

Vito and Donna Potenza – 2018 Distinguished Citizens of the Year

I'm going to make this speech short, but this is not to be mistaken that I don't have a lot to say about this year's awardees because there is much to be said in their honor. In accord with a tradition the Lodge initiated a couple of years ago, the recipients of the 2018 Sons and Daughters of Italy of Ocean City (Maryland) Distinguished Citizens of the Year Award are a couple that you all know well. Their accomplishments and qualifications as awardees are obvious to everyone so I'll just touch on a few so you'll know whom I am talking about:

- He is a member of the Knights of Columbus; she is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Knights -- they are both very active.
- They quietly support a multitude of local charities and non-profits and participate in numerous fund raising activities in their community
- At any meeting, you'll find her in the kitchen area helping set things up and get food and desserts ready to be served.
- He is a Member of the Executive Council.
- She'll help setting up the hall in preparation for the meeting doing whatever else needs to be done.
- He arrives for the meetings and dives into final preparation of the hall for the Executive Council meeting and then the General Membership meeting where you all see them both.
- She disappears into the kitchen with the Mistresses of Ceremonies to help out again with the food and desserts.
- Her experience as an educator has led to her being called upon to help out at Most Blessed Sacrament School in various roles, including acting Principal.
- As Chairperson of the Lodge's Scholarship Committee, she is instrumental in seeing that our scholarships are awarded to qualified and deserving students.
- He has served as an election judge at the local polling places in our community.
- He has represented our Lodge on multiple occasions at Grand Lodge meetings and functions both locally and in Baltimore.
- He worked multiple shifts for the Lodge's very profitable Beer Truck at Sunfest this summer.
- He has served our Lodge for four years as Vice President and for the past three years as our President where he is very hands-on both behind the scenes and before you at meetings and other functions.



Pictured Left to Right: Vincent 'Vinnie' Mollicone (SDOI of OC Vice President), Donna Potenza, Vito Potenza (SDOI of OC President)

I am pleased and privileged to present the Sons and Daughters of Italy of Ocean City (Maryland) Distinguished Citizens of the Year Award for 2018 to Vito and Donna Potenza.

*Congratulations to Vito and Donna.
The Lodge is proud of your accomplishments.*

Sharon DiMatteo – 2017 Distinguished Citizens of the Year

Due to hazardous weather condition forcing the postponement of the January 2018 General Meeting, the Sons and Daughters of Italy (SDOI) of Ocean City announced its 2018 Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award winner, Sharon DiMatteo, at the February General Meeting. Sharon has demonstrated a commitment of service to family, friends and neighbors and through her work with two Maryland Sons and Daughters of Italy Lodges, Harford County Lodge #2464 and the Ocean City Lodge #2474, as well as, the Catholic Ladies Service Organization associated with the BelAir (Maryland) Knights of Columbus Lodge #4714. Sharon's contributions are many and varied; she:

- Is currently the Secretary for both the Harford County Sons of Italy Lodge and the Catholic Ladies Service Organization;
- Has donated her time and talents to a variety of other charitable activities for the Perry Point Veterans Administration Medical Center (Perryville, Maryland) and the homeless in the Baltimore Area;
- The Catholic Ladies Service Organization in Harford County has previously recognized her as one of the 'Ladies of the Year';
- Has researched and provided monthly information to the SDOI Ocean City Lodge members through the 'Good of the Order' for the last two (2) years -- providing observations about the historical and positive achievements of the Italian community and the Sons of Italy Organization;
- Has served as the hostess for the Ocean City SDOI's *la festa annuale di San Giuseppe* (annual St. Joseph's Day Festival);
- Is the chairperson for the *la festa annuale di San Giuseppe* hall decorations;
- Has picked up some of the Italian specialty food items and Italian decorations from Baltimore for *la festa annuale di San Giuseppe*;
- Has hosted several visiting Italian students in her home here on the Eastern Shore during the last several summers;
- Finds time to give willingly of herself to help Lodge members and friends.



Pictured Left to Right: Vincent 'Vinnie' Mollicone (SDOI of OC Vice President), Sharon DiMatteo, Vito Potenza (SDOI of OC President)

*Congratulations to Sharon DiMatteo.
The Lodge is proud of your accomplishments.*

Armando and Barbara Graziosi— 2016 Distinguished Citizens of the Year

This year's 'Distinguished Citizen of the Year' was given to two individuals, Armando and Barbara Graziosi, at the January General Assembly Lodge Meeting on Thursday, January 5. Like so many of us who join the Lodge and participate in Lodge events

with our spouse or significant other, the Lodge many times recognizes our contributions as coming from one couple or another. With this concept in mind, the Nominating Committee, with the Executive Committee's approval, decided to consider this year's Distinguished Citizen Award as a co-recipient award.



Pictured Left to Right: Vito Potenza (SDOI of OC President), Barbara Graziosi, Armando Graziosi, Vincent 'Vinnie' Mollicone (SDOI of OC Vice President),

Armando and Barbara have been members of the Ocean City Lodge for close to 20 years, and before that, they were active in the Lodge in New Freedom, Pennsylvania, until they moved to the Ocean City area. They both held offices in that New Freedom Lodge. When they joined the Ocean City Lodge in 2004, the Lodge consisted of only 38 members who met in the small church hall of the First Presbyterian Church on 14th Street.

Armando and Barbara's contributions are many and varied:

- Armando has served as Sergeant-at-Arms and President.
- He was the catalyst that started the growth of our organization in 2008 that has brought us to our current membership of over 200.
- During his Presidency, the Lodge set up booths to sell Italian food and merchandise specialties at both SpringFest and SunFest in 2008 and 2009.
- He was instrumental in starting our annual St. Joseph's Day Festivals.
- He has chaired the last two beer truck events.
- He has chaired our involvement in the St. Patrick's Day Parade for the last three (3) years.
- Barbara has served as Corresponding Secretary and Financial Secretary.
- She published the first Directory of Lodge Members shortly after joining in 2004.
- She has been the Food Team leader for our St. Joseph's Day Festival since the beginning six (6) years ago.
- Both Armando and Barbara have led the team in the 3-day task of cooking sauce and meatballs (Barbara's family's recipes), as well as, running the kitchen on the festival days.
- They have been a force behind the growth of this Lodge for the last 12 years.
- They continue to be involved in their current roles as Co-Historians.

Congratulations to Armando and Barbara Graziosi.

The Lodge is proud of your accomplishments.

Mary Ellen Arena – 2015 Distinguished Citizen of the Year

This year's "Distinguished Citizen of the Year", Mary Ellen Arena, was announced at the annual Lodge Christmas Party at the Dunes Manor Hotel on Sunday December 6. Mary Ellen's contributions are many and varied:

- She serves on the board of the Atlantic General Hospital Auxiliary and has volunteered at the hospital weekly for the past ten years.
- She is a volunteer at St. Luke's Catholic Parish in Ocean City, Maryland, for the past nine (9) years in a number of different roles.
- She also is a member of the Delmarva Polish-American Club and has served on its board of directors.
- She is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus and currently serves on its board of directors.
- Within the Ocean City Lodge of the Sons of Italy, she serves in a number of ways:
 - She serves as a team captain for the St. Joseph Day Festival Committee.
 - She is a member of the Lodge's Helping Hands Committee. She is one of the first to reach out to help members in need.
 - As the Social Committee Chair, she has encouraged fellowship through the many social activities and trips she arranges.
 - Her hard work on behalf of the lodge has cemented friendships within the lodge and promoted our club to the Ocean City community. Her efforts are a major factor contributing to the growth of our Lodge.



Pictured Left to Right: Sal Castorina (SDOI of OC President), Mary Ellen Arena Sebastian 'Bob' Arena, Vito Potenza (SDOI of OC Vice President)

*Congratulations to Mary Ellen Arena.
The Lodge is proud of her accomplishments.*

Anna Foultx – 2014 Distinguished Citizen of the Year

This year's "Distinguished Citizen of the Year", Anna L. Foultx, was announced at the annual Lodge Christmas Party at the Dunes Manor Hotel on Sunday December 14. Anna's contributions are many and varied:

Before moving to the area, Anna started the first community service program in Northern Virginia called "Youth in Action" to volunteer high school students with non-profit organizations which kept them off the streets.

- Anna and her husband, Carl Foultx, established Star Charities in 2007, and Anna has continued with the group since his passing a few years back. This organization has benefited Wounded Soldiers, has gathered holiday gifts yearly for the troops overseas, runs Beef and Beer benefits to provide phone calling cards for our troops overseas, runs benefits for the Women Supporting Women, American Cancer Society, Home of the Brave, Worcester County Development Center and Interfaith Caregivers to name just a few.



Pictured Left to Right: Sal Castorina (SDOI of OC President), Anna Foultx, Vito Potenza (SDOI of OC Vice-President)

- Anna has been given the Keys to the City of Ocean City three times.
- Anna has held many offices in the Ocean City Lodge of the Sons of Italy, including President, and established the first yearly scholarship to a deserving high school senior. This has continued to the present day and grown to include three area high schools.
- She is still an active Girl Scout and was honored with a plaque in their museum in Houston, Texas, as the oldest living active girls scout.

The Lodge of the Sons of Italy of Ocean City congratulates Anna for being the first recipient of this award, and we thank her for all she does for our community.