



Buona Fortuna Lodge 2835

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Sons and Daughters of Italy
IN AMERICA

The Lotito Family Scholarship: Honoring Legacy and Education

John Lotito, a proud member of Buona Fortuna Lodge since 2022, offers this scholarship in loving memory of his father, Frank Lotito, a man who embodied the values of hard work, determination, and the transformative power of education. Frank was born in Montana, USA, in 1909 to Italian immigrant parents, Vincenzo and Angelina Lotito, who came from the Calabria region of Italy.

Vincenzo and Angelina both came from humble beginnings in Calabria. Seeking to escape poverty and build a better life, they immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island at different times. Vincenzo arrived first in the late 1800s and worked as a gang foreman for the Great Northern Railroad starting in 1898. Vincenzo's rise to gang foreman was not only a personal achievement but also a witness to the physically demanding work required to build the railroad structures across Montana's rugged landscape. The challenges of this work, coupled with the long hours and tough conditions, deeply influenced Frank's understanding of hard work and perseverance.

Angelina arrived in 1902, and after marrying Vincenzo in Chicago, the couple began their life together. Vincenzo's job with the railroad eventually led the family to relocate to Montana. Frank, born in Montana in 1909, lived alternately between Montana and Chicago, depending on his father's work with the railroad.

While Frank could have followed his father into the physically demanding railroad industry, he chose a different path. He recognized the lessons of accountability and hard work learned from his father's experience, but Frank was determined to look forward and pursue a future that aligned with his own passions. He decided that education was the key to his future success. Frank embraced the belief that knowledge and self-improvement were critical to shaping his own destiny, and he focused his life on learning and growth.

Frank married Hilda, a woman of German and English descent, and together they had their son, John. Hilda was a constant source of support to Frank throughout their life together. She lived a long and impactful life, passing away in 2023 at the age of 105. Their partnership helped instill in John the family values of tradition, family, and hard work that Frank had passed down.

Frank's first career path was in the insurance field. His self-taught knowledge and passion for education ultimately led him to Lincoln National Insurance, where he started out as a sales agent and eventually owned a large agency in the city of Chicago. Frank's success in the insurance field led to an offer for the position of Vice President at Lincoln National. However, Frank turned down the offer, as it would have required a move to Fort Wayne, Indiana, and he was not willing to leave Chicago, particularly due to his love for family and the life they had built there. Additionally, the move would have meant transitioning from a commission-based income to a salaried position. Despite this, Frank continued to excel in his career, ultimately retiring at 65 to begin a second career as an investment broker. He excelled in this field as well, proving that his focus on service and results would yield success for both him and his clients.

Frank passed away in 1995, but his legacy of dedication to work, learning, and family continues to inspire John.

Frank's philosophy of education was instilled in John, who recalls how his father emphasized the importance of learning throughout his life. Frank's commitment to education allowed John to receive access to the best educational opportunities available. John served in the U.S. military, and taking his father's words to heart, he used the benefits offered by the GI Bill to earn his MBA.

Through this scholarship, John honors his father's legacy, as well as his mother's, by helping high school students of Italian-American descent pursue their dreams. The Lotito Family Scholarship is a testament to Frank's belief in the power of education to open doors, create opportunities, and offer the freedom to rise above challenges. John's dedication to his community is evident in his many other philanthropic efforts, including donations to Mercy Home, Loyola Academy High School, the Pensacola Opera, and the Pensacola Symphony.

John offers this scholarship because he understands, just as his father did, that education is the pathway to success. This scholarship is available to high school students of Italian-American descent who wish to pursue an education in the field of their choice. Just as Frank believed his son should have the chance to follow his own educational path, John hopes to provide future generations with the tools they need to succeed. Through this scholarship, John Lotito continues to honor his father's values and legacy, ensuring that the power of education will continue to shape lives for years to come.