



# Staten Island Advance

October 18, 2016

## 'My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes' screens on Staten Island

by CAROL ANN BENANTI

Wagner College, the National Organization of Italian American Women, Casa Belvedere, the Alan and Joan Bernikow Jewish Community Center and the Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island are joining forces to co-present.

The cultural powerhouses are screening "My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes" at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Wagner College's Manzulli Boardroom in Foundation Hall, on the Grymes Hill campus.

The 2014 documentary recounts the story of courageous Italians who carried out ingenious schemes to rescue and protect Jews in Nazi-occupied Italy during World War II. The film is narrated by Italian actress-filmmaker Isabella Rossellini and Oscar-nominated actor Robert Loggia, the New Dorp native who also was a student at Wagner College. Loggia passed on Dec. 4, 2015.

Dr. Lori Weintrob, professor of history and director at Wagner's Holocaust Education and Programming Center, is excited about hosting the event to be able to reach out to diverse communities of all faiths, and to introduce personal stories of courage, in the face of prejudice and bigotry.

Following the screening will be a discussion led by former New York State Senator Seymour Lachman. Panelists include former Borough President Ralph Lamberti and Vincent Marmorale, president of the Italy and the Holocaust Foundation.

Lamberti, who chairs Wagner's prestigious DaVinci Society, is often a participant in panel discussions regarding Italian and Italian-American traditions and culture.

"The Italian culture emerged despite all the bad feelings put forth by a Fascist-controlled government," Lamberti said. "So much so that so many Italians across Italy felt literally compelled to risk everything to save Jews."

Lamberti is helping to spearhead the drive to build a Holocaust Education Center in our borough. An upcoming event that's part of that effort, is slated for Nov. 22 and will welcome Dani Dayan to Wagner and to Staten Island.

"It is heartwarming to know that there were thousands of Italian Christians throughout Italy who risked their lives by standing up to the Nazi's to save their Jewish Neighbors during the Holocaust," said Wagner alum MaryRose Barranco Morris, president of the NOIAW, Greater New York Region. "This is an extraordinary story and a piece of our culture, religion and history which inspires within us hopeful lessons about humanity."

Pre-registration is required via the Wagner College or NOIAW websites, by emailing [noiaw@noiaw.org](mailto:noiaw@noiaw.org) or calling 212-642 2003.

FYI: NOIAW's mission is to unite and connect women through Italian culture and heritage and to celebrate the achievements of women of Italian ancestry. It strives to inspire and enrich members with shared interests through cultural programs and to empower and advance the educational and professional aspirations of current and future generations.

Those interested in additional information about the event or NOIAW, should kindly contact Lori Weintrob at LRWeintr@wagner.edu, phone 718-390-3309, or contact Barranco-Morris at noiaw@noiaw.org or at 212-642-2003.