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[itam_wi] [Fwd: SONS OF ITALY ELECTS 2009-2011 NATIONAL LEADERS]

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Sons of Italy News Bureau

NEWS

For Immediate Release

SONS OF ITALY ELECTS 2009-2011 NATIONAL LEADERS

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Joseph Di Trapani (N.Y.) Chosen OSIA National President

Vincent Sarno (N.J.) and Santina Haemmerle (NY) Picked to Head Foundation & CSJ



Caption: Joseph Di Trapani (center), OSIA's new national president, accepts congratulations on his election, which took place during the 51st Biennial National Convention in San Diego, August 15, 2009. (Photo: Joseph Guidi)

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Washington, D.C., Sept. 10, 2009 - The Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), the oldest and largest national organization for men and women of Italian heritage, elected a new slate of national officers, headed by **Joseph Di Trapani** of New York, during its 51st Biennial National Convention in San Diego, Calif., August 9-15.

Mr. Di Trapani, senior vice president of sales for insurance brokerage agency Professional Group Marketing, Inc., was sworn in as OSIA's 33rd national president on August 15, succeeding Alfred Affinito of California.

Vincent Sarno of New Jersey, who served as OSIA National President from 2005-2007, was elected to lead the Sons of Italy Foundation (SIF), OSIA's philanthropic branch. Established in 1959, the SIF this year celebrates 50 years of philanthropy and more than \$105 million given to education, medical research, disaster relief, cultural preservation and other special projects.

Santina Haemmerle of New York was chosen as president of the Commission for Social Justice (CSJ), OSIA's anti-defamation branch. The CSJ fights the stereotyping of Italian Americans by the U.S. entertainment, advertising, and media industries. It also collaborates with other groups to ensure that people of all races, religions and cultures are treated with dignity and respect.

More than 300 OSIA national officers and trustees, state presidents, national delegates, and their guests were present to review OSIA's last two years of activities, elect the new national leaders and set the organization's cultural, philanthropic and administrative agendas for 2009-2011.

During the convention, **OSIA lodges announced they had raised \$600,000** for the Order's main charities: the Alzheimer's Association, the Cooley's Anemia Foundation and L'Aquila Earthquake Relief Fund. The money was raised by members and their lodges over the past two years.

In addition to recognizing the incoming and celebrating the outgoing national officers, three remarkable Italian Americans were honored at the convention for their professional and personal contributions. **Vince Ferragamo**, who played ten seasons of professional football and is the only quarterback to take the Los Angeles Rams to the Superbowl, received the OSIA Sports Award.

Edward Innella of New York was honored with the OSIA Sellaro Award for his nearly 50 years of service to OSIA in leadership positions at the local, state and national levels. The award is named after Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro, who founded the Order in 1905.

Renowned actor **Joe Mantegna** received the Guglielmo Marconi Award. Mr. Mantegna has received accolades for his numerous roles on Broadway and in television and film. In addition to his distinguished acting career, Mr. Mantegna is a dedicated philanthropist. He has served as Master of Cermonies at the SIF's National Education & Leadership Awards Gala for the past 8 years and regularly donates his time to charities that support Autism research and veterans programs, among others. The Marconi Award is OSIA's highest honor.

Established in 1905, OSIA has more than 500,000 family members and supporters and a network of more than 650 chapters coast to coast. OSIA works at the community, national and international levels to promote the heritage and culture of an estimated 26 million Italian Americans, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group according to the U.S. Census Bureau. To learn more, visit www.osia.org.

For biographies on Joseph Di Trapani, Vincent Sarno or Santina Haemmerle, please email nationaloffice@osia.org

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