

# NIAF says goodbye to Salamone

By Monica Soladay

John Salamone receives the Republic of Italy's Order of Merit "Commendatore," the country's highest honor, during NIAF's 33rd Anniversary Gala as NIAF Vice Chairman Jerry Colangelo looks on.



On October 31, NIAF said goodbye to **John Salamone**, the Chief Administrative Officer and National Executive Director who has served the Foundation for the past 25 years. Salamone will continue as an advisor to NIAF through 2010.

At age 57, Salamone is retiring so that he can devote his time to his family. "I will miss the daily excitement of working with a dedicated and talented staff and a board that is unmatched by any other organization," he said.

In 1984, Salamone began working with NIAF, concentrating on building the young organization's annual Washington gala. Under his leadership, the NIAF gala has emerged as one of the most financially successful annual events in the nation. Salamone was subsequently named NIAF

National Executive Director and Chief Administrative Officer by a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors at the New York Stock Exchange in 2001.

"When I started with NIAF it was a four-person operation with a gala dinner that raised maybe \$150,000," Salamone reminisced. "Now, we have more than 20 employees and a gala that raises millions every year, but also an organization that has dozens of programs to promote our heritage and help the next generation."

Salamone came to Washington, D.C., in 1970 when he accepted the position of legislative director for U.S. Congressman Frank Annunzio, a NIAF founder. After 10 years, he moved to the Department of Justice (INS) where he served as

Congressional liaison during the Reagan administration. But it was Annunzio who first involved Salamone with NIAF 33 years ago when the Foundation opened its doors.

"I see the next generation of NIAF as not just including Italian Americans, since as an ethnic group we are further away from the period of immigration and much more likely to come from multi-ethnic families," Salamone said. "I believe NIAF's future must include people who may not share our heritage, but have an appreciation for what Italy and all things Italian have done for the world."

A native New Yorker, Salamone is a graduate of the University of Maryland. He resides in Oakton, Virginia, with his wife of 27 years, Kathy. They have two children. ▲