

Cavaliere Susan R. LaMorte
Executive Board Secretary
Federation of Italian American Societies of New Jersey

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Susan was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, attending St. Augustine's Grammar School, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School in Newark and graduating with a degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Psychology from Kean University in Union. She taught briefly in both Newark and Belleville, before beginning her career with the State of New Jersey. In 1975, she worked with the New Jersey State Employment Service, which allowed her the opportunity to provide much needed assistance to the public to overcome the barriers to employment. This position served as a cornerstone enlightening her to just how rewarding public service can be and how important the role of dedicated public employee is to the success of a program.

Building on her experience with Employment Service, she welcomed the opportunity, in September, 1981 to work with the Division of Disability Determination Services (DDS) in Newark, NJ. She has distinguished herself in the area of adjudication, claimant service and developed a harmonious relationship with the public, her co-workers, managers and the medical community. She was the recipient of many awards and citations for her outstanding professionalism and leadership in the field of disability

adjudication and management. In 2010, she was appointed the Assistant Director of Administration, overseeing External Contacts, Policy and Procedure, Fiscal and Budget, as well as Accounting Unit and Disability Hearing Unit. In 2012, Susan along with NJ top Management Team received the 2011 SSA Associate Commissioner's Group Citation in recognition of exemplary teamwork, professionalism, leadership and flexibility in providing outstanding service to the public, the New Jersey DDS and the Social Security Administration. June, 2014, Susan retired from Disability Determination Service after 35 years of service.

Susan was the driving force in the rejuvenation of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Disability Examiners (NADE). NADE is a professional organization of individuals involved in all aspects of the disability evaluation process. With the help of a handful of original members' (11) and the support of the Administrator, she set her goal to make the chapter, a leader not only in the Region but the entire nation as well. And that she did! The New Jersey Chapter won the President's Award, the highest award given to a chapter, two years in a row 1989 & 1990, which had never been done before. Susan was also the first Italian-American elected President of the National Association of Disability Examiners, representing 2500 members in 1996. She testified before Congress representing NADE in 1992 on the problems facing the disability program and the President's Commission on Childhood Disability in 1995. She still maintains her membership in NADE and assists the Executive Board on issues involving the Social Security Disability Program.

Susan is actively involved in many organizations that afford her the opportunity of promoting her Italian heritage in a proud and positive manner. These organizations allow her to give something back to her heritage, namely instilling in the younger generation the importance of knowing your heritage, being proud of it and working hard to preserve it. She is currently the Executive Secretary of the Federation of Italian-American Societies of New Jersey since 1996. She is also an actively involved in the Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Parade Committee and St. Lucy's in Newark. She was awarded the Positive Image Award in 2009 from Belleville Chapter of UNICO for her active involvement promoting the Italian Heritage in the Community. She was also recognized by the Italian Tribune in 2010 as Italian Women of Italian Heritage. She was named Italian Belleville Woman of the Year by the Nutley-Belleville Columbus Day Committee in 2011. She also served as Concessions Supervisor with Delaware North Company at MetLife Stadium from 2010 through 2017 and had the great opportunity to attend Super Bowl XLVIII. She was the proud recipient of the Federation's Faithful Service Award in 2016. Susan is always ready to pitch in and get the job done whether helping a local church solicit gifts or helping raise funds for needy families, -- **She's there!** She has donated countless dollars and hours to helping others in need whether they are family, friends, co-workers or neighbors. In December, 2016, Susan was awarded the title of Cavaliere Gran Croce di Giustizia, Palermo, Sicily her efforts to promoting, protecting and preserving her Italian Heritage, Customs and Traditions. The Essex County Board of Commissioners awarded her with the 2018 Italian Heritage Award for all her service to the community promoting the Italian Heritage.

She is a first-generation Italian, the proud daughter of late Pasquale and Assunta LaMorte, who were born in Castelnuovo di Conza, Provincia di Salerno and Pescopagano Provincia di Potenza, respectfully. She came from a close-knit family of many Aunts, Uncles, cousins, a niece Nicole, two nephews, Pasquale and Frank and a Godson, Dakota. She had two older brothers, Frank, died in 2018 and Peter, who died in 1998. She is a warm, caring and positive person, who always goes "above and beyond the call of duty". Susan is a warm and caring person. She is a true "agent of change". She is someone with boundless energy and limitless time to get things done. She has a sparkling personality and compassionate ways, always making everyone she meets feel special and cherished. She is always ready to pitch in and get the job done or just be your friend. She was nicknamed "cordially persistent" because she never gives up – with the love of God and family she feels all things are possible!