



## Buona Fortuna Lodge 2835

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### **The Russo Family Scholarship: Honoring Heritage and Education**

Patricia Russo is proud to offer the Russo Family Scholarship as a way to honor her father's side of the family and keep their rich heritage alive for future generations. This scholarship embodies a dedication to the values and legacy of the Russo family, tracing its roots back to the small town of Taurasi in the Avellino area of Campania, Italy. The family's connection to Italian culture, work ethic, and values remains integral to the life of Patricia Russo and continues to inspire her efforts to give back.

Patricia has provided this scholarship for 12 years, underscoring her unwavering commitment to honoring her family's legacy through this educational endowment.

The story begins with Patricia's grandparents, Augustino Russo and his wife, who met on the boat journey from Italy to America. After landing in New York, they settled in Massachusetts, where their son, Sabato, Patricia's father, was born. Patricia's mother, Emma, was of both Irish and Italian descent, reflecting the blend of cultures that shaped Patricia's upbringing.

In the pursuit of better health for their children, the Russo family moved to Pensacola, Florida, where they had family already living. Life was challenging, with the family facing financial difficulties. Patricia recalls her childhood with vivid memories of hardship — there was often only enough food for the family in a single baby jar, and they lived in modest conditions. Despite these struggles, the Russo family always believed in the power of education and the importance of helping others.

Patricia has been a dedicated member of the Buona Fortuna Lodge since 2007, where she has held several leadership positions, including Past President. Over the years, she has become a major supporter of the Lodge's annual fundraising event, Festa Italiana. Her involvement with the Lodge is a testament to her commitment to the Italian-American community and its culture. Through these efforts, she has continuously supported initiatives that celebrate and promote Italian heritage, and the Russo Family Scholarship is another way to extend that legacy of giving back.

The Russo Family Scholarship is Patricia's way of honoring her family's heritage while also offering a hand up to students who may be in need of support. She knows how far a little help can go and understands that even small amounts of financial assistance can make a significant difference in someone's life. This scholarship is also a tribute to the legacy of Italian-Americans, a community that Patricia feels deeply connected to, and one that has shaped her own family story.

Patricia sees this scholarship as a tool to promote equal opportunity through education, allowing others to pursue their dreams and follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. By supporting education, she hopes to give future generations the chance to thrive, just as the Russo family has. It's a way to carry forward the spirit of Italian values — hard work, community, and education — and ensure that the Russo family's contribution to the world continues to be felt.

The Russo Family Scholarship is a meaningful part of Patricia's larger mission to honor her heritage and ensure that Italian-American values are passed down and celebrated. It's a way to support young people as they take the next step in their educational journey and, in doing so, pay forward the opportunities her own family was once given.