

# IL BOLLETTINO IS BACK

THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (IALA)

## MEET DOUG & CLAIRE...

*Interviewed By Mariana Paula Noli, Esq.*

It was only a few weeks ago during the last IALA Board of Directors meeting that I was asked by the Board if I could take time to interview tomorrow's honorees Douglas Collodel and Claire Ambrosio for il Bollettino.

didn't join IALA until 2007, several years after they served as Presidents of this organization. I have known both of them for over a decade but having



Pictures of IALA past Presidents Ambrosio (2003) and Collodel (2000)

I feel privileged to get to know more about these two Hall of Fame honorees on a personal level since I

a chance to go over a few questions about their heritage,

## *President's Messagio*

*This month we are honoring two long time IALA members by inducting them into the Italian American Lawyers Association Hall of Fame: Claire Ambrosio and Douglas Collodel.*



*Our two Hall of Fame honorees are recognized for their service to our organization and for their contributions to the Italian American legal community at large.*

*Douglas Collodel is a recognized appellate specialist, practicing at the international law firm of Clyde & Co US LLP in Los Angeles.*

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childhood and history with IALA was truly special to me. I hope you enjoy as much as I did going down memory lane with both Doug and Claire and learning more about these two very special people in our group.



Daureen Collodel, 4, and her brother, Douglas, 2, get lost in thought aboard liner Cristoforo Colombo. Daureen takes the calm view, while Doug looks unhappy. Youngsters are bound for Milan, with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dino Collodel of Clifton. He's an engineer employed in Italy by a New Jersey pump manufacturer.

Young Douglas and his older sister featured at a local newspaper

*M: Thank you very much for your time, Doug. I will be respectful of your busy work schedule and try to go through the questions as fast as possible. How long have you been an attorney? What kind of law do you practice?*

***D: No problem, Mariana. For about 5 years, I was a trial attorney and then I became an appellate practitioner for the last 30 years; I've been certified as an appellate specialist by the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization since 2000.***

*M: Very impressive career. How and when did you find IALA? Why did you join IALA? What led you to*

*serve on the Board? When were you president?*

***D: It was in the mid-80's, I attended a meeting shortly after becoming a licensed lawyer in California. I remember the interesting and influential people that came to our meetings, like Willie Brown (Willie Lewis Brown Jr.), the speaker of the California State Assembly (house), and the many judges who regularly attended the dinner meetings at Casa. I served as a Board member in the 90s and I became President in 2000. 2000 was a big year for me!***



*Doug with Ed Masry, Erin Brokovich and Past President Judge Larry Crispo at the "Erin Brockovich Night"*

*M: Yes, indeed, lots of accomplishments. What is your best memory of the time you were IALA president? The worst or most challenging? What significant changes were made to the organization when you served?*

***D: We had many great dinner meetings at Casa.***

***At one, prominent trial lawyers read their famous arguments. Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Paul Turner was a frequent attendee of our IALA dinners and served as a moderator for the night we had a debate between DA candidates. We had Erin Brockovich as one of our speakers shortly after her movie was released. Of course, we had some of the signature events and hosted the Marco Polo Night (with JABA, SCALA) that year. Our annual Supreme Court Night was another hit, most of the court Justices were in attendance.***

*M: Sounds like your year was a year to remember for IALA*

***D: Yes, it was. Looking back now, I would say the hardest part is the passing of many good friends and mentors from back in the 80s and 90s.***



*Presiding Justice Paul Turner, then DA candidate Steve Cooley and Doug after the debate moderated by Justice Turner*

*M: I am sure of that. So do you think organizations like IALA are important? Why (or why not)?*

***D: Yes, of course. For me, IALA forged an opportunity to network. It was very influential and crucial in the development of my legal career. For years, many judges and politicians regularly attended all our meetings, and we had great a wonderful opportunity to connect with them in a relaxed social setting with good food and wine.***

*M: Now about your personal life, please tell us a bit about your heritage? Do you know where your family is from? When they came? Why they came? Where they settled?*

***D: You may be surprised to learn that I was born in Milano, Italy. If I am not mistaken I believe of the current 2019 Board of Directors members, only Rocco (Liberio) and I were physically born in Italy.***

*M: Actually, Federica (Dell'Orto) was also born in Italy.*

***D: I did not know that. Well, both of my parents were born in New Jersey. My father's job took our family back to Italy, where we lived for five years. Both my little sister and I were born in Italy, the family eventually went back to New Jersey before we moved to other foreign countries - Japan and Hong Kong. I lived 13 out of my first 16 years of my life overseas. My father's father, Paolo Collodel, fought in WWI for the Alpini (Alpine Corps of the Italian Army). My mother's family is Sicilian. Her father came to the US with four (4) brothers and they had a grocery store in Passaic, New Jersey.***



Proud father and his two children, Little Italy, New York, December 2017

*M: Are there family traditions that you hold especially dear? Or an interesting or amusing family story? Do you have a family recipe or two you would like to share? What*

*is your favorite Italian food?*

***D: There are many memories. I would say my great-grandmother made a one of a kind Italian Sicilian style pizza. I remember that my parents would host dinner parties, with one of the signature dishes being chicken and sausage cacciatore with polenta. Also, my dad made the best risotto in town, and often my job was to assist him by stirring the pot. My grandmothers and aunts were fantastic cooks, too.***

*M: On behalf of all of us at IALA, I want to thank you for your time. I hope you enjoy your night!*

*M: Hi Claire. It is so nice to get a chance to talk to you one on one. It has been a long time. So I have a few questions for the Bollettino and for the Hall of Fame Night tomorrow, I will go over them as quickly as possible to be respectful of your time. Let's begin with how long have you been an attorney? What kind of law do you practice?*

***C: Nice talking to you too, Mariana. Well, let's see, I have been licensed in California since 1996.***

**Early on in my career, I worked with a former senator, who owned an Italian movie company as an-house entertainment attorney. Now as you probably know, I practice law in Orange County. I work as an in-house attorney for a health company in the life sciences field.**



Beautiful Claire at the Installation Dinner

**M: Please share how did you find IALA? Why and when did you join IALA? What led you to serve on the Board?**

**C: This is a very long time ago, I was recruited by the First female President and invited to join the Board by the Second female President. They were trying to bring more young lawyers. I was one of them. I joined as a student member while I was in law school.**

**M: As a law student? That is great, you grew up with IALA!**



Claire and her soon to be husband Jim

**C: Yes, I did... I was studying law at the Southwestern School of Law when I attended my first event.**

**M: When did you become IALA President? What is your best memory of the time you were president? The worst or most challenging?**

**C: I was IALA President in 2003. I have so many fond memories, for example the Installation Ball at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills. We also used to have a Hospitality Suite at the California State Bar Convention. During the year I was President, Anthony P. Capozzi, former State Bar President in Fresno,**

**would always invite me to represent IALA at the state bar events.**



Proud Italian Claire with her mamma

**M: Do you think organizations like IALA are important? Why (or why not)?**

**C: Well, I would say yes. I met my future husband through the organization, haha. Of course, I think IALA and other organizations for Italian-Americans are very important. I have lots of good memories, I made a lot of great friends, and truly learned a lot thanks to this organization.**



Cake at Claire's Installation Ceremony

*M: Tell us a bit about your heritage? Do you know where your family is from? When they came? Why they came? Where they settled?*



Claire, her dad and goddaughter at her Installation

***C: I am the first attorney in my family. My mother's family was from Naples and Sicily and her father's from Naples. They relocated in the East Coast.***



Proud Italian Claire, her mom and her dear friend Pat Gabrielle

*M: On behalf of those at IALA who were not yet members when you served as President in 2003, I want to thank you for sharing the vision of our founders and for all your efforts and participation, dedication to this group.*

*Mille grazie to both Douglas and Claire for making our famiglia what it is today.*

*Doug served as President of IALA in 2000 and remains active as an ex officio member of our Board of Governors, in addition to his numerous other bar activities.*

*Claire Ambrosio is the general counsel for a publicly-traded company, MYnd Analytics, Inc., located in Mission Viejo, California. In addition to serving as President of IALA in 2003, Claire has been an active participant in numerous Italian American organizations and events, serving as legal counsel for the San Gennaro Foundation of Los Angeles, the National Italian American Bar Association (NIABA) Board of Directors, and the Federation of Italo-Americans of Southern California, by which she was named Woman of the Year in 2008, and more!*

*Having participated as members, officers and Board members of IALA for most of their careers, Claire and Doug are great examples of lawyers who have given back to the Italian American community while engaged in an active practice of law. We think you will enjoy hearing more of their stories.*

*Please join us in recognizing and honoring Claire Ambrosio and Douglas Collodel as honorees of the IALA Hall of Fame and ...*

*See you at the Casa!*

*Gregory M. Salvato, IALA 2019 President*