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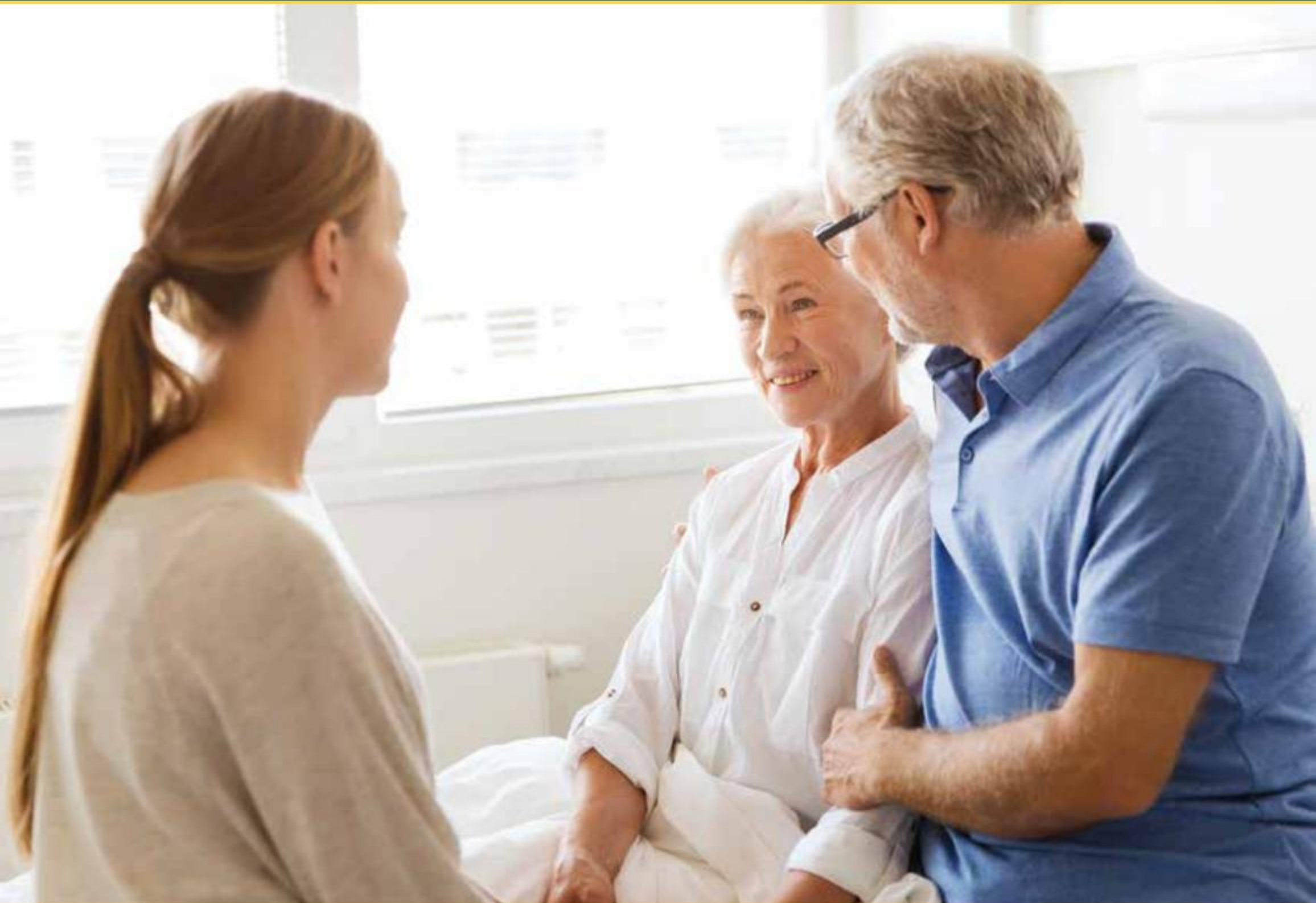
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2017 ICCO Business Excellence Awards

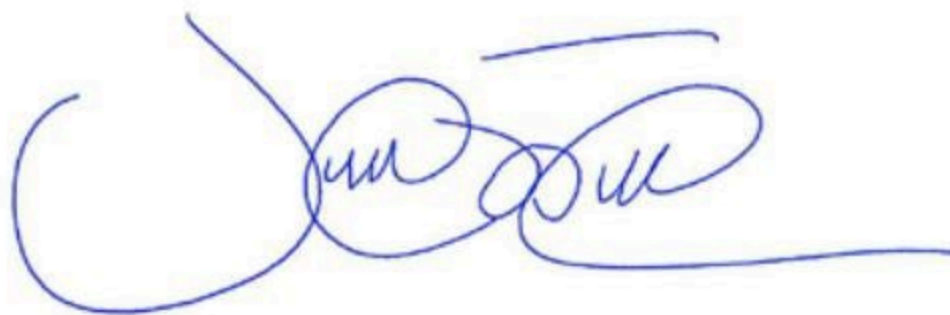
It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 15th annual Italian Chamber of Commerce Ontario (ICCO) Business Excellence Awards.

I recently had the distinct honour to meet with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni. During our visit, we discussed our strong commercial and cultural relationship, a relationship reinforced by our large Italian-Canadian community and by our recent signing of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement. Our two countries will continue to work together on our shared priorities, especially during the upcoming G7 summit in Taormina, Italy, and Canada Trade Mission to Italy, which is supported by the Italian Chambers of Commerce in Canada.

We come together tonight under the auspices of the ICCO to honour the leaders in our community who have distinguished themselves by their entrepreneurial excellence. Through innovation and hard work, these honourees have made Ontario a better and more prosperous place for all.

This year's awards come at an exciting time in Canada, as we celebrate our 150th anniversary of Confederation, an opportunity to look back over the span of our history and recognize the people and events that have shaped our history, including the many contributions of our Italian-Canadian community.

Thank you to the organizers of this amazing event and to all of you who are in attendance tonight to celebrate excellence in the community. Please accept my warmest welcome and best wishes for a memorable event.



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SELLING A PROGRESSIVE TRADE AGENDA

A CONVERSATION WITH THE HONOURABLE FRANÇOIS-PHILIPPE CHAMPAGNE CANADA'S MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Denis De Klerck (DDK): I understand you have a close personal relationship with Italy.

François-Philippe Champagne (FPC): Well I lived in Italy. I was there from 1994 to 1999. For the first five years of my professional life I was a young lawyer, based out of Genoa. That's why I learned Italian, and that's why the Italians are usually very happy when I go, because they feel they have one more Minister who is close to them by heart at least, and by language.

DDK: And a little bit of Latin blood.

FPC: Exactly. Well, being French Canadian, that's already something, and then—that I speak Italian—they always love that. It's why I look forward to speaking to the Italian Canadian community whenever there is a chance. Italy was a staunch supporter of the CETA agreement, but also is an important trading partner with Canada. Beyond the numbers, the people-to-people relationship matters. Our bilateral trade is about ten billion and they are our eighth largest trading partner, but first and foremost is our deep friendship, which started even before the Second World War. I feel very strongly about the relationship.

DDK: You and the Prime Minister are bringing a trade delegation to Italy soon. What do you hope to achieve?

FPC: Well we obviously want to strengthen and build on the very deep relationship we have. Prime Minister Trudeau has asked me to make trade real for people, and to create more jobs on both sides. But it's also about more choice and better prices for the consumer, and particularly, finding opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses to export in each other's market. I think that when you look at the number of Italian Canadians we have, and at CETA,

which will come into force in the next few weeks, you see nine thousand tariff lines which are going to come down to zero. Once we have removed tariff barriers, we need to seize the moment, we need to be bold, we need to be ambitious and bring our relationship to another level.

DDK: Are there certain economic sectors in Italy that have a particular synergy with what Canada has to offer?

FPC: Well certainly, if you build on what we're doing already—the top Canadian exports in Italy are around pharmaceutical products, cereals, oil, and machinery. But I think that some of the opportunities will be around clean tech, life science, and tourism. I think Canada is more than natural resources. We need to move beyond natural resources and look at other sectors where we can expand. For example, even softwood, where there might be opportunities that we need to explore. Like our Prime Minister said, “we'll defend Canadians from softwood to software.” That's a nice way to put it. Canada is thought of highly. When I travel, what I hear is that, in a world of instability and unpredictability, of nations or leaders questioning rule-based order, Canada stands out as a beacon of stability, predictability, rule-of-law, rule-based, principle-based trade, and as an inclusive nation that values diversity. Those are very powerful messages. And they are the types of messages that we will be using to attract further foreign direct investment in Canada. I think the progressive trade agenda we have, where we focus on under-represented groups, like female entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized businesses—those are the things I try to focus when I go abroad, to make sure that trade is inclusive and that it can really make a tangible and positive difference in the lives of people.

DDK: That's an admirable goal, but the beginning of your term coincided with Donald Trump becoming President, threatening

to cancel NAFTA; there was Brexit, the USA withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Where does all this anti-global, protectionist sentiment come from?

FPC: Well I think we need to do a better job at the World Trade Organization (WTO). When I was at my first meeting, it was the Ministers that spoke last, and everyone had spoken and no one had spoken about people. And I said, you know folks, we're in the WTO for the people. We should put people first. And this has been the agenda we put forward with Prime Minister Trudeau, which is an ambitious, comprehensive, progressive trade agenda. One that puts people first. Like I said, consumers, workers, exporters. We need to make trade real for people. People need to feel that what we're negotiating is open and transparent, and that they can have a say, that they can be part of the process, and particularly that we—I keep saying it—we need to convert that goodwill into actual benefit. Whether it's better jobs, better prices, or it's more choice for consumers.

DDK: Canada and the US have a very integrated economy with goods and people crossing the border every single day. Now CETA is going to open the market to procurement, as well as recognizing professional certifications. Are we going to see a similar kind of integration over time? I know it won't happen overnight, but will we see, for example, Italian companies building Canadian infrastructure?

FPC: Well I hope so. I think there is an enormous opportunity. When I looked at CETA I said, this is the right deal at the right time. For all the reasons you mentioned. You must acknowledge those who started that process more than a decade ago. They were visionary. Because no one expected at the time that we would find ourselves where we are today, in terms of world trade, with protectionism, and this anti-globalization sentiment. So it really comes at the right time. This is the most progressive trade agreement ever negotiated by either Canada or Europe, so it's very significant. And we need to build on that. I think CETA has the same potential to be as transformative as NAFTA was for our economy.

DDK: And for their economies too.

FPC: Definitely. Because Canada becomes, for them, the gateway to the Asia Pacific. It becomes the bridge between the Atlantic and the Pacific. If you're on the other side, in Europe, obviously, Canada gives the unique opportunity to enter the North American market—to the US, to Mexico, but also to go further on to the Asia/Pacific market. So there is enormous opportunity for the Italians and Europe,



because Canada then becomes that particular gateway, which will help you in North America, in an invariable way with preferential market access, and the same thing for the Asia Pacific region.

DDK: But now that Trump has walked away from the TPP, can it survive? Will you walk away from it?

FPC: What we're doing is quite the opposite actually—we're planning a meeting of chief negotiators in Canada next week. I'm in conversation with my counterpart in Japan and we have a very strategic and ambitious trade agenda. And I am pursuing discussions with APEC, so we are front and centre when it comes to rule-based principals and open trade in the Asia Pacific region.

DDK: If all the TPP countries can't come together, will you pursue bilateral agreements?

FPC: Obviously, the circumstances are changing. But one thing I can assure you is that—as I've indicated to our Japanese friends—while we're very happy to work in collaboration together, to pursue open trade in the Asia Pacific region, we are always willing to engage with them on a bilateral basis. And we are also engaging with ASEAN in terms of a feasibility study and we're pushing for that to happen within the timetable we have given ourselves for that. So we'll see. We'll do what's in Canada's best interests.



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THE ROLE OF ICCO IN PROMOTING TRADE

A CONVERSATION WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORRADO PAINA

Denis De Klerck (DDK): We seem to be at a crossroads in trade relations between Italy and Canada, and Canada with the rest of the world. Tell me about the role of the Chamber today.

Corrado Paina (CP): Organizations like the Chamber—some people call them business councils—play a very important role of support for companies, through being knowledgeable about the market where they live, and the market where the Chambers are from. Even institutions need to consult with the Chambers, because they can offer fresh points of view; they are in constant contact with the other side of the ocean. They can guarantee a variety of services, and a sophistication and knowledge that is necessary today if countries want to diversify into other markets. Canada, for example, has been working for a long time to escape the trade dependence on the United States by looking for new markets. The CETA agreement that is being signed, between Europe and Canada, fits perfectly with this trend. Countries need new places to export, to develop business. This is a perfect moment for the relationship between Canada and Europe. It unfolds in several ways, as we know, but one way that is very tangible is the erasure of customs duties for most of the goods being exported between Canada and Europe. What can the Chamber do in this relationship? Can we enhance that? We can work with people to bring new companies to the table. We can help Canadian companies that are interested in discovering the realities of the European market by bringing them to Italy, for example. And Germany will do the same thing and bring Canadian companies to Germany. Because all these countries are springboards to Europe. At the same time, they offer their own point of view on innovation, on aerospace, on food, on all the main sectors that today reflect the economy of Canada.

Canada, as you know, is very strong on cars, machinery, aerospace, innovation of any kind, multimedia and food. But these relationships can only be enhanced if this country

uses the Chambers. Chambers—and I'm going to sound arrogant—have a nature that no other organization has. There are other trade commissions, and they do a great job, but a Chamber maintains that kind of continuous relationship to countries, like Italy and Canada, that no one else can guarantee. Our knowledge is superior because we are in constant touch with the needs of the companies in Canada and the needs of the companies in Italy.

DDK: I understand the ICCO will support Prime Minister Trudeau and International Trade Minister Champagne on their upcoming trip to Italy.

CP: Yes, the Prime Minister is going to Italy because of the G7. But he is not only going there. He decided to extend his trip and go to Rome and Milan. Minister Champagne will accompany him. In the past Canada missed a chance with the Milano Expo, but today the government has decided to go back to Europe, in this case Italy, and bring a delegation that's not just institutional, but is a trade delegation, a business delegation. And the great news for us is we've been called by the Minister of International Trade, and the Minister of International Affairs to cooperate and to recruit Canadian companies that can go there, and once there, to bring Italian companies to the table. That's exactly what I meant before: this is the perfect realization of the kind of support that the Chamber can give.

DDK: What do you hope to achieve there?

CP: Well, the trade relationship between Italy and Canada is worth about 10 billion dollars, so it's a very established exchange, growing every year, with two main sectors where the growth is very strong— food, and the sector we can call machinery or mechanics, which includes a lot of different sub-sectors. The Italy-Canada relationship is one that can

get bigger and bigger. And it is growing. We notice stronger exports from Italy compared to the exports from Canada to Italy, but there is also growth there. We hope with this trip we can bring an increase in direct investments. There are several Italian companies that want to come here. And they're getting equipped. Some of them are already here and are strengthening their facilities or operations. At the same time, we hope that Canadian companies will discover the new Italy. There are two Italies as we know. There is the Italy with a traditional economy, which, despite everything, is still one of the strongest economies in the world with expertise in food, machinery, engineering, design and manufacturing. We also have a new economy, which is comprised of aerospace, multimedia, clean tech, and environmental products. So there are several areas to explore, plus the traditional. There are reasons to be optimistic that we are heading for a stronger exchange.

DDK: How do you think the CETA agreement will affect our trade with Europe?

CP: The CETA relationship is about the future. We really want to believe that there will be a big exchange of goods, in all sectors. They say that almost 100 percent of products are going to lose their customs duties, just to give you an idea of what's going to happen. We must overcome certain issues related to products that don't have quality, but have a low price. It won't always be easy. This new international trade agreement is the most sophisticated because of all the components at play—from the institutions, to the companies, to the liberalization, eventually, of procurements. I really want to believe that it's going to bring benefits for Canada, and benefits for Europe.

DDK: When we think of international trade, we usually think of large corporations setting up shop in other countries. Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Champagne have both stated their desire to support SMBs who will now be able to partake in this trade agreement too. Will this impact ICCO members since many of them are running SMBs?

CP: You identify a real issue. First of all, that's where we work, with small and medium-sized businesses. So that's why the Chamber can play an incredible role, because we are shifting the interest of government. Yes, big companies will always be very important, but we know economies like Italy and Ontario, have a huge presence of family companies. In some sectors it is practically only family-run companies that set the benchmark. We really think that this is going to benefit them. Once you don't pay taxes on customs duties, you know, there will be more access to goods. I'm



also very interested in the fact that countries are starting to meet each other again. Canada goes to the United States and we know they are the preferred counterpart, but there are countries with a lot of things to say and to sell, so I am happy that the number of countries that work with Canada is going to increase.

DDK: It's nice that Trudeau is going to Italy so close to Canada's 150th birthday.

CP: It is kind of symbolic for the Prime Minister to go. A recognition, even if perhaps unconscious, of a strong relationship, and of the contribution of the people from Italy who came here and contributed to the utmost of their potential. There are two things we celebrate with the 150th birthday. One is the sense of gratitude for the country that has opened the gates. The other is how immigration is never a relationship that only goes in one direction. It is always a two-way relationship of 'yes, I get,' and 'yes, I gave.' The relationship of give and get I think is fantastic and epitomizes the 150th. Every community has given, every community is getting or got. There's definitely been a historic passage to this birthday, and I see the visit of the Prime Minister as the cherry on the cake. He's really visiting the places that shaped Canada.



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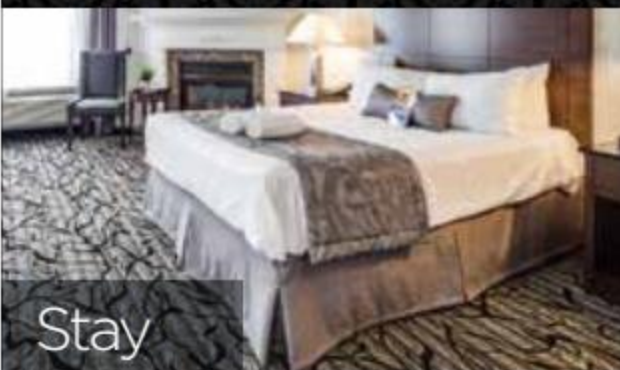
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THE AWARDS ARE DISTRIBUTED IN THE FOLLOWING SEVEN CATEGORIES

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cant contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of Canada through their groundbreaking and innovative work in the field of Arts, Culture and/or Academia.

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This award honours individuals, at the discretion of the ICCO President, for their outstanding contribution in building bridges between Italy and Canada.

ICCO RBC BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award honours women who demonstrate outstanding accomplishment in all categories—proven business acumen, outstanding leadership skills, notable achievement in her area of expertise, exemplary community involvement, as well as contribution to the arts.



LETTER FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

This year, as we mark the milestone of our 15th Annual Business Excellence Awards, we have a lot to be thankful for. The Italian Chamber of Commerce of Ontario (ICCO) has always served as a bridge between Italy and Canada, not just to promote business development, but to foster a relationship that has been growing between the two countries since Canada was created 150 years ago. There may be an ocean between us, but there is also an inseparable bond that formed as so many Italians made the fateful decision to become Italian *Canadians*. It has been their leadership and their strong community ties that helped build this great country. We owe a debt of gratitude to these pioneers.

Tonight we celebrate the latest generation of Italian Canadian leaders—men and woman who have shown the world, by example, what it means to build a business, contribute to the community, and to support those who are less fortunate, with integrity, creativity, and determination. We also thank those people that give selflessly of their time to make the ICCO into an organization that can advocate on behalf of all Italian Canadians. As incoming Presidents we hope to build on the years of hard work performed by George Visintin, our former President. With regards to the Directors of the ICCO, we would like to thank those Board members who have served their terms and have stepped down this year. The two of us look forward to working with the new Directors that have been elected to the Board, and the current remaining Directors.

The staff of the ICCO may be small, but they are mighty under the able leadership of Executive Director Corrado Paina. Together they have cultivated relationships with business leaders in both Italy and Canada. They have worked in concert with other Chambers in this country to provide a unified voice for our business community, and they have worked with all levels of government to promote trade that is beneficial to everyone. As they join with Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister François-Philippe Champagne on an upcoming mission to Italy, we wish them the greatest success.

And finally, thank you to our members, patrons, sponsors, and government officials for your support of the Chamber and for your presence here this evening. Your participation has made our 15th instalment of the Business Excellence Awards a resounding success and we look forward to seeing you at our future events.



MR. TONY ALTOMARE



MR. PATRICK PELLICCIONE

Tony Altomare



Co-President

Patrick Pelliccione



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 MR. NORBERTO MAROCCO – INNOVATION AWARD

2004

MR. TONY GAGLIANO – BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. BASILIO FARANO – NEW GENERATION AWARD
 MR. JOE PANTALONE – PRESIDENT’S AWARD
 MR. MIKE D’UVA – GLOBAL SUCCESS AWARD
 MR. ENZO DE LUCA – INNOVATION AWARD

2005

MR. JOE VITALE – BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. SAM PRIMUCCI – GLOBAL SUCCESS AWARD
 MS. JULIE DI LORENZO – INNOVATION AWARD
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 MR. RODRIGO RODRIQUEZ – PRESIDENT’S AWARD

2006

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 MS. ALBERTA G. CEFIS – PRESIDENT’S AWARD
 MR. SERGIO MARCHIONNE – PRESIDENT’S AWARD
 MR. MARCO CITTERIO – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

2007

MR. RON BARBARO – BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. FRANK CIANCIULLI – NEW GENERATION AWARD
 MR. PETER MARRONE – GLOBAL SUCCESS AWARD
 MS. ANNA SIMONE & ELAINE CECCONI – INNOVATION AWARD
 MR. MARIO ROMANO – PRESIDENT’S AWARD
 MR. MARIO MORETTI POLEGATO – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 MR. DINO CHIESA – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 MR. FRANCO PREVEDELLO – CULTURAL ENTERPRISE AWARD

2008

MR. GARY PILLITTERI – BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. ANTHONY LACAVERA – NEW GENERATION AWARD
 THE SORBARA FAMILY – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 MR. FELICE SABATINO – CULTURAL ENTERPRISE AWARD
 MR. LUIGI SANTAGUIDA – SCOTIABANK ICCT ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

2009

MR. TONY VARONE – BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. ALEX RECHICHI & MR. MARK RECHICHI – NEW GENERATION AWARD
 MS. FRANCES LANKIN – COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MR. FRANCO MIRABELLI – ARTS AND CULTURE AWARD
 MR. TONY VERRELLI – SCOTIABANK ICCT ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

2010

MS. CONNIE CLERICI – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. PAT DICAPO – PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS ICCO NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MS. ROSSANA DI ZIO MAGNOTTA – KPMG ICCO COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MS. GIANNA PATRIARCA – PREMIO AMBASCIATA ITALIANA ICCO ARTE, SCIENZA E CULTURA
 MR. GINO DI REZZE – SCOTIABANK ICCO ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

2011

MR. JOE NATALE – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. FRANK CARNEVALE – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. ALLAN BROADBENT – ICCO KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MR. DANIEL BRAMBILLA – PREMIO AMBASCIATA ITALIANA ICCO ARTE, SCIENZA E CULTURA
 MR. MICHAEL ALBANESE – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

2012

MR. ROBERT DELUCE – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MS. ERSILIA SERAFINI – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. SAM J. CICCOLINI – ICCO KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 DR. ISABELLA CANIGGIA – ICCO FERRERO CANADA ARTS, SCIENCE AND CULTURE AWARD
 MR. PATRICK DOVIGI – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

2013

MR. NICK DI DONATO – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MS. JENNIFER CORRIERO – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. RALPH CHIODO – ICCO KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MR. MARK J. PICONE – ICCO EMBASSY FLAVOURS ARTS, SCIENCE AND CULTURE AWARD
 THE DELZOTTO FAMILY – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
 ARTHUR PELLICCIONE SR. – ICCO GROUNDHEAT ITALY-CANADA AWARD

2014

MR. HENRY IACOBELLI – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. ANTHONY SARNO – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. MIKE GIAMPAOLO – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
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 MR. PERRY DELLELCE – ICCO RBC COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 DR. MICHAEL CUSIMANO – ICCO LOCILENTO GROUP AND VINBON ARTS, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE AWARD

2015

MR. CARLO BALDASSARRA – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. JOHN NALLI – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. DOMENIC MEFFE – ICCO KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MS. SHAROLYN MATHIEU VETTESE – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
 DR. AGOSTINO PIERRO – ICCO MASTERS INSURANCE LTD & COCO GROUP ARTS, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE AWARD
 HONOURABLE SANDRA PUPATELLO – ICCO RBC BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR
 MR. MIKE DI DONATO & FAMILY – ICCO HSBC ITALY-CANADA AWARD

2016

MR. JOHN RUFFOLO – ICCO BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
 MR. ANTONIO DI DOMENICO – ICCO PWC NEXT GENERATION AWARD
 MR. PAL DI IULIO – ICCO KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD
 MR. TULLIO BUGADA – ICCO SCOTIABANK ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
 DR. ANTONIO FINELLI – PREMIO AMBASCIATA ITALIANA ICCO ARTE, SCIENZA AND CULTURA
 MS. LINDA L. BERTOLDI – ICCO RBC BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR
 THE ONGARO FAMILY TREVISANA KITCHENS & INTERIORS – ICCO IC SAVINGS ITALY-CANADA AWARD

ICCO - CLOSING THE GAP - BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2017

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FACES OF THE CHAMBER



Corrado Paina, Executive Director

Corrado Paina has been running the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Ontario (ICCO) for many years. Despite having worked in both private and public sectors, and despite being a published author, Paina values his time at the ICCO the most. He believes it is a privilege to offer his services to the business community of his birthplace, as well as the country he chose as his new home.



Tiziana Tedesco, Director Trade Department

Tiziana has over 15 years of experience working at the Chamber: She has a deep knowledge of the Italian Chamber business network, the Canadian and Italian institutions and trade associations. Throughout the years, she has developed business partnerships and trade relations between companies and institutions, managed and coordinated trade related events, missions and trade shows.



Giorgio Tinelli, Business Development Officer

An Italian Lawyer with a lifelong passion for the outdoors, Giorgio joined the ICCO in 2010 and since then, has managed international trade and investment projects between Italy and Canada. In the past few years, Giorgio Tinelli has successfully specialized in developing bilateral business within the wine sector, and will be adding the innovation sector in the next month to his portfolio.



Marisa Guida, Financial Officer

Marisa is the ICCO's Financial Officer and an Instructor of accounting (part-time) at Humber College-The Business School



Mary Chirico, Marketing Officer

Mary Chirico is an Italian professional who brings more than 10 years of experience in marketing, business management and event planning to her role as Marketing Officer at the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Ontario (ICCO). From Puglia to Rome, from London to Milan, Mary works now in Toronto to know a new market and take on new challenges.



Cosmest

Cosmest provides professional assistance to companies in developing business overseas or consolidating the position in the local market. Through the recent partnership with ICCO, COSMEST has already successfully helped Italian companies to enter the Canadian market.



Marta Bertolo

Marta is an Italian and Canadian citizen. She has always been attracted to Canada: in 2014, after graduating from the University of Padua with a Bachelor degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures, she decided to move to Toronto. She recently joined the ICCO as an Executive Assistant and Project Coordinator of the "Pizza Cultura: Love at first Slice" book.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS 2017

MAY 2017

May 25: BEA – Business Excellence Awards celebrating the 150th anniversary of Canada

May 28-30: Trade delegation to Italy. Canadian companies headed by Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade, meet counterparts in Milan and Rome coordinated by ICCO on the occasion of Prime Minister Trudeau’s visit to Italy for the G7 summit

JUNE 2017

June 4: Italian National Day at Castello Italia

June 5: The Extraordinary Italian Taste project. Alumni dinner with chef Rob Gentile at Centennial College

June 5-8: Oltrepo Pavese outgoing delegation to Italy

June 11: ICCO in collaboration with ICFF presents *Il fume ha sempre ragione* at Tiff Bell Lightbox, screening at 4 pm.

June: CETA Conference in Toronto (Date TBD)

JULY 2017

July 10-14 (tentative dates): The Extraordinary Italian Taste 2016 Educational tour to Friuli for one influencer

July 21: Oltrepo Pavese Incoming mission to Toronto

SEPTEMBER 2017

Sept 7: FUSION NIGHT, Italy-China

Sept 11: GOLF TOURNAMENT

Sept 28: ICCO ENO CLUB

Sept. 29: Wine Club – Presentation of Barbera DOCG in Ottawa

OCTOBER 2017

“Pizza Cultura” launch – new ICCO publication on one of the most popular Italian foods—its origin, traditions and innovations throughout the years in Italy and in Canada

NOVEMBER 2017

Nov 8: Wine Club – Appellation TBD

Nov 13-17: The Extraordinary Italian Taste 2017 (TBC) – Promoting authentic Italian foods and wines during a week-long event of discussion, workshops and masterclasses with visiting chefs from Italy

Nov 17: PENTOLA D'ORO – 5th annual Pentola D'oro Gala – Closing event for The Extraordinary Italian Taste 2017

DECEMBER 2017

Dec 13: ICCO Christmas Party

ALL YEAR DESKS

INNOVATION DESK – Business development and opportunities for Italian and Canadian companies promoting innovation in various business sectors

WINE DESK – Events and promotions of Italian wines and spirits in Ontario and Manitoba



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**ICCO - CLOSING THE GAP HEALTHCARE
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD
LEONARD (LENNY) LOMBARDI,
PRESIDENT, CHIN RADIO & TV INTERNATIONAL**



There must be very few people in Toronto's Italian Canadian community who are not familiar with the Lombardi name. CHIN Radio, the famous CHIN picnic, and the multitude of Italian artists that have come to Toronto to perform over many years, are all testaments to the Lombardi family's place in our cultural landscape. The CHIN building, with its United Nations of flags fluttering over College Street, is a cornerstone of Toronto's Little Italy, and close by on Grace Street, a bronze statue of a smiling Johnny Lombardi sits in a piazza named in his honour. Johnny became a pioneer in multicultural broadcasting by creating CHIN Radio, and like his contemporaries Sam the Record Man and Honest Ed Mirvish, he remains an icon in Toronto, even now, fifteen years after his death.

Thanks to Johnny's highly public career as a grocer, a musician, a broadcaster and multicultural community advocate, his legacy casts a long shadow and it's easy to miss the fact that the company he founded has been successfully run by his son Lenny for many years now. In fact, Lenny Lombardi has been the president of CHIN for twenty-five years, though even an internal search on the CHIN Radio website doesn't turn up his name. There is a biography of Johnny, but none for Lenny. And this is by design, rather than omission, according to Lenny himself. "I recognize that he accomplished so many things. I always wanted to be sure that people never lost sight of the great pioneering and visionary mind of my father. I take great pride in highlighting him in every aspect. If that means taking a backseat to my dad, that's ok with me, because he really earned it, and I'm really fulfilling, I think, his dream."

The seed of that 'dream' was planted during an incredibly fertile moment in Canada's history, when the open-door immigration policies of the 50s and 60s transformed a staid and waspy Toronto into something entirely different. Suddenly traditional immigration from the United Kingdom, where everyone spoke a common language, was augmented by new arrivals from Italy, Portugal, and a variety of eastern European countries. It was Johnny's insight that these new

Canadians would want to get news and information about their own communities, and hear it in their own language.

We usually credit Pierre Elliott Trudeau for being the first Prime Minister to promote multiculturalism as being an essential part of the Canadian identity. Johnny Lombardi created CHIN radio in 1966, two years before Trudeau came to power and the men were kindred spirits according to Lenny. "Pierre Trudeau had a strong passion for a diverse nation, and he recognized that we were peoples from all over the world that populated Canada, and it was important to explore this—that it was not necessarily British or French. He recognized the importance of immigration. Just as Pierre was starting off as leader of the Liberal Party he met my father, who was living the experience, and was proof that celebrating cultural diversity could be, and is, a very positive thing for the country and for the soul, if you will. And they embarked on a friendship that spanned their entire lives. My father believed wholeheartedly in multiculturalism at a time when people didn't even understand the word, and he had an ally in Trudeau."

CHIN Radio was founded on European immigration, and it was the Italian community that was the driving force behind the original programming of the station. Lenny began his broadcasting career in the family's supermarket as a stock boy and floor washer and along the way learned the basic skills of butchering, including learning how to debone a prosciutto—not an easy thing. Eventually his father gave him a job as an operator on the graveyard shift at CHIN. Over time he worked his way through all the different departments in radio and television as well, until he eventually became his father's executive assistant. "I went and did everything with him and that was an important part of my development."

Toronto immigration trends have changed during Lenny's tenure as the head of CHIN, and the station has changed along with them. CHIN's mandate is to serve the communities that require news and information in languages other than English and French. Originally, that language was



Italian and the station was a vital aid to new immigrants. As Lenny points out, “Having free access to radio programming in a language you understood and that could interpret the world around you—can you imagine how important that must have been? That was the role of CHIN radio.” And it still is the role of CHIN, though now that there are three or four generations in the Italian community, there is a lot less urgency to interpret the news since many people now speak English. The shows have consequently shifted to more of an emphasis on entertainment and music-based programming. It is in serving the other emerging communities that CHIN shows most clearly the importance of its original mandate. These days you are much more likely to hear programming geared to South or East Asians, or Chinese communities. These are groups that still have a need for third language news and information because they are still relatively new to the country. You are just as likely to hear Cantonese as you are Italian when you spin the dial.

Despite growing up in the broadcasting world, Lenny Lombardi still retains a passion for what he does and the multicultural mission of his father’s original mandate. “I’ve lived a wonderful life mixing with—and learning from—a multitude of individuals, of very diverse cultures, and it’s enriched my life tremendously. It encourages me and increases my desire to find new programming venues so I can continue to help associate producers create programming and get it out there.” And he has found those new venues already once before. In 2002 CHIN expanded and successfully launched a new station in Ottawa, which had no access to third language programming. “I couldn’t understand how that could have been missed,” says Lom-

bardi. “It’s our nation’s capital. How could there not be a multicultural station when we have a multicultural mandate in Canada, and it’s not being represented in Ottawa?” Lombardi submitted his application to the CRTC and they have been in business ever since.

Lenny Lombardi may prefer to keep a low profile compared to his very public father, but he certainly has some of his father’s entrepreneurial determination. He has led CHIN now for many years, through a shifting, tumultuous media environment, and he’s found great success. As if to underline this fact, on the day of our interview Lombardi received a phone call during our conversation and abruptly excused himself, leaving the cameraman and I to imagine some terrible emergency. When he returned, he was filled with emotion but assured us it wasn’t an emergency. He had just received word that the CRTC had approved his application for a new frequency. It is a project he has been working on for a long time, and within a few weeks, 91.1 on the FM dial will produce 80 or 90 hours of new programming for underserved communities in the GTA. It’s another jewel in CHIN’s multicultural crown.

When I express surprise that a radio station could be approved and then be ready to go live to air a short three weeks later, Lombardi shrugs as if to say, ‘no big deal,’ even though it obviously is. “We’re celebrating our 51st anniversary, so we’re familiar with the process and I got it right. We put an application together, and the commission ruled rather quickly. It’s just having all the elements in place. We have a great facility here at CHIN on College Street. I have the technical capabilities, I have the studios, I have the staff and I have the drive. Everything is in place now. We’re ready to go.”



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ICCO PwC NEXT GENERATION AWARD

MIKE SORAGNESE, CREATIVE DIRECTOR & PRODUCER, RENDER MEDIA INC.



The Next Generation Award has always been one of the most interesting spotlights the ICCO shines on the business community, because the stories capture people much earlier in their career. These folks are not necessarily household names yet, but they do excel in their chosen field and show promise that they will be avatars of the next generation of leaders in the Italian Canadian community. Mike Soragnese, who is the Creative Director and Producer at Render Media, is one such person.

Soragnese is a great example of someone perfectly placed, by virtue of his age, to take advantage of the digital revolution and leverage it to create a thriving business out of video production. For a previous generation, a career in film was something many people wanted, but the cost of equipment was often too prohibitive. The digital age changed all that as computers and software became more powerful, cheaper, and within reach of the average person. This didn't make having a career in film easier; in fact, it became more difficult and competitive because more people were able to try their hand at the business. With equipment levelling the playing field, the differentiator here—as in so much of life—becomes talent, and a well-rounded understanding of the requirements of the job. You can be good at filming, editing, writing, branding or marketing, but the people that excel in this industry are those that can offer all those things in one synergistic package.

Render Media has experience in creating everything from online to broadcast videos, in short or long formats, enabling companies to leverage their message through taking various forms of content and reformatting them to distribute across multiple platforms. Soragnese has gathered under one roof a team able to provide clients with creative direction, scripting and storyboarding and every stage of production and post-production. Because of their understanding of how the modern digital world works, they are able to find the most appropriate method to help clients

reach their target audience. With this potent collection of skills, Render Media has built an impressive resume of customers. With almost 2000 videos under their collective belts, Soragnese and his team have created material for businesses in every sector you can think of, including the Globe and Mail, the City of Toronto, the Ontario Teachers' Plan, Ford, Yamaha, Banff Ice Vodka, SNC Lavalin among countless others.

Soragnese, whose father and mother are from Puglia and Calabria respectively, was born in North York. When he was thirteen the family moved to Vaughan so that he could go to Woodbridge College, a high school that, among other things, taught him the rudiments of filmmaking. In those days though, his passion was music. Along with some close friends he founded the indie band Fake Reality. They had success as performers and released one album, but as he explains, the future looked uncertain: "There was a point when I came to a crossroads in the music industry. As you know it is a very difficult industry to succeed in, and to monetize especially. I realized that if I were to put the same amount of effort I was putting in the music industry, into a more viable business, I would have a higher likelihood of success." That's when Soragnese decided to make the jump into media production. "It was something I was still passionate for—I was a filmmaker in high school, I had the chops for it, and it was certainly a more viable business venture at the time."

Of course, one doesn't create a successful video production company, with expertise in branding and marketing, by taking a couple of courses in high school. Soragnese did an Honours degree at York, majoring in sociology along with a minor in theatre. Working musically as a performer, along with his theatre experience helped to develop his skills in presentation and communication. He worked for a time at Rogers TV as a host and correspondent, curating a show called "The Business Section," in which he interviewed



business owners in the community. He also did correspondence for live broadcast, covering everything from elections to the Santa Claus Parade.

Soragnese got most of his experience, like many successful entrepreneurs before him, simply by doing it and learning the ropes by producing films for the corporate environment. “It didn’t happen overnight,” he says. My first few years producing for the corporate world... let’s say I had a ‘learning curve.’ But I worked hard every day, always looking to improve. I never thought I knew everything at any point and I still don’t.”

The growth of Render Media has no doubt been aided by their skill in branding and marketing. After all, if they do this for clients, they should be able to do it for themselves. Soragnese acknowledges this but for him, the key lies elsewhere. “We have marketed ourselves, and I think we’ve done a good job of branding ourselves. However, I do believe the driving force behind our business growth is referrals and word of mouth. Every project we take on, I look at as an opportunity to get another three. We don’t just do a project to get it done. We do a project to get it done right, and make it great. And we’re always looking to make our last project a calling card to showcase our talent and our abilities.”

As Render Media has grown over the last few years and experienced stability and success, Soragnese has been able to turn some of his attention to giving back to the community, which is very important to him. He has sat on the

board of REV IT UP for Sick Kids, Right to Play, and others, and he is the Director of Marketing and Communications for the MLSE Foundation Game Changers program which helps to empower youth. In fact, much of Soragnese’s philanthropic work revolves around youth initiatives, such as “Critique Week,” a video competition for kids he founded with the goal of raising awareness of social issues relevant to youth. It’s a way of generating important questions and conversations, while giving kids experience and education in film, television, and the media arts.

The success Soragnese has had in recent years has not gone unnoticed. He has been nominated a few times already for the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Awards. While he is grateful for the acknowledgment, the example of the Italian community around him feels a bit more personal. “Winning the Next Generation Award is a huge honour to me. That it came unexpected makes it even more special.” The story of the Italian community in Canada has always been important for the lessons it offers by example. “Seeing these individuals coming to this country with literally a few pieces of clothing, and some of them building an empire... it’s just extremely inspiring to see what a really strong work ethic can do for an individual. And I feel that I’m getting a lot of support from the Italian community, because as an entrepreneur there’s a lot of ups and downs, and it’s very difficult at times, and getting that support, even if it’s just positive feedback, really means a lot to me.”



MILANO

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We would like to congratulate Mike Soragnese, Creative Director & Producer at Render Media Inc., as the 2017 ICCO PwC Next Generation Award Winner!

To all nominees and winners, your contributions to the business community continue to inspire.

Complimenti a tutti!

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Partner

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Fred Cassano

Partner

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ICCO - SCOTIABANK
ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
LUIGI FERRARA, DEAN OF THE CENTRE FOR ARTS,
DESIGN & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE



It is common now, throughout the world, for some organization or other to sponsor an environmental leadership award. Usually those awards go to a company that has made a commitment to reduce their carbon footprint—and that makes for good public relations—or to a developer for creating buildings that exceed LEED certification requirements, or to a school for innovative recycling programs. Without a doubt, these are all worthy initiatives as we search urgently for sustainable solutions to living in an ever more crowded world.

This year's Environmental Leadership Award is a little different and it doesn't go to Luigi Ferrara for any one particular thing. Indeed, over the years Ferrara has been the instigator of numerous initiatives that could rightfully garner him the award many times over. Instead, what is really being celebrated here is his lifelong commitment to questioning our habitual design solutions, asking if they still have relevance, and researching whether there is a better way. As a gifted educator, perhaps his greatest legacy is to teach a generation of students to think critically about sustainability and to come up with solutions not thought of before.

Ferrara is the Dean of the Centre for Arts, Design and Information Technology at George Brown College. He is an architect, a designer, an urban planner, and his practice includes web, software, and product design. The diversity of his interests has made him an ideal exponent of a multidisciplinary approach to design solutions that is perhaps most apparent in his leadership of the Institute Without Boundaries which is, among other things, a post-graduate academic program that is thought of as the college's "interdisciplinary think and do tank." The Institute focuses on collaborative design practice with the objectives of social, ecological and economic innovation through design research and strategy.

Through his work at George Brown and the Institute, Ferrara has overseen many speculative projects that all have the idea of sustainability at their core. Design competitions he has created have resulted in initiatives like the "Canühome," an 850 square foot home that can be built locally and easily with available materials while using solar,

wind and vibration energy collection to reduce its environmental impact. It can be constructed in a backyard, or on a rooftop or in rural locations where amenities may not be easily accessible. He's taken his students to the municipality of Lota in Chile to create a revitalization plan and propose design solutions for a region that struggles with environmental and economic issues and faced a shortage of affordable housing after a devastating earthquake in 2010.

Along with co-authors Emily Visser and Justin Aitcheson, Ferrara published *Canada Innovates: Sustainable Building*, a book of essays on the history of sustainable design, and its future, by practitioners involved in the construction of sustainable buildings. Ferrara's own design work is motivated by a philosophy he has developed over the last two decades called "Systemateks," which is an "evolutionary design thinking concept" that applies sustainable and transfigurable design concepts to fashion design, furniture design, interior design, architecture, and urban planning. It's not simply a philosophy of 'reduce, reuse and recycle,' it is more about reimagining and reconfiguring our manufactured environment so it is more modular, flexible and changeable, with the potential for future evolution built into its DNA. It is a philosophy that understands that people have different needs at different stages of their life, so designed objects must have the capacity to change and accommodate change.

"Sustainability is really a kind of philosophy of life," says Ferrara who learned it first from his parents. "My mom was a 'piece weaver'... where she repaired garments by mending them. My father worked in a repair industry as well. If I think of our lifestyle—we had food security, we had recycling, we had conservation—all of the main tenets of environmental leadership are embodied in the lifestyle that my parents lived, and that I grew up in."

Simply reviewing three generations of his own family history has taught Ferrara the necessity of questioning what is fundamental in design, and what values have been strong enough to survive three generations of technological change. "I think one of the unique things of my life is I lived in three



different epochs,” he offers. “I kind of lived in the medieval ages: my grandparents were from feudal Italy and they gave me a sense of what the world of representation was about—how you lived in a closed society, and how you worked together, and how you live in harmony with nature. And then I would go into school every day in the industrial world, which is based on abstraction and money and manufacturing. It’s a change of a world, from where the old world was making things that were beautiful, durable, and unique, to a world where you needed to make things quickly, abundantly, and cheaply.” Seeing how things changed from his grandparents’ time, to his parents, helped him see his own generation more clearly, and how it is also influenced by technological changes beyond his control: “By the time I was finished my education we were close to an industrial world where digital technology tools allow you to transfigure reality; they allow you to dematerialize reality, and rematerialize it in new ways. And what became important, and what is increasingly becoming important, is how to make things that are scalable, optimal, and that preserve the ecology of our planet.”

Thinking of these transformations has encouraged Ferrara to imagine a kind of design that transcends time, where you’re enabling people to design for themselves because you have given them evolutionary capabilities. Instead of designing a product for now, you’re designing a product system that will evolve and change over time. It’s a bit like the idea of modularity and interchangeability that has made Ikea such a worldwide phenomenon, except the furniture doesn’t break after a year and the ideas can be applied to urban planning and organizational design and even how we design our governments and make our decisions as a nation.

Ferrara is currently working on an international project called “Future Ways of Living.” He has partnered with the cities of Toronto and Milan to reimagine how we live. They

are looking at the future of healthcare, education, work, culture, transportation and food and how all those things interconnect in the life of the average citizen. At the Institute Without Borders he is also engaged in the “Regional Ecologies Project,” which is a five-year study of the Greater Golden Horseshoe region to determine how cities can better cooperate on a regional scale to eliminate inefficiency and waste in our social and physical infrastructure. “This is part of the excitement I have working for the Institute,” says Ferrara, “because we are reimagining formats. And one of our problems is that we are living a new life in an old format.” Suburban sprawl, for example, wasn’t originally a devious method to isolate people and then choke them with highways overcrowded with hapless commuters. The first suburb was created in 1805 and the suburbs we have now were mostly conceived in the early 1920s, according to Ferrara. “They were doing something special and environmental at the time they were created, but then as time changes, and they grow, they create problems of their own. The need for a continuous evolution in redesign is inherent in our activities. The things we do create the problems of our future, that we need to solve in the future.” All of the projects that Ferrara takes on seem to have a global perspective when tackling the problems that evolve with the passage of time, and they all ask—how do you create the right framework for solving them?”

There is, of course, no easy answer to that question. Yet Ferrara is ultimately optimistic. “I’m a great believer in the idea that wisdom is everywhere around us. Over the years we’ve done projects—at least 100 of them—all around the world. We bring children into projects, we bring the elderly, we bring the weak and dispossessed. We bring the experts, we bring the people with money. When you have them all together you can solve any problem.”

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ICCO - C MILANO ITALY-CANADA AWARD

NICOLA CAPOMASI, VICE PRESIDENT, THOR & PARTNERS INC.



Italian Canadians, it could be said, have built much of the infrastructure in Ontario. The great wave of immigrants from Italy in the 50s and 60s arrived in Canada at a time of intense population growth, when Toronto overflowed its borders and skilled labour was required to build the roads and housing demanded by a country that was maturing fast. Italy supplied this labour by the boatload and today those men and women, and the children that followed in their path, have become architects, developers, and city-builders, renowned for leaving their mark on the built environment of the GTA. It's something we take for granted as we go about our day, just as we have become accustomed to expecting some form of Italian cuisine on every block of this busy metropolis.

Nicola Capomasi is the 21st century version of the immigrant that arrives with a necessary skill, developed and perfected by Italians in Italy, and brought here, to what used to be called the 'new world.' Yet the new world is not so new anymore and as time goes on, that has become a problem. We Canadians have been very good at building out our cities, and as they matured, adding signature buildings, cultural monuments, skyscrapers and transit hubs. The problem is now the infrastructure is beginning to show its age and we don't have the necessary skills or experience to care for it. The Italy-Canada Award is about building bridges between the two countries. It's about sharing knowledge and skills, and that is where Capomasi comes in. He brings us something we don't have much of, and that is the ability to care for our architectural treasures and preserve them for future generations. And unlike that earlier wave of immigrants, he didn't have to labour a lifetime in obscurity so that his children could experience success. He has found it already in the two years since he set up shop.

The creation of Thor and Partners begins with his parents in Padua, where he was born, and where his parents created a janitorial company that grew large enough to employ 65 people. But they needed help. "We were fighting for 10 cents," says Capomasi, "because it was a challenging

business. So I started to develop my skills to do something different." Instead of general cleaning, he started specialty cleaning. He researched new products and equipment and began to focus on restoration, sensing there would be a demand in the architecturally rich European nations. He wasn't wrong. As his skills developed, the world came calling and entrusted him with restoring some of its most iconic structures. His company has cleaned the base pylons of the Eiffel Tower, the exterior walls of the Italian Embassy in Moscow, the square that frames the Milan Cathedral, the limestone stairs of the Louvre in Paris, the stone facades of both the Vicenza and Bolzano train stations. The facade and plaster work he did on the Venice train station's "Palazzo Compartimentale" added up to 600,000 square feet of restoration.

Despite these successes, Capomasi began to grow dissatisfied with the life he had created for himself in Europe. "I was feeling like I was in a cage in Italy. I couldn't express myself in the right way, so my wife told me 'you have to find something.' So where could I go? Italy is one of the best countries in the world, but to do business now is a little tricky."

It was in thinking about his daughter, and what lay in store for her in the future, that led him to explore living somewhere with more opportunities. Capomasi's father-in-law introduced him to a man whose brother, Franco Prevedello, lives here in Canada. Prevedello in turn introduced him to Glen Pestrin, the owner of York Marble. Capomasi told Pestrin he wanted to come to Canada and Pestrin offered to help him get the papers to work here and to help with immigration. So in 2015, Capomasi transferred his company from Italy to Canada along with his expertise and equipment.

Arriving in Canada without his family, who stayed behind in Italy until he established the business, Capomasi threw himself into working seven days a week, eighteen hours a day. In a remarkably short period of time Thor and Partners racked up an impressive list of clients. He did work on phase 1 of the Union Station restoration, and a



variety of different projects at the TD Tower, the Princess of Wales Theatre, The Sony Centre, Bridgepoint Hospital, the Fairmont York Hotel, among many others. What all these clients value is his knowledge of the unique qualities of the various stone and plaster materials used in the building trade. He is an expert in the corrosive effects of time, wear and tear, and pollution. Finding the appropriate solution to cleaning and maintaining these materials, whether that be through powerful cleaning agents, or using a laser treatment, is essential to preserving our landmarks. It is this skill that is in short supply in North America simply because most of our built environment is only a few generations old.

Besides sharing his Italian experience with Canada, Capomasi imports 85 percent of his cleaning products from Italy. "I import something from there every month because you can't find that kind of stuff here. And it's also a way to keep the line between Italy and Canada open," he says. Once he has restored a building, he is able to teach building owners the methods and materials to use to properly maintain it. And it is not just the scuffed terrazzo floor of aging condominium lobbies that he is able to preserve.

Perhaps nothing illustrates the firm and friendly connection between Italy and Canada, and Canada's historic habitual welcome to immigrants, as the fact that Capomasi and his company won a bid to do restoration work on Canada's most iconic symbol: our Parliament Buildings. One of his clients tipped him off to the open tender for the work

so Capomasi teamed up with another Italian company and did a joint venture. With no one else bidding who had the appropriate experience, they won the bid, signing a contract for eight years of work restoring the interior of the building.

Capomasi is something of an ideal immigrant because in a very short time he has been able to create value by preserving our buildings but also by creating employment. And he wants to go further. "Our goal is to create a franchising company. One in Ottawa for sure, one in Vancouver, one in Calgary, one in Montreal. My ambition is to create jobs," he says, his enthusiasm for his new country apparent in his every gesture. "In Canada you can meet a lot of different people, you can share your opinion, you can share a lot of stuff. I am Italian, but you have Latino, you have Indian, you have Canadian, you have American, so it's something different. It's not like this in Italy. I love this kind of stuff. To share the culture."

Despite the fact Capomasi is not yet a citizen, he already identifies with his newly forming Canadian identity. He even claims to like cold weather. "It's fantastic to be half Canadian and half Italian because I can manage everything. I can put together the expertise with the new challenges. I think I'm really lucky with this." For Capomasi, finding Canada meant finding his place: "I want to be right where I am. I'm proud to be Canadian and I'm lucky that I was born again at 40 when I came here. I was born again at 40 with 40 years of expertise. So it's great!"



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THE ICCO - KPMG COMMUNITY BUILDING AWARD

DANIELE ZANOTTI, PRESIDENT & CEO, UNITED WAY TORONTO & YORK REGION



Daniele Zanotti is no stranger to the concept of a community building award because he has spent his entire working life as a frontline witness to community activists in the GTA. As the CEO of the recently merged United Way Toronto and York Region, Zanotti oversees the largest United Way chapter in the world; raising over 100 million dollars in its most recent year, funding over 200 agencies, and engaging more than 20,000 volunteers who gave their time and talents to make change happen. Only the government is a larger funder of community services here.

For Zanotti, the work of those individual 20,000 volunteers is just as important as the work he does, and his idea of success seems to be when he sees a community—any community—become engaged enough to want to improve the life of their neighbours. “I love the fact that the Chamber talks about community building,” says Zanotti, “because some of the best, most transformative work that I’ve ever been involved in has been simple and granular. It’s always driven by the unsung hero, who’s not the person like me who often gets recognized.”

Zanotti came by this realization early, and often. His parents were immigrants. His mother came from Ofena, in Abruzzo and his father from Lover in Trentino Alto Adige. Like many recent immigrants, Zanotti’s parents worked two jobs and he benefitted from the Italian Canadian sharing economy, with the family relying on an uncle who worked nights for childcare, and a neighbour, for lunch. As the son of immigrants, among friends and neighbours who were also immigrants, the idea of belonging and helping was a natural, unspoken thing. It helped define the trajectory of his later working life. “This idea of relying on each other,

and being a part of the community was always deep within, and then nurtured within.”

Zanotti knew that he would always be in what he calls this “belonging spot,” because for him, it’s the most important human need. He grew up in a home speaking Italian, and because of the northern and southern mix of his parents, was able to understand two dialects. He did his undergraduate degree at York University in languages, working with some of the best teachers in Italian, before moving on to the University of Toronto to complete a Master’s degree in Social Work. While his experience at York may have provided the theoretical underpinning of what would become his life’s work, he credits the environment in which he grew up as his greatest educational model. There he saw, “this commitment within my family and the Italian Canadian community of a ‘tribe.’ Of togetherness. Of sitting down at a table, hashing it out, and getting up, then getting stuff done.” It was that core belief in community action that propelled the work he would pursue following university.

It was early in his career, working at the Rexdale Community Health Centre that the power of people sitting together and working on things really came to life for Zanotti, outside of his own home, because he encountered people with great needs but limited resources. Solving issues became a community effort as they tackled how to get dental services for residents, or how to create a new program for meals for people without money, or how to bring health services to Jamestown, or eliminate gun violence in Rexdale. These front-line initiatives provided essential experiences for Zanotti in what it takes for communities to control the narrative of their own destinies.

Eventually, Zanotti felt a desire to find a place where he could contribute to changing policy. So, he went to work for the regional government of York where he was able to help shape policies on homelessness in the York Region and develop an early years program on how kids get ready for school. It was there he realized the importance of policy in shifting the levers of government. With his experience on the street and his experience with government he had the tools that would enable him to thrive in his next job, with the United Way. It was there he realized the importance of money, and bringing government and donors together to make change. Zanotti saw a powerful model in the work of the United Way because, as he says, “Now it wasn’t only a handout from the government, it was people putting ten bucks or a thousand bucks in—with their own skin in the game to make change in a neighbourhood.”

Zanotti had seen many layers of methods and means to implement change, but the United Way was the first place where he saw all that come together. “It was like the full table, where you had the ability to invest in front line programs. You had the ability to research, and to shape a narrative. You had the ability to drive policy leaders at different levels of government. You were at a table where corporate players could come. And this full meal was enough to help me see that this is how change happens, with community at the core.”

In 2015, Zanotti helped merge the United Way of Toronto and York Region, eventually becoming CEO of the new entity. Bringing the two together was necessary as over the years the GTA has changed and the United Way Toronto was divided from York with two separate boards of directors and often duplicate sets of initiatives that required going to Toronto City Hall to fight for similar issues. The only real division between the two was the arbitrary line created by Steeles Avenue. “When you take all the clutter away,” says Zanotti, “and you put community issues in the middle, what we found was people in Vaughan and Markham were travelling south to access service in Toronto. And people in Toronto were travelling north to come to a women’s shelter in York to get away from abuse. So Steeles was artificial.”

Within the first year of merging the United Way Zanotti saw a bunch of successes. “Magna gave a gift of 5 million dollars, which they haven’t done in thirty years of courtship with York region. We saw 3 percent growth in the campaign year over year after flat lining in the previous year. We were able to release a report in York region around homelessness that we hadn’t been able to do in the past. And we did a report on the number of people living in precarious jobs, right across York region. All because of the infrastructure that we were able to scale.”

As successful as the United Way has been in fundraising, Zanotti wants to see the organization become more than an



aggregator of funds. “We must be an uprising of care, for the region. Because we need people to actually sit at the table, roll up their sleeves, and get involved in the causes they are concerned about in the city. It has got to a point where we are not going to fundraise social services, or charity our way out of this stuff. These are deep problems.”

In the end, Zanotti is guided by the lessons he gathered growing up in a tightly-knit community. As he is fond of saying, “we are who we are with, and where we are with them,” which is another way of saying that success in life is often grounded in the family you grew up in and the network you have. He was lucky on both counts, with a supportive family and the extended Italian Canadian community watching his back and teaching him that helping people is never merely a question of money. “I’ve learned to distinguish between services and care. Services are something we fund at the United Way. We monitor, we evaluate, and we fund that work. Care is natural. And it emerges from community. You don’t need to pay somebody to care about you. It’s just, if your butcher is ill, or your barber—you care. This is something we have to cultivate in our communities. And there’s no app for it, there’s no digitizing it, it’s just *mano a mano*. You sit at the table and get to know the person.”



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 CRISTIANO DE FLORENTIIS &
 MAURIZIO MAGNIFICO, CO-FOUNDERS,
 ITALIAN CONTEMPORARY FILM FESTIVAL



It seems natural that Cristiano De Florentiis and Maurizio Magnifico, co-founders of the Italian Contemporary Film Festival (ICFF), would be candidates for this year's ICCO Arts, Science and Culture Award. In a few short years, they have gone from sharing the pleasures of Italian cinema with friends, to creating an Italian film festival in Canada that is recognized around the world. They could have just as easily received the Community Builder Award because that is how the ICFF came to be—built first on the bedrock of friendship.

In 1997 De Florentiis, who is originally from Rome, was working in the office of the director of RAI International, Italy's public broadcaster. As an ambitious journalist, he wanted to work in New York. His boss suggested instead that perhaps he "wanted a North American experience," and cleverly redirected him. The next week he was on a flight to Toronto without knowing anything about Toronto. "It was a fantastic trick," says De Florentiis, because "it is a fantastic city, especially for an Italian journalist; there is so much news you can get first-hand and bring to an audience in Italy that doesn't know a lot about Toronto or Canada." Twenty years later, he is still here.

Magnifico, originally from Bari, had an earlier arrival in Canada in 1988, but a similar 'accidental' trajectory. He came, the day after his wedding, with the idea to stay two years to explore North American culture. 29 years and three children later, he is still here because "We really liked the lifestyle and decided to stay."

The two men met in a stereotypical way for Italians: on the soccer field. Playing for fun, with teams divided between men who were married and those who were not, the single De Florentiis came across Magnifico first as an opponent. "At the beginning, it was antagonistic and after it was a wonderful friendship." Magnifico remembers that they got together almost every Thursday night. "We had ten people playing soccer and twenty people coming out for dinner."

These gatherings, which began to grow in size, included Italians from different regions of Italy who now lived in different parts of the GTA. It was sometimes difficult to get together. "Coming from an Italian background where you go out every week with friends in large numbers, we wanted to see each other," says Magnifico, so he and some close friends created the group L'Altra Italia (the other Italy), as a way to socialize and explore their common Italian heritage. Carlo Coen of the Italian Cultural Institute was instrumental in helping them out and the group began to show the first movies there in February of 2002. As they grew they moved to Ryerson, and then to other theatres like the ROM, and finally, their current place, the Bell Lightbox.

Over time, L'Altra Italia became an organization that sponsored readings, culinary events, theatre and other cultural activities along with their film series. It was a little different from the other groups of Italian Canadians in the GTA. As De Florentiis points out, "We were a group of friends who came at a different time than the earlier immigrants. We wanted to have a close relationship with the Italy we left. This was not the Italy of the 50s or 60s. There are many associations in Toronto, but most of them are regional associations. Our group came from all over Italy so we couldn't form based on our regions." The group didn't want just a nostalgic relationship with Italy because "It is a different time. There are people who travel to Italy a lot. And they want to have a business relationship—to understand Italy today." It turns out that there are a lot of people that desire this: "After a few years that group of friends became a large group of friends and now there are 1000 members and we don't all know each other anymore. But we all share a feeling for Italy that is contemporary rather than nostalgic."

Success and growth changed L'Altra Italia and it became hard to program events in so many different areas for so many people because the organization relies on volunteers, and on this basis, as Magnifico says, "you can't do everything."



CRISTIANO DE FLORENTIIS & MAURIZIO MAGNIFICO

There was a need to focus. “We noticed that the interest was strongest with cinema. It gives you the culture, the scenery, the way of dressing, the cars, Italian design, not to mention being able to hear the beautiful Italian language. You can learn a lot about different layers of Italian arts and culture.” Since all the movies are subtitled in English, it also opened the door to non-Italians sharing in Italian culture. And this is really how the ICFF grew out of the early work of L’Altra Italia.

De Florentiis explains, “L’Altra Italia is a closed association. You have to be a member. The idea of the ICFF was to be open to everybody. We already had our community coming. We wanted to open our culture to the city first, and ultimately the nation.” The ICFF now has festivals in Toronto, Vaughan, Montreal, Quebec City, Hamilton and Vancouver that are all growing in size. It is working so well because the Italian diaspora is large and is represented right across the country.

The first ICFF was organized in a mere two months, and was five days long. De Florentiis remembers, “The response was incredible because people here were starving for this. It was a beautiful way to see the values and the arts and the language. It was a very simple way. You can have all different generations in the same room and everyone is happy. It’s very difficult to have this kind of feeling at a banquet hall in Vaughan. The young people would not go. With cinema, we could do that.”

Magnifico credits the festival’s growth to the format they created in that first year, which they still maintain. “We thought the formula was a winner. The second year

the festival was 9 days. In year three megastars started accepting our invitations. People began recognizing our hard work. When Roberto Benigni came it raised the level again. Through the work of the volunteers we have created a big structure that can deliver.”

There was always an outreach and educational focus to the ICFF, and the founders are rightfully proud of the program they have created for students called ICFF Junior. “At first it was just to have some films for our kids,” says De Florentiis, “but now it is a festival within a festival. It attracts thousands of students across the GTA. For many, it is the first time they have seen a movie that is not a Disney movie or a Pixar movie. They get to hear a different language and it’s often the first time the kids have seen subtitles. They come out with a wonderful experience.”

Since its inception, the festival has always sought to highlight the contributions of Italian Canadians to cinema. As Magnifico notes, “In the last Academy Awards an Italian Canadian won an Oscar. But when you ask our community, they don’t even know this person because we don’t celebrate these figures.” This year, in honour of Canada’s 150th birthday, the ICFF will present a special program called *From Bello to Beautiful: The Art and Impact of Italian-Canadian Cinema*. It will run from June 8th to June 16th, and they will be screening inspirational films crafted by Italian Canadians. Admission to the films is completely free—a gift from the ICFF to the people of the GTA and a fine example of the generosity and friendship that Cristiano De Florentiis and Maurizio Magnifico have shown to all Canadians throughout their creative lives.



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VIVIAN RISI, BROKER/PRESIDENT, ROYAL LEPAGE YOUR COMMUNITY REALTY, BROKERAGE



At some point, late in our amiable conversation, after being asked what winning Businesswoman of the Year means to her, Vivian Risi says plainly, “It means a milestone for me. Being an Italian Canadian and receiving this recognition from my colleagues is huge. I’m very proud to represent women in the business world. Never thought I would.” That simple response, seen on paper, obscures the fact that it was said with great emotion. The recognition clearly means a lot to her, which is understandable if you know a little about the path of her remarkable career and what it says about the changing place of women in the workforce.

Risi is a broker and the President of Royal LePage, Your Community Realty, Brokerage. She is the largest Royal LePage independent broker in the country, with 10 offices scattered throughout the GTA representing over 1000 real estate agents. Most of those realtors work in York Region, which has seen explosive growth over the last couple of decades and Risi’s brokerage is number one in market share for the region. Over the years, she has created a successful brand by providing professional services to the market and giving her agents the training, the facilities, the marketing department, and the mentoring that is necessary to compete in today’s competitive climate. It is, by any measure, a thriving, successful enterprise and the result of a long apprenticeship in the world of real estate.

Risi’s first exposure to the business began at home, at the kitchen table. She was three-years-old when her family left the town of Cassino and sailed for the famous Pier 21 in Halifax to make a new life in Canada. Like many Italian men, Risi’s father found work in the construction industry, and eventually, became a developer himself, by building a home for the family and living there until the next project could be finished and the first could be sold. Real estate naturally became a regular topic of conversation at the dinner table.

The table-talk drew Risi in, and she became intrigued by the mystery of why one property was worth more than an-

other property. She also saw the trade being lucrative for a lot of people. Risi recalls, “I was able to watch Italians become very successful in the real estate business, so it really, really caught my attention.” As soon as Risi came of age, she pursued her real estate license and at nineteen, began working. These were challenging times because she had two large hurdles to overcome. First, she was so young, and she had to convince people that they should entrust her to oversee the largest purchase they would probably ever make in their lives. The second hurdle was her gender. “It was not as easy as I thought,” says Risi. “You’re talking the 1970s and the industry was very much male-dominated. Who is going to take a nineteen-year-old girl seriously? It was very difficult.”

The lessons were sometimes hard and hurtful to Risi. “I’ll never forget—once, I had an offer on one of my father’s properties, and I worked really hard for these clients. So I walk in, and I present the offer, and my broker grabbed the paperwork out of my hand and said, ‘we’ll take care of it from here.’ And I was like, what? I couldn’t even present my own offer. Because it was almost like I was not qualified. And I have never forgotten it. It was frustrating but I learned how to navigate through that, and I think it makes you stronger.”

By the age of twenty-four, Risi was a mother of three, with two girls and a boy. She was a stay-at-home mom for four years but she decided she needed to get back to work. She had matured, but it was still something of a challenge working in the industry. “It didn’t change overnight.” Only in her mid-thirties did she feel she was truly taken seriously. She became successful and so proved herself. And she took another important step: “I stopped working with people that I had to try so hard with. I thought, why am I trying so hard with this group, I’m just going to go out there and find my own place, my own space. And I did. And that’s when I came into my own.”



Risi soon found herself challenged in other ways, and those challenges planted the seeds of her current success. Her kids were teenagers and she found herself as a single mother, torn between needing a job and wanting to be home with her kids. In those days, before email and cell phones and all the other technology we take for granted, selling real estate meant getting in the car at all hours for face to face meetings. It was working a lot of nights and weekends. None of this was conducive to raising a family solo. So Risi decided to pursue a management job at a brokerage because regular 9 to 5 business hours were possible. She eventually found a job, but one of the requirements was that she get her brokerage license.

That very same year, fatefully, she was called down for a big brokerage meeting. She remembers being very excited to be there. At the time the firm was Canada Trust and they decided they were going to sell off the real estate business to an American firm. She was told to go back to her office and tell the staff and the realtors that her company would either be sold to an individual buyer, or merged with another office. Either way, they would no longer be employees of the company within 30 days. Risi took it upon herself to find a buyer to preserve herself and her staff. She started calling brokers she knew who could potentially be a buyer or an owner. One broker in particular said, “Why don’t you buy it?” Risi thought he was either being insulting, or joking. She told him she didn’t have any money. That night she went home and talked to her kids and they said, “you can do it mom.”

After some thought, Risi called the president of the company to say she was interested in purchasing the business. At the time it was an 18 person office. She remembers the negotiations that lasted over a few weeks as something that resulted in “the best deal of my life,” because she was able to negotiate terms that allowed her to pay over time.

Today, Vivian Risi is renowned throughout the industry and all three of her children work alongside of her in the family business. Her history reminds us that men don’t always face the same challenges that women do. In her desire to be with her children, she pursued management work in a brokerage. That led her to take the risk of purchasing the brokerage when the opportunity came up. She turned that initial office of 18 people into 10 offices with more than a thousand realtors. Through all these challenges she has still managed to raise a family and give back to the community—she currently supports over 30 different charities.

Times have changed, but not all things change. “My reason for going back to work was to give my children hockey and dance lessons,” says Risi, “we couldn’t afford that on one salary. And I think everyone is still doing the same.” Risi believes young women today worry about having a family and a career at the same time, just as she did early in her career. She is living proof that it is possible. “You need the support, you can’t do it alone. You need your family, meaning your children, and a spouse, your partner. You need to be a team. If you can get that support there’s no reason why you can’t have a successful career as well as a successful home and happy kids.”

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