



ITALIAN AMERICAN museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARIA FOSCO RECEIVES COVETED TITLE OF UFFICIALE OF THE ORDER OF MERIT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY'

Honor is Bestowed by President Giorgio Napolitano

The Italian government has awarded Italian American Museum vice president Maria Fosco with its "Ufficiale of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy", an internationally recognized honor given to individuals whose outstanding achievements contribute to Italian culture in the fields of literature, the arts, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic and humanitarian activities.

The Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Italian: *Ordine al merito della Repubblica Italiana*) was founded as the senior order of knighthood by the second President of the Italian Republic, Luigi Einaudi in 1951. The highest ranking honor of the Republic, it is awarded for outstanding service in civilian and military careers.



Maria T. Fosco

“I am truly humbled by this honor,” said Ms. Fosco. “To be recognized for my dedication and perseverance is something I will always treasure.”

“Maria embodies all of the virtues of the Italian American experience,” said IAM president Dr. Joseph V. Scelsa. “I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition.”

Ms. Fosco has been affiliated with the Italian American Museum since its inception and currently holds the position of Director of Administration and Events at the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at Queens College of The City University of New York.

Maria Fosco was born, reared and currently resides in Astoria, Queens, and is the daughter of Filomena and Antonio (deceased), who emigrated from the village of Orsogna (Prov. Chieti), Abruzzo in the late 1950's. She attended Hunter College of The City University of New York and received in 1985 a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a Specialization in International Affairs.

In 1986, she was asked to join the staff at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at Queens College and held the position of Director of Administration and Community Programs. In July 2005, she was placed on release time to actively search for a home for the Italian American Museum, of which she is a founding member and a board member, and which now sits on the corner of Grand and Mulberry Streets in New York City.

On April 6, 2009 when an earthquake devastated her beautiful ancestral home of Abruzzo, Maria, went into action to find relief for the victims, raising \$110,000 along with the Italian American Museum and personally delivering the funds to the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Founded in 2001, the Italian American Museum is dedicated to exploring the rich cultural heritage of Italy and Italian Americans by presenting the individual and collective struggles and achievements of Italians and their heirs to the American way of life. The Museum received its provisional charter from the New York State Board of Regents on June 12, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) organization.