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Edward Liccardi

IACF wishes to add our regrets for the death in August 2008 of Edward Liccardi, a longtime supporter of IACF and past-president and friend. Our sympathies go out to Edith and all of Ed's family. He will certainly be missed. We hope that all readers have seen the tribute to him in the October 2008 issue of LA GAZZETTA ITALIANA.

St. Edwards High School Joins IACF Awards Program!

We are pleased to announce the addition of St. Edwards in Lakewood to the Literature awards program. The school began an intensive Italian course three years ago, taught by Lucia De Santis Heddleson, who won the 2008 award for Less Commonly Taught Languages from the Ohio Foreign Language Association. More than 100 students have taken the course already, and we look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with St. Edwards and its staff.

IACF Introduces Its Distinguished Essay Awards Readers Committee

IACF is fortunate to have four talented and generous people who serve as an independent readers committee, reviewing dozens of essays each year, who provide a balance of views from the fields of Italian literature and English composition, and between the Italian and Italian-American experience.

Charming and vivacious, Dr. Paola Basile of Lake Erie College chairs the readers committee for IACF. Paola is the full-time Italian faculty member for the college, teaching up to eight courses a year in Italian and French language, literature and culture, as well as sponsoring Il Circolo, the school Italian club. Paola grew up in Rome and attended La Sapienza at the University of Rome. She was offered a scholarship at prestigious McGill University in Montreal, where she completed a Masters thesis on French perceptions of the new world, and then was offered another scholarship to pursue a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Montreal. Her Ph.D. dissertation has recently been published by Metauro Press (2006) as *I folli voli di Ulisse*. During her years in Canada she taught Italian at several universities and the local consulate. She has also published a collection of poetry. It is not surprising that in 2005 Lake Erie College offered her a position as Assistant Professor of Italian and French Studies, to replace Dr. Egidio Lunardi.

Egidio was born in Lucca of an Italian father and American mother and raised by his Italian grandparents. He attended the Liceo Classico in Firenze and at the suggestion of a professor applied for a U.S. passport and came to Rhode Island. Learning that "money does not grow on trees", he took a series of night jobs and went to school during the days while raising four children with his wife. He received a B.A. in education from Providence College, and then shifted to Brown University for Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Italian and Comparative Literature. He then taught

part-time at Brown while running a travel agency with a partner until 1975 when he accepted a position as instructor in Italian Studies. Moving up the academic ladder, he rose to Full Professor and became a Professor Emeritus on retirement in 2006. During those thirty years he twice received an award for excellence in teaching, chaired "every major academic committee on campus", founded Il Circolo, and developed the overseas study tours which are now a standard part of the curriculum. He served as part-time instructor at other universities when needed, and received three awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities to study Italian poetry at Stanford, UCLA, and Dartmouth. He has written two books on the poet Giovanni Pascoli, as well as a range of scholarly articles.

Lydia Distefano Thiel was born in Johnstown, PA to Sicilian parents. She attended Lake Erie College (B.A. in English and Italian), John Carroll University (M.A. in English) and Kent State University (Ph.D. in English). She is now exploring options for publishing her dissertation on "Mother and Son Conversations in Crises in the Modern Novel" and working on a collection of her memoirs and poems describing her childhood and adolescence as an Italian-American in a small town. She has presented many papers on Italian film and literature, is a longtime member of Il Convivio, and teaches writing and literature at Lakeland Community College.

Mimi Pipino is Associate Professor of English and chair of the Language and Literature program at Lake Erie. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from John Carroll University and a Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati, and is the author of *I Have Found My Voice: The Italian-American Woman Writer* (Peter Lang 2000) as well as several articles on ethnic literature and education.

We are deeply grateful to all four, and look forward to reading the 2009 essays.