

# JCCIA Journal

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*The Joint Civic Committee  
of Italian Americans*  
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~ Organized in 1952 ~



## Dante Award has special meaning for this year's recipient

by Jo Ann Serpico, President

When Charles Porcelli was president of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans in 1972 and 1973, the JCCIA launched several new ventures. JCCIA activities always had been concerned with matters addressing anti-defamation. The members of the Human Relations Committee felt that its policies should also include recognition of the positive contributions being made by persons in the communication field with help to foster the true image of the Italian people. Among those who came up with this idea for the award were Dominic DiFrisco, Anthony Fornelli, Jerome Zurla and Michael Glasso, the chairman of the Human Relations Committee.

Named after one of history's literary giants, Dante Aleghieri, the award draws its inspiration from Dante's Paradiso XVII 118-120, which reads, "If I should prove a timid friend to truth, I fear to lose my fame among the folk whose age will call this epoch ancient." The first recipient was John C. Severino, vice president of ABC and general manager of WLS-TV (Channel 7) at a luncheon on May 5, 1972, at the Sheraton Chicago. Severino had shown real sensitivity to all ethnic groups and their concerns, issues and special needs. President Porcelli presented the award with Jerome Zurla serving as chairman.

Through the years, those given the bronze bust of Dante have been editors, publishers, columnists, anchor people, commentators and heads of radio and television stations.

On May 20, the JCCIA will honor our 39th recipient of the Dante Award, Neil Steinberg of the Chicago Sun Times. Steinberg is a Dante fan and often uses the master to illustrate points in his column. Steinberg at one time began one of

his articles in Forbes magazine with "Dante Alighieri had a very bad fiscal year 1302."

Our admirer of Dante was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. Steinberg began his newspaper career as the weekend editor of the Barrington Courier Review. He then became the opinion editor for the Wheaton Journal at 24 and wrote a column three days a week for that paper. Steinberg joined the Chicago Sun Times in 1987

as a reporter on the night shift for many years covering the environment and charities. He also spent five years on the editorial board.

Steinberg is the winner of three Peter J. Lisagor awards, the local prize for journalism. Our Dante scholar has written for a wide range of other publications, from Esquire and Sports Illustrated to Granta and the New York Daily News. He is also the author of six books, including "Don't Give Up The Ship," which recounts a sea voyage taken with his father from New York to Naples and their travels through Italy. He now resides in Northbrook with his wife



**2010 DANTE AWARD RECIPIENT  
NEIL STEINBERG**

and two sons.

The Dante award luncheon is at Galleria Marchetti at 11:30 a.m. on May 20. Tickets are \$65 and may be ordered by calling the JCCIA office at 708-450-9050.

### A SPECIAL MESSAGE:

**A big thank you to the Rosebud Restaurant for hosting a St. Joseph Table benefiting the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. Your generosity and hospitality is unsurpassed. We thank all those who were present that day and contributed bakery items or gave a monetary donation. We also thank all of our organizations and individual members who contributed so willingly to the Haiti Relief Fund.**