

GRYMES HILL

Wagner College DaVinci Society Dinner to celebrate Italian heritage

Carol Ann Benanti *benanti@siadvance.com*

The DaVinci Society of Wagner College will host its 15th Annual Scholarship Dinner in Nicotra's Ballroom Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Bloomfield.

The DaVinci Society serves to raise scholarship funds to benefit Staten Island Italian-American students. To date, the DaVinci Society has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarship funds to qualifying students at Wagner College.

Chairing the 2018 event is former Republican Party chairman **Robert Scamardella**.

This year's honorees include **Dr. Charles DeMarco**, **Anita Bisso-Harvey** and **Jon DelGiorno**, who will be receiving community service awards. **Guido Passarelli** will be honored with the Lifetime Achievement award. The society also presents a "Renaissance Award" to a non-Italian-American who is a positive role model in the community. This year's recipient is **Dr. Chitoor Giovindaraj**. Also planned is a special presentation to outgoing Wagner College President **Richard Guarasci**.

DeMarco is an orthopedic surgeon with an extensive medical practice that is primarily based on Staten Island and Brooklyn. A member of the board of Eger Health Care & Rehabilitation Center, DeMarco is married to State Supreme Court Justice **Catherine DeDomenico**. The couple reside on Staten Island with their three children.

Bisso-Harvey began her career as a preschool teacher with the YMCA and has ascended to leading executive positions with the YMCA of Greater New York. She currently serves as the senior executive director for the Staten Island Broadway Y, YMCA Counseling Service, the South Shore Y and the Vanderbilt YMCA in Manhattan.

DelGiorno is a founding member of Pitta, Bishop & DelGiorno LLC, and manages the firm's consulting and govern-

ment relations practice. He specializes in campaign finance and election compliance services while advising on government contracting, budgeting and regulatory matters.

Passarelli immigrated to Staten Island from Tricarico, Italy, in 1955. Utilizing his masonry trade, Passarelli started a small business installing patios and sidewalks. Over the years, his development business continued to grow, and his projects have now included more than 5,000 residential homes, high rise apartments and many commercial shopping plazas.

Dr. Giovindaraj immigrated to the United States from Madras, India, in 1967. He served his residency at Brooklyn Methodist Hospital and procured a fellowship at Downstate Medical Center specializing in Pulmonology.

Dr. Giovindaraj moved to Staten Island in 1973 and conducts a medical practice with offices on Staten Island and in Brooklyn. His wife Shanti and son Satish are also physicians. Active in the Staten Island Indian community, Dr. Giovindaraj is a major supporter of the Hindu Temple Society of North America, Spiritual Veda Agama Sudha and the Tamil Sangram Dinner for the Poor.

Dr. Guarasci has been with Wagner College for 22 years, serving as president for the last 16. During his tenure, Wagner College has been continuously recognized by US News and World Report as one of the best liberal arts colleges in the country. Dr. Guarasci has overseen the erection of a new dormitory (Foundation Hall) and the complete renovation of Main Hall, while working to increase the college's endowment from \$4 million to \$98 million.

For more information, contact **Betty McCummisky**, Wagner's director of special events, at 718-420-4014 or email Betty at emccomis@wagner.edu.