

Napolitano Accepts Society Medal

FROM ITALY (October 11, 2007)



The medal, which is a full size medallion, depicts the Great Seal of the United States, indicative of the American quality of the Society, with the Society's name in the round. The reverse, inscribed in a four-line legend, reads "Presented to/His Excellency Giorgio Napolitano/President of the Republic of Italy/19 September 2007."

The Gold Medal of the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit - - headquartered in New York and comprised of all those decorated by Italy and resident in the U.S. - - has been presented to H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italy. By virtue of office, the President is Head of all Italian state Orders of Knighthood.

The Society's Gold Medal, its highest accord, is reserved for heads of state and personages of similar exalted status. In 2006, it was awarded to President George W. Bush of the United States.



With arrangements concluded by Cav. di Gran Croce H.E. F. Paolo Fulci, the Society's Special Representative in Rome, Ambassador Fulci accompanied a delegation headed by Society President Cav. di Gran Croce Hon. Dominic R. Massaro that was received at the Quirinale Palace in Rome. Also attending were: Gr. Uff. Baroness Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo, Society secretary general; Comm. RoseMarie Gallina-Santangelo, president emerita of the Society and its chief of protocol; Cav. Joseph V. Del Raso, Esq., chairman of the board of the American University of Rome; Cav. John Leopoldo Fiorilla, Esq., Society counsel on the United Nations; and Cav. Michael L. Santangelo, Esq.

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Massaro, a New York Supreme Court justice, took the occasion to report to President Napolitano on the Society's efforts in the diplomatic arena on behalf of Italy at the U.N. and in Washington, D.C., as well as noting its increasing levels of charitable beneficence. Discussed was the current monitoring of adherence to the United States-Italy Accord prohibiting the importation and acquisition of illicitly excavated Italian antiquities, and ongoing negotiations seeking the return of such artifacts being held by American museums such as the Fine Arts Museum in Boston, the Metropolitan in New York and the Getty in Los Angeles. He likewise spoke to the Society's support for La Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi in New York City, the Italian Government accredited school for North America.

During the 40-minute session, President Napolitano expressed "continuing

appreciation" by the Italian state for the Society's "long-standing efforts" toward strengthening the friendship between Italy and the United States. He urged it "to

pursue the best interests of both countries," praising "those on whom high honors have been bestowed."

Photo. At the Quirinale Palace in Rome (from left) Cav. Joseph V. Del Raso, Esq.; Cav. Michael L. Santangelo, Esq.; Gr. Uff. Baroness Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimo; Cav. di Gran Croce Ambassador F. Paolo Fulci; Cav. di Gran Croce Justice Dominic R. Massaro, President of the Society; His Excellency Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Republic of Italy and Head of all Italian Orders of Chivalry; Comm. RoseMarie Gallina-Santangelo and Cav. John Leopoldo Fiorilla, Esq.

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