



The Ambassador

*Embassy of Italy
Washington*

I am so very pleased to write these words of introduction to the book *PrimiDieci*, which intends to celebrate Italians whose singular accomplishments have distinguished them in the most varied sectors of American life; they stand in confirmation of the genius of our people, of its breadth, diversity and scope, and of its tremendous ability to make sacrifices and grow stronger.

It is an exemplary way to acknowledge, through the top ten, the entire community of countrymen, hailing from both the old and new emigrations, both those of Italian descent and those who see themselves as belonging to Italy in ideals and culture. It is one community in the broad sense, one that has contributed and continues to contribute to making the historic relationship of friendship between Italy and the United States and between our two peoples ever stronger.

Its contribution is born from shared basic values, ideal and cultural, that find expression in the pride that being of Italian heritage summons today in this country; a pride confirmed by the increasing number of Americans who declare, and thereby lay claim, to Italian origins. It is a clear signal of the sincere affection felt in this country toward Italy and of the prestige that the values and the qualities associated with Italy have attained, thanks to successful efforts and activities of many like the ten whose stories are recounted in these pages.

As the Ambassador of Italy, I can say that the real ambassadors of “Italianicity” are those in the working world, in research, in culture, in the sciences, and in business who have so capably brought great honor to Italy’s standing in these United States.

It is indeed a happy coincidence that *PrimiDieci* comes to publication precisely during the *Year of Italian Culture in the United States* since many of the men and women who have brought honor to our country here are connected to the world of culture and since culture, in its broad sense, is the true, profound, and historically intrinsic strength of Italy.

However, there is no culture without language, which is at the same time its form of expression and its conveyor. It is precisely to promote our language that I call together all the forces of the great Italian and Italian-American community present in the United States to take up the challenges that still lie ahead, one being that of making Advanced Placement (AP) in Italian a permanent program. In my view, *PrimiDieci* and its top ten are promising testimonials for learning Italian, and I am confident they will help us to disseminate Dante’s language in America even further.

Congratulations to the Top Ten and to the organizers of this marvelous initiative!


Claudio Bisogniero



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