

Italian Author Garners Prestigious Collegian Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Community

Author Pierette Domenica Simpson receives the most prestigious award bestowed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Wayne State University.

Dearborn, Michigan September 18, 2008— On September 16, Pierette Domenica Simpson, author of **Alive on the Andrea Doria! The Greatest Sea Rescue in History**, was presented the Collegian Award by Wayne State University. Simpson was one of four honorees to receive the prestigious honor offered by College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of her alma mater. In a ceremony at the Ritz Carlton Hotel of Dearborn, Simpson was bestowed the Laurel Cup, a symbol of outstanding achievement which originated in ancient Greece.

The Collegian Award is awarded to alumni who have demonstrated accomplishments in three areas: professional attainment and achievement, community service/outstanding service to their profession, integrity and character. Simpson was recognized for authoring a definitive book on the infamous shipwreck between two passenger liners: the Andrea Doria and the Stockholm. She survived the catastrophic collision, along with her grandparents as they were immigrating to America in 1956.

Alive on the Andrea Doria (also published in Italian as **L'Ultima Notte dell'Andrea Doria**) is a nonfiction historical account which solves the mysterious details, including political and technical ones, correcting historical blunders that led to falsely blaming the Italian crew and maritime industry for the collision and the sinking of the luxury liner Andrea Doria. The Italian book has been optioned for a movie.

Recently, a new publication called **Thank God I... Stories of Inspiration for Every Situation** has been released, featuring a short story by Simpson. "Thank God I Had a Catastrophe: Surviving the Andrea Doria Shipwreck" expresses gratitude for experiencing the challenge to survive. It highlights the blessings that have been derived from that challenge.

Additionally, Simpson is involved in writing and speaking about several other projects partnered with:

- naval architects, engineers, and shipwreck divers to bring about marine safety
- maritime museums to create exhibits based on shipwreck artifacts
- Italian historians who are researching the immigration of Italians to Michigan

Simpson was also honored for past accomplishments in the field of education. In 1994 she was recognized as Foreign Language teacher of the year in Secondary Education. In 2001, she was inducted into the Farmington Public Schools Teacher's Hall of Fame. Her educational career included 37 years of teaching French and Spanish at all grade levels, both in public and private schools.

The Collegian Award ceremony also recognized three other recipients: Michael H. Acheson, entrepreneur and community activist; Dr. Kenneth G. Furton, dean and professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Florida international University; Gary Brown, former Detroit Police Department Deputy Chief and community activist.

The honors ceremony was led by Robert L. Thomas, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Wayne State University president, Jay Noren, remarked about the significance of the Collegian Awards, especially as they coincide with Wayne State University's capital campaign. "As the university continues to grow and flourish so too does the value of your Wayne State University degree..."

Simpson remarks, "I'm so grateful that Wayne State University remembers its alumni. I feel so blessed to be recognized for having followed my passions: teaching foreign languages, defending what is just and fair, and promoting projects that serve humanity."

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Contact:

Pierette Simpson

Author, speaker, educator

248. 349.8557

www.pierettesimpson.com