



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the*
ARCHDIOCESE of NEW YORK

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Faith, Heritage, and Education: Catholic School Leaders Honored by FIAME

Catholic School Leaders Honored for Excellence in Education and Service at FIAME Awards

BRONX, NY – Catholic educators from across the Archdiocese of New York were recognized for their exceptional service and leadership at the 39th Annual Awards Dinner Dance hosted by the Forum of Italian American Educators I, Inc. (FIAME) on Friday, April 4. The event, held at Villa Barone Manor in the Bronx, highlighted the achievements of Catholic and public school leaders, teachers, and staff who embody excellence in education and a commitment to community.

Linda Mele-Dougherty, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Identity & Secondary Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, received the evening's highest honor, the Thomas C. Giordano Leadership in Education Award. The award acknowledged her visionary leadership and dedication to forming students in both academic excellence and Catholic identity.

"I accept this award in honor of my grandparents, who immigrated from Bari, Italy, and raised a family of eight, first in Hell's Kitchen and later in Brooklyn," said Mele-Dougherty. "My father and his brothers served this country in the Civilian Conservation Corps, helping build the nation and sending much-needed income back to their family during the Depression. They continued their service during World War II. My parents, who never had the opportunity to attend college or choose their careers, were determined that my siblings and I would go to college. Above all, they encouraged us to pursue careers that would bring us happiness."

A career educator, Mele-Dougherty reflected on the personal meaning of the award and the vocation that has defined her life.

“Education has been my life’s work, and I am deeply grateful to my parents and family for their unwavering love and support. Over the years, it has been my students and colleagues who have taught me countless valuable lessons. Through the grace of God, I have achieved a level of happiness and success I never imagined. Most importantly, I pray that I have made a meaningful difference in the lives of others.”

FIAME also presented other significant awards, including several more to Catholic school educators. John Musto, Principal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, received the Michael Tomasetti Administrator’s Award for his dedicated leadership and impact on school culture. Josephine Casale, an Italian teacher at St. Raymond Elementary School, was honored with the Guy Stella Excellence in Teaching Award for her work preserving the Italian language and heritage. Anne Marie Norberto, Guidance Counselor at Cardinal Spellman High School, received the Andy Galdi Student Support Service Award for her compassionate service to students.

Longtime FIAME Secretary Phyllis Tiz Nastasio was honored with the Dominic Capone FIAME Service Award, recognizing her years of tireless advocacy and support for students and the broader community.

Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, commended the honorees for their work. “Our Catholic schools thrive because of leaders like Linda Mele-Dougherty, John Musto, Josephine Casale, and Anne Marie Norberto. Their work in the classroom and beyond shapes lives, builds community, and reflects the mission of Catholic education. We are proud to celebrate them and their incredible achievements.”

The evening also featured the awarding of 2024 FIAME Scholarships to four outstanding high school graduates, as well as a charitable donation to the St. Vincent DePaul Society, reinforcing FIAME’s longstanding commitment to educational access and community support.

“Since 1978, FIAME has stood as a supportive voice for the Italian American community,” said Rosa Leoncini, President of FIAME. “We come together this evening to honor educators and community leaders whose dedicated service as Italian Americans is recognized and affirmed by FIAME.”

The annual dinner and celebration served as a tribute to the legacy of Italian educators and the enduring values they bring to their schools and communities: faith, service, excellence, and heritage.

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Photo Captions:



ADNY-FA-1: *Linda Mele-Dougherty, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Identity & Secondary Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, proudly holds the Thomas C. Giordano Leadership in Education Award at the 39th Annual FIAME Awards Dinner Dance.*



ADNY-FA-2: *John Musto, Principal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, receives the Michael Tomasetti Administrator's Award in recognition of his transformative leadership and dedication to Catholic education.*



ADNY-FA-3: *Josephine Casale, Italian teacher at St. Raymond Elementary School, is honored with the Guy Stella Excellence in Teaching Award for her commitment to preserving the Italian language and heritage.*



ADNY-FA-4: *Anne Marie Norberto, Guidance Counselor at Cardinal Spellman High School, accepts the Andy Galdi Student Support Service Award for her compassionate work in student guidance and wellness.*



ADNY-FA-5: *Phyllis Tiz Nastasio, longtime FIAME Secretary, receives the Dominic Capone FIAME Service Award in celebration of her decades of service and advocacy for students and the Italian American community.*