

Susan Macaluso

I'm a New Yorker born in Niagara Falls, NY. I grew up in an Italian family, my mother from Calabria, and my father born in Boston to parents from Sicily and Veneto. The customs, songs and language of Italy were part of my growing up. I have often traveled to Italy for pleasure and to meet relatives, and in college I studied Italian. Since graduating with a BA and MA from Indiana University, I've had a diverse career in performing arts, public relations, marketing and social services. For many years I was an independent producer and event planner, creating dozens of videos on social justice issues, and multi-media presentations for corporate training and fundraising events. In 2021, I relocated to Santa Rosa from New York City, where I had retired as the director of a performing arts center in Manhattan. In that capacity, I was able to present many plays in Italian. When I moved to be near three grandchildren, I was also delighted to find the NBICF and am honored to be a part of this Foundation that brings Italian awareness and culture to the community.

René Berardi

My grandparents are full Italian, came over through Ellis Island in the 20's, worked in the coal mines in Pennsylvania and lived in San Francisco. Joe and Jennie Berardi retired to Santa Rosa in 1977. Since then, we have spent many evenings with NBICF. I was born in San Francisco, spent my childhood in West Marin and Sierra counties. I have 8 siblings, three moms and one dad. I raised my three children in Santa Rosa and they attended Cali Calmecac Language Academy and are bi-literate in Spanish. They have also attended NBICF summer youth language courses. I have one granddaughter, Charlie Reign, who attended her first NBICF dinner just last month. I live with my partner, Ted, and recently retired from 36 years of teaching. Our most recent trip to Italy this past September included my granddaughter. I am currently remodeling our house in Italy that has been in my family for six generations in the tiny hamlet of Isola Fossara, the Marche region. I intend to spend 3-6 months each year there. It's important to keep cultural traditions, connections to our ancestors and the rich variety they bring to our world. I would love to see Italian traditions taught by our members. We all know someone who makes manicotti, pasta, wine, who speaks the language, is familiar with Ellis Island, art, history, and helpful with travel ideas or geography. Let's connect and offer that to each other and by all means include the children!

Diane Bourassa

My mom's family came from the northern Italy region of Lombardy. My grandparents, along with siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles all funneled through Ellis Island and made their way to Alexander Valley. They worked the fields, mainly grapes and prunes. My dad was raised in Oregon and met and married my mom in Healdsburg. His parents were English and due to distance we rarely saw his family. As a result, I grew up in an Italian household. Food, family and culture were based on my mom's traditions. I live in Rohnert Park with my husband Zac and enjoy spending time gardening and vacationing when not at work as a CFO for a winery in Healdsburg. I have fond memories of dinners and events hosted by the NBICF. I believe it is incumbent upon each generation to pass down traditions and cultural knowledge to the next in order to preserve our heritage and family legacy. I hope to influence this in my work with the foundation.

Sonia Badalamente



I was born in the Dominican Republic and came to New York with my mother and sister where I went to Business School and graduated as a Bi-lingual Secretary and Translator. Also in New York I met and married my husband, Vito, born in Sicily and my strong connection to Italy. He passed away in 2013. Shortly after our marriage, we moved to San Francisco, where I got my certificate as a Court Interpreter and worked in an attorney's office, Crocker National Bank and APSA Peruvian Airlines. I have two children and three grandsons. I like to play Bocce, Chinese Mahjong and I love to travel and have been to Italy several times; one of my favorite countries to visit and, even though I have no Italian ancestors, Italy has a very special place in my heart.

Allen Barbieri



I was born in Santa Rosa. My parents were born in California, but my grandparents were born in Italy. I was raised in Santa Rosa, until I left to go to Creighton University School of Dentistry, in Omaha, Nebraska. After graduation, I stayed there and worked as a dentist in Public Health for two years, then moved back to Santa Rosa to set up my dental practice. I have been married to my wife Jean, from Nebraska, for 53 years. We have two children, and four grandchildren. Now that I retired, I can spend more time cycling, skiing, and drive my '50 Porsches, watching my grandkids sports activities, and of course participating at NBICF events.

Steve Albini



Steve Albini was born in Santa Rosa and grew up in Marin. His roots are Sicilian and Lucani. Steve is a professional musician and singer. His passions include music, wine and cooking. He currently lives with his family in Santa Rosa and is passionate about his Italian heritage and the Italian history of the North Bay. He has been a member of the NBICF since its beginnings in the 1980s. Steve is a Lifetime member of the NBICF.

Donald Malvestiti



My family lived in the Corona Heights area of San Francisco, above Castro and Market, where I was raised. Both my parents came from the same area in northern Italy, around Galeratti in the Lombardi region. During my 32 years of teaching at both Lincoln High School in San Francisco and San Marin High School in Novato, I taught 12th grade History and English, photography, was responsible for the yearbook and making sure the graduating class went to "Grad Nite at Disneyland". Bev and I were married for 60 years until she was taken away from me. We moved to Santa Rosa in 1970 where we raised our 3 children. I have always been a believer in expanding one's view of the world through travel. I started the "Happy Wanderer Touring Company" specializing in trips to Italy and Europe. Some of the people who traveled with me still talk about their experiences. I am proud to be joining the board of the NBICF. I will keep your interest in Italian culture paramount in my decision making

Carole Stewart



I was born and raised in San Francisco and have been a resident of Santa Rosa for over 50 years. I'm a retired teaching assistant and caregiver. I have three grown children – a son who is a teacher living in Warsaw, Poland, two daughters living in Santa Rosa, and six grandsons. I am one quarter Italian from the Piedmont area. My passions have been art, music and traveling to archaeological sites. I returned to college to get a degree in archeology and anthropology. I've done tour directing to Yucatan, Mexico, and "digs" in the southwest. Currently I'm a fine artist in oils and co-president of Artists Roundtable. I have been on the NBICF Board of Directors for five years and been singing with Coro Allegro for 15 years. I have also acted with Actors Theatre for Children and many years ago with "ACT". I love gardening, billiards, bocce ball, cards, traveling and just getting involved with fun and interesting people and my family. I also volunteer at Assistant League of Sonoma County for the last 19 years, was past president of Sonoma County Museum Auxiliary and on the Board of Directors of Senior Advocacy Services (SAS) of Sonoma County.

Breanna D'Argenzio-Tamburin



Breanna D'Argenzio-Tamburin is 3rd generation Italian-American. Her roots come from the regions of Campania, from a small countryside village called Sant'Angelo A Cancelli, Bari Puglia, and Messina Sicily. She was born and raised here in Sonoma County, and married an Italian immigrant from the Istria region, they are now growing their own family, raising their children in an Italian-bilingual home. She values family traditions and strives to teach them to the future generations and other Italian families alike. Co-owner of her family winery, D'Argenzio Winery, she started her wine career at the bright age of 9 years old, foot stomping grapes with her papa, siblings, and cousins. Her love of the wine industry guided her to study wine and business locally and abroad in Italy. She has dabbled in winemaking, however her passion in the industry is on the hospitality-end — organizing and hosting an array of events from weddings, special wine tastings, and a multitude of special gatherings. When Breanna is not working, you can find her with her three lovely children and family. A relaxing day with her family would include going on an outdoor adventure to enjoy nature, baking sourdough bread and other nutritious home cooked meals while dancing in her kitchen to good music. Breanna is involved with volunteering at her children's school and she is interested in holistic and natural remedies, gardening, and dreams to someday have a fully sustainable homestead.

Sophia LoRé



Sophia is a third-generation Sicilian American born in Oakland, California. She has Italian heritage from Messina and Francavilla di Sicilia, Sicily. Sophia moved to Santa Rosa in 2017 and feels blessed to have made connections with the Italian-American community in Santa Rosa through her work with the D'Argenzio family. In the Spring of 2019, Sophia studied abroad for a semester in Florence, Italy, through Santa Rosa Junior College's study abroad program. While she has always been proud to be Italian-American and excited to share her Italian-American culture, connecting with Italy's regional cultures only grew her passion for all things Italian. Sophia met her husband, Collin, while studying abroad, so not only does revisiting Italy feel like a reconnection to her roots, but it brings her and Collin back to the beginning of their love story. Sophia appreciates life's simple pleasures: spending quality time with family and friends, taking in the sun, sitting with a good cup of coffee, eating great food, swimming in the ocean, and traveling. She is always looking to try new things and share new experiences with loved ones.

Gina Fortino-Dickson



Gina is a Civil Litigation Attorney, focusing on plaintiff's personal injury and consumer law. She completed her Juris Doctorate degree at Empire College, here in Santa Rosa.

Gina was born in Syracuse, New York. Her paternal great grandparents emigrated from Italy and settled there. Her roots are in the campo region of Italy and possible traces to Sicily. Her parents moved their young family to Sonoma County in the 80's. Gina and her husband, also of Italian descent, now live in Windsor. She looks forward to serving on the board the NBICF striving to maintain a connection to our heritage and culture. When Gina is not serving the community, she loves spending time with her family, including her parents and five siblings, her husband and two children.

Virginia Wilburn



I was born in Salinas, California, to my immigrant father from Massarosa, (Lucca) Toscana. I am third generation California on my mother's side. My mother was half Italian, father was from Calabria, her mother's ancestry was from Chile. My first language was Italian. I could not speak English when I started school at age 5 in first grade. As a child we moved up and down the state of California always stopping close to other Italians. My father knew all of them. I spent my high school days at McCloud, northern California, graduated as Salutatorian on a Thursday and went to work at my first job the following Monday with the McCloud River Lumber Company in the accounts receivable office. Promoted to the company employment office and collected receipts from the local businesses and other duties. This was a most unusual job, ask me and I will explain. Most of my working years were spent as Customer Service Rep for Insurance Agencies. I was a licensed Broker and spent the last 20 years working and living in San Francisco. After I married, my husband was drafted into the Army and sent to Fairbanks, Alaska, where I joined him and worked for the Air Force for 18 months. I worked at Aerojet in Sacramento where they developed the propellant for the Polaris missile. I have 4 sons, 10 grandchildren and 3 great grandsons. I was a single mom for many years before they coined the phrase. I joined NBICF in 1998 and became a Board member and secretary for 15 years. I was chairman of the Festa Italiana for 9 years. And here I am again as a Board member trying to influence more people to join our organization. I am also the Office Manager, Reservations Coordinator and club volunteer. I hope to bring new life into this organization and keep it going for the future. Sempre avanti!