of the Daybreak Children's Rare Disease Fund, which operates in the United States.

A special award was presented to Min. Plen. Uff. Natalia Quintavalle, the then Consul General of Italy. ASILM President, Cav. di Gran Croce Dr. Lucio Caputo introduced Min. Quintavalle, stating "Min. Natalia Quintavalle has been a great friend and supporter of the ASILM and has participated in all our events, including the last five Galas. We are not saying goodbye but arrivederci."

In September 2011 Natalia Quintavalle was appointed Consul General of Italy in New York, with Consular jurisdiction over 90,000 Italians and more than 4 million Italian Americans. She is the first woman to be appointed to this position. Prior to this appointment, she was Vice Director General for Political Affairs and Principal Director of UN and Human Rights at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. She was previously appointed to Italian Permanent Missions to the UN in Geneva, and New York as Italian General Assembly Delegate to the Fifth Committee. Between 1986 and 1999, she served twice at the General Directorate for Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was also appointed as Italian Consul in Toulouse, France (1989-1991), and as First Secretary in charge of political and consular issues at the Italian Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1991-1995).

Previous "Grand Award of Merit" Recipients include: Comm. Mario Andretti, Cav. del Lavoro Marchese Piero Antinori, Dr. Joseph Bertino, Hon. George W. Bush, Mr. Francesco Cafiso, Dr. Silvia Formenti, Hon. Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Uff. Giovanni Mantovani, Comm. Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi, H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, Uff. Hon. Eugene Nardelli, Cav. Joseph Perella, Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Arnaldo Pomodoro, Cav. del Lavoro Giovanni Rana, Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Antonin Scalia, Gr. Uff. Hon. Ronald Spogli, Count Lucio Tasca d'Almerita, and Cav. del Lavoro Gianni Zonin, among others.

The ceremony could not be concluded without paying tribute to the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Cav. di Gran Croce Antonin Scalia, who had been awarded the "Grand Award of Merit" at the ASILM Gala in 2012. "He was a towering personality, who we will remember with our deepest sympathy," Toastmaster Laura Savini said during the awards presentation.

Additional features of the evening's program were the toasts to President Obama and President Mattarella using the finest sparkling wine in Italy: Ferrari, Reserve Lunelli, Trento DOC; the invocation given by Msgr. Hilary Franco, of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations; and the performance of the National Anthems of Italy and the U.S., both of which were performed by Panorama Music under the direction of Mr. Rino Minetti.

To add a more meaningful, long-term impact to this event, the proceeds from the Gala were used solely to further the ASILM Education Fund.

Created by the Society in 2013, the ASILM Education Fund endows scholarships for undergraduate college students to pursue degrees in Italian language studies. The scholarships are granted on the basis of achievement, character, motivation and financial need, and are subject to renewal throughout the student's undergraduate career.

The evening was full of energy even as the event drew to a close. With a unique program and beautiful setting, the 50th Anniversary ASILM Gala Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony was a night to be long remembered by all.

~Kimberly Fry



FDNY Commissioner Daniel Nigro talks with Dr. Antonio Bernardo during the Gala dinner.



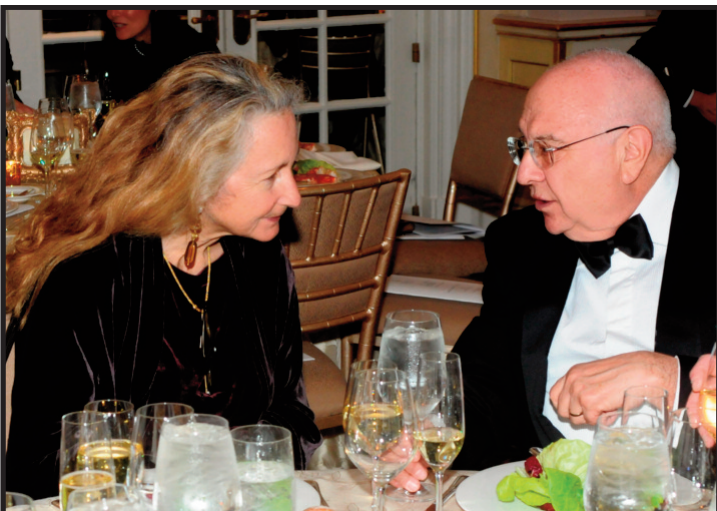
Mrs. Aurelija Copeland and Mr. Michele Greca pose together at the event.



(L to R) Cav. Francesco De Angelis, Mr. Alberto Milani and Mr. Enrico Dallavecchia celebrate the Society's 50th Anniversary.



(L to R) Organizers of the Gala: Ms. Cristina Caramello, Dr. Lucio Caputo and Ms. Kimberly Fry.



Mrs. Priscilla Ratazzi and Cav. di Gran Croce Claudio Gorelli chat at the Gala Dinner.



Cav. Joseph M. Mattone, Sr., and Mrs. Mary Ann Mattone pose for a picture.



Cav. di Gran Croce Dr. Lucio Caputo and Toastmaster Laura Savini give their closing remarks.



The maître d' and chefs are greeted with applause as they carry out the "surprise" birthday cake for the Society's 50th Gala.



Panorama Music put on a classical twist to the "Happy Birthday" song as tribute to the Gala's 50th Anniversary.



Ms. Laura Savini about to blow out the 50 candles illuminating the Society's cake.



Even the chocolate mousse cake dessert paid tribute to the Society's historic milestone.



Panorama Music performs live at the ASILM Gala.



*All photos on page:
Guests dance late
into the evening to a
variety of songs per-
formed by the talent-
ed group Panorama
Music, led by Rino
Minetti.*



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AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF THE ITALIAN
LEGIONS OF MERIT



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More pictures
of the

50th Anniversary
ASILM Gala Dinner Dance
& Awards Ceremony

can be viewed and down-
loaded on the Society's
website:

www.asilm.org/photo-gallery/

Cavalieri who receive honors and other
recognitions should send information and
a portrait photograph to:

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