



## **NIAF Celebrates Historic 50th Anniversary Gala with John Elkann and Andrea Bocelli**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 19, 2025) — The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) successfully celebrated its historic **50th Anniversary Gala on Saturday evening** at the Washington Hilton, **marking half a century of promoting Italian heritage and strengthening U.S.-Italian relations.**

The black-tie celebration welcomed over 2,500 guests in a historic evening — a powerful symbol of friendship and shared values between the United States and Italy.

“This Golden Anniversary celebration underscored the vital importance of U.S.-Italian relations and our organization’s role as a cultural bridge between our nations — now stronger than ever,” said **NIAF President and CEO Robert Allegrini.**

Among the distinguished guests were the **Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies, Hon. Giorgio Mule’**, **Italian Minister of Tourism Hon. Daniela Santanché**, **Italian Minister for Relations with Parliament Hon. Luca Ciriani**, the **Deputy Minister of the Environment and Energy Security, Hon. Vannia Gava** and the presence of numerous members of Italian Parliament and of the European Parliament, whose attendance reinforced Italy’s commitment to strengthening cultural and diplomatic ties with the United States. **Ambassador of Italy to the United States, H.E. Marco Peronaci** also joined the celebration, further emphasizing the strong partnership between the two nations.

The gala spotlighted the **Italian region of Lazio**, highlighting its cultural heritage, artistic excellence, and economic dynamism as a symbol of Italy’s enduring influence on the global stage. **Francesco Rocca**, President of the Region of Lazio, addressed the audience, reaffirming the region’s commitment to fostering strong cultural and institutional ties between Italy and the United States.

This year’s honorees represented the excellence and innovation of Italy across business, education, science, and the arts.

World-renowned tenor maestro **Andrea Bocelli** received the NIAF Dea Roma Lifetime Achievement Award in Entertainment, celebrating his extraordinary career and captivated the audience with a special three-song performance that served as the evening’s crescendo.

**John Elkann**, Chief Executive Officer of **Exor N.V.**, Chairman of **Ferrari N.V.**, and Chairman of **Stellantis N.V.**, received the Special Achievement Award as a Global Business Leader for his leadership in promoting Italian business excellence worldwide.



NIAF also honored six recipients of the NIAF Dea Roma Special Achievement Awards:

- **Flavio Cattaneo**, CEO of **Enel Group**, received the award in Management Leadership for his distinguished career leading major transformations across multiple industries;
- **Roberto Cingolani**, CEO & General Manager of **Leonardo S.p.A.**, received the award in Global Defense & Security Technology for his leadership in aerospace and defense;
- **Stefano Antonio Donnarumma**, CEO & General Director of **FS Italiane Group**, received the award in Engineering Excellence for National Growth and Sustainable Infrastructure for his vision in sustainable, innovative mobility;
- **Kamel Ghribi**, President of **GKSD** and Vice President of **Gruppo San Donato**, received the award in Healthcare Innovation, Research, and Management;
- **Doug Leone**, Partner at **Sequoia Capital**, received the award in International Business for his transformative role in venture capital and global impact in fostering innovation;
- **Katia Passerini**, 27th President of **Gonzaga University**, received the award in Academic Excellence for her groundbreaking contributions to higher education.

Special moments throughout the evening included a **Lega Serie A** segment celebrating the partnership between NIAF and Lega Serie A featuring Italian soccer legend **Alessandro Del Piero** and the announcement of the NIAF/De Laurentiis Film Prizes winner presented by **Aurelio De Laurentiis**.

A special moment included the unveiling of a commemorative **NIAF 50th Anniversary postage stamp**, marking this milestone anniversary.

While a special video salute from famed Italian American comedian **Sebastian Maniscalco** added warmth and celebration to the evening's program.

A portion of the evening's proceeds will support NIAF's educational and cultural programs, ensuring the foundation's continued impact for future generations.

[High-resolution photos from the 50th Anniversary Gala are available for media use at this link](#)



## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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### **About NIAF**

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a non-profit organization based in the United States that promotes the Italian culture and heritage. Founded in 1975, NIAF has been a leading advocate for Italian Americans, preserving their legacy and promoting their contributions to the United States.