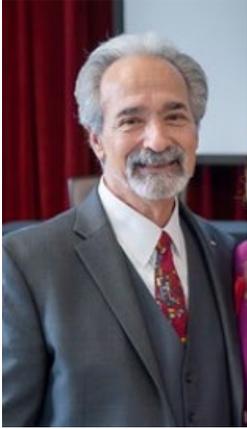




New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission

A Year in Reflection 2024 & More to Come in 2025!



It has been truly an honor to be at the helm of the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission and a voice for our culture and heritage for over a decade. I will continue to be a voice, but in a different role. I am honored and grateful to have been granted the title of NJIHC Chair Emeritus! I will now chair a committee dedicated to encouraging other states to enact legislation following the courageous action taken by New Jersey, the first state to highlight Italian American contributions and positive achievements while combating bias and prejudice.

Commissioner Vincent Maione, who has served as Vice-Chair, will now be the Chair. Vincent has been a major influence in our efforts to support and direct our mission for as long as I have. He brings to the position an immense treasure of corporate experience and common sense. I have had the pleasure and benefit of our founding officers, Cav. Larry Paragano and Salvatore Davino guided me for several years before their passing. Another advantage we experience is having a curriculum program led by Cav. Gilda Rorro, collaborating with the NJ Dept of Education making it the best in the nation. Any successes experienced during my tenure can be attributed to all our Commissioners and Academic Advisors performing as a team, emulating our Founders.

I look forward to 2025, chairing the new Italian American Renaissance Committee and assisting the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission in conveying our mission and their new vibrant programs that promote our legacy through education.

Sincerely,



The New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission would like to extend our gratitude for your continued support in celebrating and preserving our rich Italian heritage.

Grazie e Buon Anno a tutti! Here's a timeline of all the amazing highlights, events and accomplishments throughout 2024. Looking forward to 2025!

*You can find more event photos on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/NJItalianHeritage>

Margaret Fontana Assumes Role of Executive Director for New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission



In March of 2024 the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission proudly announced the appointment of Margaret Fontana as its new Executive Director. With her extensive career spanning diverse sectors in media, nonprofit, healthcare, education and entertainment, Fontana brings a wealth of experience and a passion for cultural preservation as a first generation Italian American to her new role.



New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission Leads the Way: 2024 Annual Meeting Excels in Enhancing Awareness of Italian Heritage Through Film



The New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission hosted its annual conference on April 20th, 2024, at Rutgers University. The event, titled “Increasing Awareness of Italian Heritage through Film,” was a resounding success, drawing notable educators and other guests from across the state of New Jersey and fostering engaging conversations among attendees. The highlight of the conference was the panel discussion on the integration of ‘An Italian’s Dream,’ which explored the origin of Hispanic peoples and beyond.



New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission Unveils New Curriculum Lesson: The Creation of America: The Roman Legacy



NJIHC is proud to announce the launch of its latest educational initiative, The Creation of America: The Roman Legacy. This newly developed curriculum lesson delves into the profound influence of the ancient Roman Republic on the formation of the United States, offering students a unique opportunity to explore the intellectual foundation of America's Founding Fathers. This curriculum is designed to highlight the American Founding generation, often regarded as the greatest intellectual generation in the nation's history. The Founders, known for their exceptional knowledge and wisdom, drew inspiration from the ancients, particularly the Roman Republic. Through this lesson, students will examine the significant connection between the formation of the United States and the principles of ancient Rome.



Continued Partnership with Rutgers University

Executive Director Margaret Fontana attends Rutgers University Italian Department Luncheon. Grazie to Professors Alessandro Vettori, Advisors Laura Sanguineti White, and Andrea Baldi.



It was a pleasure meeting the incredible faculty and students, sharing our mutual passion for Italian culture and language. We're excited about the ongoing partnership between Rutgers University and the NJ Italian Heritage Commission, and we're looking forward to collaborating on further initiatives this year and in the future to educate, celebrate and promote our rich Italian heritage.



NJIHC attend the 'We Italians' Gala in Rome June 2024





Chairman Robert DiBiase, Commissioner Vice Chair Vincent Maione, & Washington D.C. Liaison Cav. Mary Ann Re, Ph.D attend the 2024 UNICO National 101st Convention in Princeton N.J. With Unico National President Cav. Ralph Contini & Honoree Ralph A. Larossa.

[#italianamerican](#) [#italiansinusa](#) [#unico](#) [#njitalian](#) UNICO National





October Italian Heritage Month Events

(Not all photos are shown here to see all please follow our Facebook page)

Columbus Day Flag Raising Ceremony in Hamilton Township Celebrates a Successful Event with Community Leaders, Volunteers, & Students



The Columbus Day Flag Raising Commemoration Ceremony, held in Hamilton Township, was a resounding success, thanks to the participation and support of our local leaders, community members, and dedicated volunteers. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Honorable Mayor Jeff Martin, our Mercer County Executives, and all officials who joined us in commemorating the rich cultural heritage of Italian Americans. Your support and participation were invaluable in making this year's Columbus Day Flag Raising Ceremony a memorable event.

Video of event: <https://youtu.be/m46UyhOkfjo>



Italian Heritage Month at the White House & Italian American Museum of Washington D.C.



Chairwoman Emeritus Cav. Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Cav. Dr. Mary Rorro, Cav. Mary Ann Re, Ph.D., Washington D.C. Liaison and Chairman Robert J. DiBiase attended and represented at many important events across Washington D.C. and including at The White House's Italian Heritage event hosted by First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.



Italian American Podcast Interview – Red Sauce Studios – Little Italy, NY

Executive Director Margaret Fontana participated on the The Italian American Podcast episode where she shared the latest important work of the NJ Italian Heritage Commission, all about growing up Italian American, and her journey on creating the Italian American Girl blog. A special thank you to hosts John Viola and Patrick O'Boyle. Watch the episode here: <https://youtu.be/yloX2x-4fbw?feature=shared>





NJIHC Commissioner Eileen L. Poiani, Ph.D. was invited to give keynote remarks at the wreath laying ceremony at the Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade with Nutley Unico.





NJ Italian Heritage Commission was proud to attend an excellent educational symposium at Montclair State University by The Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America.





Executive Director Margaret Fontana attended an excellent workshop with ITANJ at Rutgers University learning all about education and artificial intelligence.





Chairman Bob DiBiase participated in today's Mother Cabrini homecoming procession with Apostolato Italiano dell'Arcidiocesi di Newark/ Italian Apostolate RCAN.





New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission Celebrates Success at the NJEA Conference Connecting with Educators Statewide



The New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission proudly announces a successful experience at the annual New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) Conference, held this year in Atlantic City. As a premier gathering for educators and educational leaders from across the state, the NJEA Conference provided NJIHC with a valuable platform to share resources, establish meaningful connections with educators, and collaborate with other heritage and cultural commissions.

During the conference, the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission engaged with a wide range of educators eager to explore ways to integrate Italian heritage, culture, and history into their curricula. The Commission shared its robust educational resources, including lesson plans, teaching guides, and classroom activities designed to celebrate and honor Italian heritage.



New Initiatives– Launch of Ambassadors Program

Under the direction of the NJIHC and with a liaison from the curriculum committee, an Ambassador Subcommittee has been initiated by offering knowledgeable and proficient representatives to undertake and pursue our NJIHC mission.

Volunteers will be selected by geographical areas of expertise, emissaries who will network with universities, schools and organizations supporting the ideals of the commission and offering our library of lessons on culture and heritage.

Ambassadors have already accepted the commission's proposal to be part of our new Council of Ambassadors. A Chair has been elected, Cav. Eric Lavin, an educator in Caldwell to head the subcommittee. Adjustments and improvements are expected as we implement our strategy. As we progress new Ambassadors will be welcomed into the program. More to come for this exciting new initiative.



SAVE THE DATE



*New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission
Spring Conference*

MARCH 22, 2025

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DETAILS TO FOLLOW

More to Come in 2025!

Please follow our social media pages along with signing up for our newsletter.
Buon Anno e grazie!