

# From the NIAF Chairman



With summer behind us, few days remain until NIAF's 34th Annual Convention and Gala Weekend, planned for October 23-24, 2009 at The Hilton Washington in Washington, D.C. I encourage you to attend the Convention and Gala Weekend, as it is the nation's premier Italian American event, bringing together guests from around the world for a celebration of our shared heritage and the continued fulfillment of NIAF's mission. Please turn to this issue's center NIAF News section for more details about the event.

This year, convention and gala attendees will have much to celebrate: despite the nation's recent climate of economic hardship, Foundation supporters gave in unprecedented numbers to the NIAF Abruzzo Relief Fund. Their support has enabled NIAF to partner with the U.S. State Department to provide scholarships for University of L'Aquila students displaced by the April 6 earthquake that destroyed their campus. In recognition of that work, President Barack Obama acknowledged NIAF in a speech while visiting Italy for this summer's G-8 Summit (page 7).

NIAF's Abruzzo Relief Fund is just one example of the many Foundation-run programs that benefit Italians and Italian Americans around the world. We offer scholarships and travel opportunities to college students. We provide grants for projects that enhance the general understanding of the Italian American experience. And we connect our members to the language, food, wine, history and culture of their ancestors.

But we can't accomplish this important work alone. We need your help – and the help of your family and friends. If your membership will soon expire, please renew your support of the National Italian American Foundation. And please encourage family, friends and colleagues who share your love of the Italian American heritage to join you in supporting NIAF's mission as well.

Together we can share our heritage with the rest of the world – and the next generation.

*Jerry Colangelo, NIAF Chairman*

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