

NERO LIFESTYLE

THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

FINIZIO
LAW GROUP

ROMANO
LAW GROUP

BARDARO
FOUNDATION

Summer 2025

La Circolettera



ANNIVERSARY GALA HONOREES DAME VIVIAN CARDIA & PAUL FINIZIO

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Be a Part of Our Story

Over 4 million Italians arrived in
the U.S. between 1880 and 1920
—bringing flavor, family, and
fierce work ethic with them.



The Italian Cultural Society

Ilcircoloflorida.com

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Il Circolo is an independent, not-for-profit, non-sectarian organization, legally incorporated in the State of Florida. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Il Circolo, the Italian Cultural Society of Florida, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and was created in 1976 with the mission to preserve and promote Italian Culture in South Florida through educational outreach and special events. To fulfill this mission, the organization each year produces a robust schedule of special events that focus on Italian art, music, culture and Italian food and wine. In addition, Il Circolo gives support to college students to study in Italy and provides funding to local school organizations that promote Italian culture, including Florida Atlantic University, Palm Beach Opera, Palm Beach Atlantic University, St. Paul Academy and St. Andrew's School.



Paul Finizio, President

Cari Amici,

I write this from a hotel in Rome, having traveled from Lake Como to Lake Garda, Viareggio, Tuscany, and now Rome, en route to Sicily. Each place reflects Italy's rich, diverse heritage—its unique food, language, and culture all reminding us of the many contributions that shape Italian identity.

Since our last newsletter, I fondly recall our March Gala at the Opal Resort in Delray Beach. Thanks to our dedicated Gala Chairs, Committee, the Tony Bardaro Foundation, supporter Vivian Cardia, board members, and families, it was a great success. Special thanks to our administrator Robert De Angelis, who truly keeps "the trains on the tracks."

We hope this Gala and upcoming programs set a new standard for fundraising and growth as we approach our 50th year. I often wonder how Father Maestrini and the original board would view our journey and future.

I encourage all readers, and their families and friends, to get more involved and discover il Circolo's broader impact. Many may not know about our partnerships with high schools through Sister Cities, led by board member Tony Phillips, and with Florida Atlantic University via Ilaria Serra and Barbara Salani.

On that note, Barbara Salani will lead an Italy tour in September, featuring a premiere opera in Massa. Remarkably, this opera is based on a libretto Barbara discovered and completed herself, then orchestrated. Our members are true talents in many ways.

As Summer unfolds, I wish you all a season full of love, joy, and lasting memories. Meanwhile, board member and Gala Chair John DiPrato is planning the Italian Festival for the first weekend in November at the Deerfield Beach pier. It's a wonderful annual event for members, friends, and family!

Finally, I renew my "call to action" and hope you will consider getting involved in your own way, either through programs, committees, publicity, or supporting visiting students. Your volunteer efforts are vital and, on behalf of il Circolo, I say in advance "grazie!"

Paul Finizio

NEWS FROM FAU ITALIAN STUDIES



Recent Highlights from Prof. Ilaria Serra, FAU Italian Studies and Il Circolo Board Member:

We welcomed the **Mille Miglia** by saluting cars passing through Boca Raton and organized a presentation on this historical race with Paul Baxa, Daniel J. Simone, and Luca Contessa.

The **IX International Symposium Italy in Transit** featured three nights dedicated to Medieval sacred music by women composers.

Manuela Filomena's "My Florlta," a **docu-fiction on Italians in South Florida**, produced by Eufrazio Volpe and supported by the FAU Italian Program, was released and shown at the Italy in Transit International Symposium.

FAU Italian Studies enjoyed a night at the opera with a performance of Mozart's **Marriage of Figaro** at the Kravis Center with thanks to a donation by an Il Circolo Member.

Giovanni Agnoloni, author/translator from Florence, spoke at FAU about his book, "**Le rivelazioni del viaggio**".

Barbara Salani, Il Circolo member and 2020 Gala honoree, defended her dissertation, "Amalia e Carlo", by Pietro Carlo Guglielmi in Napoleonic Naples: Unearthing a Forgotten Opera," and received her PhD in Comparative Studies.

We hosted Italian-American author Lou Bruno and his memoir, "**The Love of San Demetrio**", at our book club.

Actor Luca Vullo entertained a large audience at the FAU amphitheater with his comedy show, "**The Language of Italian Gestures.**" Event was co-organized by the University of Central Florida and the Istituto di Cultura di Miami.

Ilaria Serra was honored as the Faculty honoree at the 2025 Culture, Arts and Society Today Party.



Note: All FAU Italian events are open to the community, especially Il Circolo members. Join the mailing list: clubinsieme@gmail.com.



A Life of Heritage, Heart, and Sports

Born in Lodi, New Jersey in 1932, Anthony Salamone is the proud son and grandson of Italian immigrants from Sicily and Calabria. His family arrived in America in 1903 with just \$20 and no formal education beyond the 8th grade, and they went on to build a garment factory in Paterson, NJ. Later they also built, owned, and operated a motel and parking facility in Seaside Heights.

Anthony inherited that same entrepreneurship. A star athlete, he was an All-State pitcher, scouted by Major League Baseball, and drafted by the Cincinnati Reds. His pro career, however, was put on hold when he was called to serve in the Korean War. While in the Air Force, he became one of the top pitchers in the military, facing off against major leaguers.

After his service, Anthony attended Seton Hall University and, around the same time, co-founded one of the first basketball camps in the country with his best friend, Catello Gemma. Their program, which expanded to include girls' basketball, soccer, and field hockey, trained thousands of young athletes over three decades.

Professionally, Anthony thrived in sales at Engelhard

Industries before becoming a partner at Metalix, a precision metal firm. He also founded Kraft Metal Finishing.

But there was yet another sport (and business) to conquer. After college, he took up golf and shot 83 in just his first round! He later purchased a driving range and gave lessons for many years, maintaining a 3–4 handicap well into his 60s. This became his third business running simultaneously.

In the 1990s, Anthony joined his son Chris in building his early-stage educational and youth leadership programs. He retired in 2000 when the company was sold to a major publisher, but remained *consigliere* as the business grew into one of the world's largest youth leadership organizations.

Anthony married his sweetheart, Rita, in 1958 who sadly passed in 1977. They had two children—Karen, a marketing executive, and Chris, an attorney and bestselling author. He is the proud grandfather of three, and great-grandfather of three.

Known for his signature smile, zest for life, generosity, and unforgettable Sunday sauce, Anthony is beloved by all — and affectionately known to many as “Don Antonio.”

2025 GALA PHOTOS



2025 GALA PHOTOS



2025 GALA PHOTOS



2025 GALA PHOTOS



2025 GALA PHOTOS



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

(and many are missing from this photo).

Annual Appreciation Luncheon for **IL Circolo- Florida** board of directors, committee chairs, supporters, and volunteers at the always wonderful **Cafe Saponi Ristorante**.



Recent events from **Pompano Beach Sister Cities Org**, where Tony Phillips serves as President and Paul Finizio as Vice President. Many members of both organizations serve as Board Members, several of which were present.

The current roster of Sister Cities in Italy includes Termoli, Ercolano, Sorrento, Ascoli Satriano, Terrasini and Golfo Aranci.



250 people attended **"Regatta Aperitivo"** hosted by Casa Italia (Miami).



Ilaria Serra serving guests at traditional St. Joseph's Table, Buono's Bakery, Boynton Beach



IN OTHER NEWS

Accademia Italiana della Cucina's dinner at Lido Restaurant in the Four Seasons Hotel with stellar chef Marco Calenzo



Opera Orlando's "Beatrice & Benedict/Cavalleria Rusticana" at Dr. Phillips Center performed to soldout crowds and standing ovations. Bravo to the cast, Orlando Ballet dancers, chorus, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, and production team for their ambitious new concept.
Antonella Brancaccio-Balzano



Il Circolo Board Members (Antonella Balzano-Brancaccio and husband - and Paolo Mangia) at **Festa della Repubblica** organized by Consulate General of Miami. June 2025



Check presentation to **Broward County Police Athletic Lead Explorers**. \$10,000 made by Robert DeAngelis and check presented by John Di Prato

Casalina, Delray Beach



Regional Lunch Cafe Saporì, West Palm Beach



EVENTS



JULY 13 | Summer Fun, Italian Style
Cafe Saponi, West Palm Beach



NOV 16 | Annual "Meet & Greet"
Benvenuto, Boynton Beach



NOV 1-2 | Italian Street Festival
Deerfield Beach



DEC 14 | Buon Natale Luncheon
Wyndam Hotel, Deerfield Beach

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

MAR 14, 2026

50th Anniversary Gala
Opal Grand Resort
Delray Beach





**ANTHONY
(TONY)
BARDARO**

Born in West Philadelphia, Tony was the youngest sibling, with 3 older sisters. Tragically, his father passed away when he was 14. And that ignited a fierce determination within him to support his family.

Meeting Dorothy Schiazza, the love of his life, only strengthened that resolve. Their romance blossomed during World War II, with thousands of love letters exchanged which kept their bond strong despite the distance. After the war, Tony returned home to marry Dorothy, vowing to build a prosperous future for her, which he did through his successful career as a horse trainer and investor.

With their love story thriving and his career and businesses flourishing, Tony established the Dorothy and Anthony Bardaro Foundation, ensuring the endurance of their legacy. However, sadly, in 2017 Dorothy passed away at the age of 92, leaving Tony heartbroken.

After Dorothy's passing, Tony spent more time at the country club with friends, playing golf, enjoying lunches, and conversing. Most notably, he spent time with his closest friend, Anthony Salamone, who shared a common love of their Italian heritage ... and food!

Through this friendship, Chris Salamone (son of "Don Antonio"), introduced Tony to Il Circolo, where Chris serves as a Board Member and Vice President. Tony loved Il Circolo's mission of promoting and preserving Italian culture and heritage through academic scholarships for Italian students.



As the years moved on, so did Tony's support for Il Circolo which has continued to this day by his two nieces and sister-in-law who now run the foundation and are preserving the couple's legacy of love, resilience, and generosity. Their efforts inspire future generations, continuing Anthony and Dorothy's remarkable journey and commitment to helping others.

LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR Golden Anniversary

As we approach our 50th year, our enduring mission is more important than ever. We are counting on you, *i nostri amici*, to help make this next year our most meaningful yet.

Please consider supporting our efforts with a one-time or recurring donation. Your gift will help ensure the continuity of our outreach and the preservation of Italian-American heritage, especially for our children and their children.

There are many ways to get involved:

- make a tax-deductible donation as noted below;
- attend upcoming events and bring friends; and
- encourage new members to join.

With your support, we offer scholarships that do more than fund education — they preserve our shared Italian story, celebrate our culture, serve our community, and inspire the next generation. Your generosity keeps our heritage alive for generations to come.

Make a Donation Today



<https://ilcircoloflorida.com/Donate>

Checks may be mailed to:

Il Circolo Italian Cultural Society
7411 Modena Dr.
Boynton Beach, FL 33437

Grazie di cuore dalla vostra famiglia de Il Circolo