

## **Mario Cuomo Award in Public Service Presented at Niaf New York Gala**

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The Mario M. Cuomo Award in Public Service will be presented for the first time by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) at the legendary Cipriani 42nd Street during the Foundation's New York Spring Gala on April 8, 2015. New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo is planning to attend the ceremony to honor his late father.

The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. with a cocktail reception by dinner at 7:30 p.m.

NIAF President John M. Viola and the Foundation's leadership created the Mario M. Cuomo Award in Public Service to recognize Italian American public servants who are known for their passion, their conviction, and their dedication to serving the Italian American community.

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“Former Governor Mario M. Cuomo was a man who held his culture, his history, and our Italian American values close to his heart and wore them with an almost stoic pride,” Viola said. “His achievements were a testament to our community.”

NIAF will honor Janet DiFiore, the Westchester County, N.Y., district attorney with the prestigious award at the Gala.

Before more than 500 guests, NIAF also will honor New York television journalist WABC Channel 7's Ken Rosato, anchor at Eyewitness News This Morning and Eyewitness News at Noon. He will receive the NIAF Special Achievement Award in Media.

The evening will also include a posthumous honor for ABC 7's Lisa Colagrossi, Emmy Award-winning reporter, whose sudden passing in mid-March has greatly affected the Italian American community in New York.

To open the evening's festivities, Chazz Palminteri, Academy-Award nominated actor and playwright, will emcee this year's Gala. He will be joined by actor Ralph George Macchio Jr., best known for his roles in the Karate Kid, My Cousin Vinny and The Outsiders; Italy's Consul General in New York Natalia Quintavalle; and dignitaries from the Italian region of Lombardia. Bishop Frank Joseph Caggiano of the Diocese of Bridgeport, a Brooklyn native, will give the evening's invocation.

Industry leaders Peter G. Riguardi, president of New York operations for Jones Lang LaSalle, and his father Edward A. Riguardi, a former commercial real estate executive at Jones Lang LaSalle, will receive the NIAF Special Achievement Award in Real Estate.

Special to the evening's events, Christina Carlucci, a New York City based performer, recently in the national tour of “Annie,” will sing the U.S. and Italian national anthems. The Gala also includes a musical performance by Italian-Australian vocalist Alfio.

NIAF's New York Gala is chaired by Gerard S. LaRocca, a member of NIAF's Board of Directors, the Italian American Leadership Council, and chief administrative officer, Americas, Barclays Capital.

Proceeds from NIAF's New York Gala will benefit the Foundation's philanthropic and educational programs. Tickets begin at \$750 (member); \$1,000 (non-member). Attire: Cocktail. For more information or sponsorship opportunities, visit: [www.niaf.org/nyc](http://www.niaf.org/nyc) [2]

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the heritage of Italian Americans. [www.niaf.org](http://www.niaf.org) [3].

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