

Culinary student to study in Italy

By Harry Kyle
The Southington Citizen

William Nardi, of Southington, has received The NIAF/Mario Batali Scholarship in Culinary Arts. Nardi is a junior at the Culinary Institute of America, located in Hyde Park, N.Y., and will graduate in February 2009. He will the return to the school as a manager in training, and hopes to earn a master's degree in marketing, with his eye on working in a management program with a large hotel chain.

The scholarship also includes an all-expenses paid two-week trip to Italy to work with some of the best chefs in the country.

"It was a great honor to receive this scholarship," Nardi said, "and I thank the NIAF for the tribute they have given me."

The National Italian American Foundation, founded in 1975 and based in Washington, D.C., is dedicated to preserving and promoting the heritage and culture of Americans of Italian descent, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group.

NIAF has awarded \$10 million in scholarships and grants across the country since its inception, including one million

dollars in 2008.

The Culinary Institute is located about a half mile from the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, the former president's second home. "My friends and I walk down whenever we have the time and spend time in the park. It's a beautiful site, with a great view of the Hudson River," he said.

Cooking has been a major part of Nardi's life as long as he can remember, not surprisingly, since his father has had a long career in the food service

industry, including owning and running Nardi's Old Mill on South End Road.

"I was born into the business," Nardi said, "and I was hard at work with my father at an early age, cutting vegetables and the like. My father is fantastic, and the best friend I've ever had. Words can't express what he's meant to me."

Celebrity chef Mario Batali presented the award to Nardi at a reception at Tiro A Segno in New York City. The NIAF private reception was attended by Yankee legend Yogi Berra,



Photo courtesy of National American Italian Foundation

Yankee legend Yogi Berra, left, and Carmen Berra, right, congratulate William Nardi, of Southington, on receiving the NIAF/Mario Batali Scholarship in Culinary Arts.

actor Stanley Tucci and several members of the foundation's Board of Directors. Chaine de Rotisseurs, an international gastronomic society based in Paris, France, organized the travel arrangements and accommodations for the award recipient.

"I got to talk to Mario quite a bit during the evening and he was a great guy," Nardi said. "And Yogi and his wife were so personable. They made the experience unbelievable."

"My dad is a Mets fan, and I'm kind of leaning that way too, but after meeting Yogi, I really don't mind the Yankees as much as I did before. Be-

sides, Yogi is a legend."

When asked why he chose the culinary arts as his career, Nardi said, "I just love to cook. When I cook for a special occasion, like a birthday or anniversary, I get a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that my food is playing a part in making whatever is happening a memorable occasion."

The NIAF scholarship program has grown from four scholarships of \$250 each to nearly 100 annual scholarships. Anyone wishing to be considered for a 2009-10 NIAF scholarship can apply online at www.niaf.org/scholarships. The application deadline is March 6.

News in Brief

Showtime's over for winning tanker

In Plantsville, there are firefighters with a tanker truck. In their garage it sits at the age of 19. They like to keep their fire engine clean. It's a clean machine. While they aren't on Penny Lane, firefighters at Engine Company 2 in Plantsville have taken the lines from the Beatles song as their mantra

over the past decade, winning numerous awards for their tanker truck, Engine 22.

However, Engine 22's four-year run as winner of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association convention's Best Apparatus award has come to an end, as it is being retired from competition.

"We just don't have the manpower to keep doing it," Firefighter Richard Brodeur said.

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