

George Randazzo

George Randazzo is the Chairman and Founder of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame. A true product of the Chicago's west side, he grew up in the Chicago Avenue and Lawndale neighborhoods and went to Marshall and Austin High Schools and later to Wright Junior College. Two years in the army gave him an eleven-month tour of duty in Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry Division, where he was awarded the Vietnamese Service Medal for honorable duty served.

After return from Vietnam, George became a buyer with Motorola. He passionately continued his boyhood hobby of collecting sports memorabilia, especially anything related to boxing. His fifty year collection and creative vision inspired him to try and publish his pictures of Italian-American boxers to help provide funding for an inner city athletic program. This initial idea inspired him to create an organization - the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame. His first induction dinner was held on September 16, 1977 and was a celebrated event that honored 23 Italian-American boxing champions, including Rocky Graziano, Jake LaMotta, Willie Pep and posthumously Rocky Marciano and Primo Carnera. The outcome was so overwhelming that he was encouraged to expand the organization to encompass all sports. In 1978, Joe DiMaggio accepted his induction and opened the doors to the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame in Elmwood Park, Illinois.

Over the years, the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame grew from a one room building to a 44,000 square foot facility in the heart of Chicago's historic Little Italy neighborhood. The National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving honorable values through sports. Each year, an elite group of Italian American sports figures are inducted into the NIASHF for their contributions to sports and society. The NIASHF is committed to providing opportunities for young people through various community outreach programs and charities with over \$7 million in scholarships awarded to students of all backgrounds. Today, there are over 200 inductees enshrined in the Hall of Fame in a first-rate multi-media exhibit. The NIASHF remains committed to educating and inspiring children and are developing new programs to expand its outreach and impact on the community. Current programming includes *A Level Playing Field* which explores diversity in sports. George is the founder of *Red, White & Green Magazine*, the official publication of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame.

George has received honors from the Italian Cultural Center as their *Man of the Year* and the Gregorian Society's *Humanitarian Award* for his support of the youth of America, *The National Media Award* from the American Italian Federation of the Southeast in New Orleans, LA, and the *Lifetime Achievement Award in Sports* by the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans. He has also been recognized by the Italian Tribune, 'Il Progress' magazine. Other prestigious honors were: Italo American National Union, Young Adults *The Gioventu Award* for his work with young people, in 2002 he received the prestigious *Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award* from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations in New York and in 2007 he became the first non-UNICO member to receive the *Rizzuto Award* from UNICO National. Most recently, he was inducted into the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame.

George is married to the former Linda Collins and has two sons, Anthony and Marc. Anthony Randazzo is an umpire with Major League Baseball. He and his wife Vivian have three daughters, Ashleigh, Angelina and Ava. Marc Randazzo is a former WBC Continental Cruiser Weight Champion. He is married to Marcie and is the owner and chef of the popular *Randazzo's Little Italy* in Coral Gables, Florida. Marc has two children, Linda Marie and Marc-Anthony.