

**7TH ANNUAL INDUCTION GALA  
TORONTO AZZURRI SOCCER CLUB**



*2026*

*Wall Of Fame*

**APRIL 23, 2026**





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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CHAIR

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In 2006, the City of Toronto granted the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club five (5) acres of City Land on a 20-year lease situated at the Keele Street Reservoir. The City agreed to build a stadium lit grass field and the TASC would erect a 6,000 square foot Community Clubhouse. The Clubhouse was named after LiUNA 506 and the road leading to the Clubhouse from Keele Street would be named Carmen Principato Way. It was an honor to recognize such a visionary. Carmen believed in the TASC's dream of creating a center of excellence for our immediate community.

The project was approved by City Council and championed by then Councillor Peter LiPreti. Peter suggested to Gus Mandarino, VP of TASC, that we would be in a more advantageous position to have our presentation approved if primarily focused on offering programs that benefited the youth of our neighborhoods encompassing education, the arts and sport. The presentation featured strong partnerships with Toronto Police Services under Sgt. Stephen Hicks, the LiUNA family and career planning, staging art & drama shows under the guidance of Elaine DaVian and growing soccer within the Toronto Tornadoes family and their Special Olympics athletes. Peter LiPreti took the finished presentation to City Council and TASC's dream was unanimously approved. The document was entitled "We Teach Soccer and Build Character".

For this announcement, TASC would like to thank our MAJOR SPONSORS: LiUNA 506, LiUNA 183, LiUNA OPDC, Masters Insurance, I.C. Savings, Vin Bon, VPC Group, Falco Steel and CIPBA. We also thank the 50 Founding Fathers and general Toronto Azzurri members for helping us realize our dream. We thank all of our Board Members over the past 27 years for their unwavering support and a special thank you to our current General Manager and Treasurer, Ron Smale and Administrative Director Louise Garneau-Ross for their leadership and passion they have delivered to the Toronto Azzurri S.C.

Congratulations to our 6 worthy Inductees who will be inducted into the TASC Soccer Wall of Fame in this 7<sup>th</sup> edition Gala. They will join the 55 amazing individuals enshrined on our Wall of Fame showcased at the LiUNA Clubhouse. As we anxiously await the 2026 World Cup starting June 11th, let us appreciate all that has been accomplished via the unselfish contributions of these 61 people that have directly assisted in helping Canada being currently ranked 28<sup>th</sup> by FIFA...the highest position ever by our National program. Thanks as well to everyone who has supported TASC and helped us celebrate the past, the current and of course our future.



**Robert Iarusci, Chairman,  
Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club  
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**Ralph Ciccia, President  
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***Paolo Canciani***

***Fortunato Febbraro***

***Nicola Sparano***

**We are proud to support the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club as they celebrate the remarkable individuals who's passion and dedication have lead to incredible contributions to the sport of soccer.**

**Congratulations to them on being inducted into the 2026 Wall of Fame.**

The  
Cristina  
Ciccolini  
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Fund



Best wishes,  
Sam, Donna, Michael,  
Rita, Eric, Cristina and  
Jacqueline Ciccolini

# INDUCTEES HONOURED IN TORONTO AZZURRI SOCCER WALL OF FAME

## BUILDERS/PIONEERS

\*IN MEMORY OF

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Sam Ciccolini	2017	Basil Policaro	2019
* Johnny Lombardi	2017	Alberto DiGiovanni	2023
* Gino Ventresca	2017	* Pasquale Fioccola	2023
* Ted Laraia	2018	* Tony Fontana	2024
* Mario Di Bartolomeo	2018	Carmen Principato	2024
* Joseph J. Piccininni	2018	Joe Vaccari	2026
* Joe D'Urso	2019		

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## COACHES/MANAGERS

Carlo DelMonte	2017	Alberto DeRosa	2019
Gus Mandarino	2017	* Mario Perruzza	2019
* Aldo Principe	2017	Peter Pinizzotto	2023
Fiorigi Pagliuso	2018	Adamo Pagliaroli	2024
* Hector Marinaro Sr.	2018	Richard Morandini	2024
* Domenic Matera	2018	Tony La Ferrara	2025
Orazio DeCiantis	2018	Carmine Isacco	2025

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## MATCH OFFICIALS

Tony Evangelista 2026

## PLAYERS

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\* IN MEMORY OF

Robert Iarusci	2017	Carmelo Barbieri	2023
Tony Lecce	2017	Joe Pellegrino	2024
Pasquale Pietrantonio	2017	Sandy Scamurra	2024
* Giorgio Piotti	2018	Nick Plessas	2025
Carmine Marcantonio	2018	Enzo Concina	2025
Paul Stalteri	2019	Joe Schiraldi	2025
Paul D'Agostino	2019	Pat Ercoli	2026
Frank Riga	2023	Giacomo Stecher	2026

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## MEDIA

*Tino Baxa	2017	Tony Pavia	2023
Paolo Canciani	2017	John Iaboni	2024
Nicola Sparano	2017	Alfonso Ciasca	2025
Alf DeBlasis	2019	Vito Caressa	2026

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## SPECIAL TORONTO AZZURRI RECOGNITION AWARD

* Carmen & Bruno DeNino	2018	Fortunato Febbraro	2024
Tony Cipriani	2019	Angelo Locilento	2025
Lucky Raso	2019	Joanne Lenarduzzi	2025
Joe Mancuso	2023	Mario Borsato	2026
Ralph Ciccia	2023		



Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario

April 23, 2026

## A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD

Good evening and welcome to Toronto Azzurri's Seventh Annual Wall of Fame Induction Gala. It's my great pleasure to congratulate the leaders, players, builders and broadcasters who have who have contributed significantly to the development of the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club, as well as to the phenomenal growth of soccer.

Soccer is a sport that requires great technical and tactical mastery, as well as agility, speed and stamina. The Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club has nurtured some of our finest soccer talents and provided many young people with opportunities to learn this sport, get fit and develop discipline, leadership and other skills that will serve them well in life.

Tonight, you gather to celebrate the club's proud sports heritage by honouring the remarkable individuals who have given so much of their talents and time, for the love of community and of this beautiful game.

Congratulations to the new Wall of Famers! Know that your achievements will inspire many aspiring soccer athletes and fans in the years to come. You're all true champions and all-stars!

Have a wonderful evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Ford".

**Doug Ford**  
Premier





# Tom Rakocevic

MPP Humber River—Black Creek

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April 23, 2026

## **Congratulations Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club Wall of Fame Inductees!**

As a Member of Provincial Parliament and a long-standing friend of the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club, I am truly honoured to extend my sincere congratulations to this year's outstanding inductees to the organization's distinguished Wall of Fame.

The Toronto Azzurri has played a vital role in developing some of Canada's top soccer talent, while fostering lifelong connections among its players. United by a shared passion for soccer, the club's commitment to excellence continues to create meaningful opportunities for future generations and supports growth in athletics, leadership, discipline, and beyond.

Induction into the Toronto Azzurri Wall of Fame represents a remarkable achievement and a well-deserved recognition of lasting contribution and excellence.

Congratulations to this year's distinguished inductees - Mario Borsato, Vito Caressa, Pat Ercoli, Tony Evangelista, Giacomo Stecher and Joe Vaccari.

Best wishes to tonight's inductees and to all who have joined to support them in their special moment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Rakocevic".

Tom Rakocevic  
Member of Provincial Parliament  
Humber River-Black Creek



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

I would like to welcome everyone attending the Toronto Azzuri Soccer Club's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Wall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

This event recognizes six individuals whose contributions have made a lasting impact on the soccer community. I am pleased this ceremony is being held in our city.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable event.

Yours truly,

Olivia Chow  
Mayor of Toronto



April 23, 2026

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club on its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Wall of Fame Induction Gala, and to this year's outstanding inductees.

Since 1968, the club has provided a welcoming space that fosters teamwork, sportsmanship, and a strong sense of community. Its ongoing commitment to charitable initiatives and community development continues to make a meaningful impact.

Special recognition is extended to Mario Borsato, Match Official Tony Evangelista, Builder Joe Vaccari, players Pat Ercoli and Giacomo Stecher, and Media honouree Vito Caressa for their exceptional contributions to the sport and the community.

Congratulations once again to the club and all inductees on this special occasion and thank you to the sponsors for their continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Pasternak', written over a light blue circular background.

**Councillor James Pasternak**  
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**J**oe immigrated with his family to Northern Ontario in the early 1950s before eventually settling in Toronto, where new opportunities and a vibrant immigrant community were beginning to take shape. As a teenager, he quickly developed a deep passion for soccer and joined a local team, embracing the sport both socially and competitively. However, recurring injuries brought his playing career to an early end, forcing him to reconsider how he could remain connected to the game he loved.

Determined to stay involved, Joe shifted his focus from playing to building. He founded his own team in the Toronto & District (T&D) Industrial Division and soon earned a role on the league's board as a director. At a time when Toronto was experiencing a surge of newcomers from around the world. Joe recognized that inclusion would be critical to the sport's growth. In 1967, Joe joined Aldo Principe and Sam Ciccolini creating a soccer club ages 13–21 called Westwood Young Generation, Joe credits the dedication and perseverance from amazing people like Fiorgi Pagluiso, Joe Grande, Angelo Angelucci, Jolin Paolis and Mario Perruzza. He became a strong advocate for change, working to remove barriers and actively pressing municipal, provincial, and federal governments to support a more welcoming and accessible soccer system. His leadership contributed to the league's expansion into what became the largest amateur league in North America.

Joe later became president of the National Soccer League (NSL), guided by mentor Joseph Picininni. During this era, Westwood merged with Toronto Italia, strengthening youth pathways. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the NSL grew to fourteen teams, including Toronto Croatia, Serbian White Eagles, First Portuguese, Pan Hellenic, and Hamilton Italo Canadians. These culturally rooted clubs built passionate followings and attracted experienced European players to mentor local youth.

Committed to raising the sport's profile, Joe pushed for stronger media coverage and hosted a weekly soccer program on CHIN Radio.

# *Congratulations*



RALPH & LENA CICCIA

We would like to congratulate all of  
the 2026 inductees into the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Toronto Azzurri Wall of Fame



**P**at was born in Toronto to immigrant parents, Ottavio & Matilde, from Civitanova, Marche, Italy. A product of the Westwood Young Generation Soccer Club playing for the Mio Majors, Pat will be honored under the Player / Coach / Builder category – making him the only inductee into the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Wall of Fame in that capacity.

Pat enjoyed a professional playing career from 1975 to 1986, before going on to coach the Rochester Raging Rhinos from 1995 to 2005, and has held the title of President / General Manager from 2009 to present.

Across his career, Pat has won 6 Championships as a Player, 4 as a Coach, and 1 as President / GM, along with 5 Shield (regular season) Championships. His many accolades include Coach of the Year in 1998, the Elliot Cushing Award in 1999 for bringing national attention to the Rochester community, and induction into the inaugural United Soccer Hall of Fame in 2002. He was also honored by the Italian Civic League of Rochester, and has since been inducted into the Baltimore Blast Hall of Fame (2010), Rochester Lancers Hall of Fame (2011), and Rochester Rhinos Hall of Fame (2014).

Pat began his professional career with Toronto Italia in the Canadian NSL, winning back-to-back championships in 1975 and 1976 – a highlight of which was playing alongside the great Jose Altafini. He added another NSL title with the Montreal Casters in 1977. In 1978, Pat was named NASL Rookie of the Year with the Rochester Lancers (6 goals/10 assists) and won the NISL Championship with the New York Arrows. In 1980, he earned an International Cap playing for Canada and had his most productive season with Rochester (8 goals/10 assists).

After stints in Buffalo alongside the legendary Paolo Rossi and with the Jacksonville Tea Men, Pat spent five standout years with the Baltimore Blast, including a MISL Championship. He concluded his playing career with the Cleveland Force in 1986.

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# BUILDING ONTARIO

EST 1952 



**G**iacomo Stecher was a skillful and speedy winger who played for Toronto Roma in the E.C.P.S.L. (Eastern Canadian Professional Soccer League) from 1960 to 1966. Born in Milano on December 15, 1937, Giacomo moved with his family to Torino where, as a promising youth player, he joined AS Torino.

Blessed with quickness and an attacking style, Giacomo signed his first professional contract in 1956 with Castellammare di Stabia in Serie C. The following year he joined AS Como in Serie B, where he starred for three seasons. Unfortunately, in his final year with Como, Giacomo suffered a serious muscle tear in his right leg that stalled his career. With his recovery not progressing well, a frustrated Giacomo decided to join his mother and sister in Toronto.

News of his arrival spread quickly, and he was soon approached by Toronto Roma President Ted Lاراia with a new professional contract. It was 1960 and the E.C.P.S.L. was blossoming as a new professional league. Giacomo agreed to play for Toronto Roma in the spring/summer season, while also playing in the fall/winter season with the Philadelphia Pro Club in the U.S.P.S.L.

Giacomo fondly recalls the extraordinary passion surrounding the E.C.P.S.L. Toronto Roma played at Varsity Stadium to average crowds of over 8,000. When Roma faced Toronto Italia, attendance swelled to 15,000–18,000, with the fierce derby atmosphere fueled by both club presidents — Johnny Lombardi (Toronto Italia) and Ted Lاراia (Toronto Roma). Giacomo vividly remembers the overwhelming feeling of stepping onto the Varsity Stadium pitch for the first time before that magnificent crowd.

He also recalls that soccer rules at the time permitted no substitutions whatsoever — it wasn't until the mid-1960s that FIFA allowed a maximum of three.

After six seasons, still hampered by his severe right thigh injury, Giacomo retired from professional soccer. Those who witnessed the growth of the game in the 1960s would count Giacomo Stecher among the international stars of the league.

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**A**ntonio “Tony” Evangelista was born on October 2, 1945, in Sora (Frosinone), Italy. He became one of Canada’s most respected soccer officials and a FIFA referee, contributing significantly to the development of the game as both an official and a builder.

Tony immigrated to Canada with his family at the age of 13 and quickly developed a passion for soccer. Determined to excel as a referee, he rose rapidly through the ranks. By age 23, he was officiating high-level matches in the Toronto & District League and the National Soccer League (NSL). He often credited the intense and demanding matches of the late 1960s and early 1970s as critical to his growth and preparation for the international stage.

His strong performances earned him assignments in CONCACAF World Cup qualifying matches and later in UEFA competitions, where he served as the main referee. During the 1970s and 1980s, he also officiated in the North American Soccer League (NASL), a period when the league expanded and featured world-class players.

Known for his exceptional fitness and commanding presence, Tony built a reputation as a “no-nonsense” referee. His confidence and decisiveness enabled him to manage challenging matches with authority and consistency.

In 1984, he was selected to the FIFA pool of referees for the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, where he officiated the match between Morocco and West Germany and served as a linesman in a semi-final. That same year, he refereed Italy versus Switzerland in Bern.

His other notable assignments included the 1985 FIFA World Youth Championship in the USSR, the FIFA U16 World Championship in Toronto, and the 1989 FIFA five-a-side final in the Netherlands. He also officiated a key 1980 World Cup qualifier between El Salvador and Honduras.

Following his officiating career, Tony served as President of the Toronto Soccer Association. In 2003, he was inducted as a Builder into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame.



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**MATERA**



**V**ito was born March 4, 1956 in Spinazzola (Bari). At age 10, his family moved to Ostia (Roma), where he lived for twenty years. A lifelong Roma supporter, Vito had a strong passion for sport journalism and organizing local calcetto tournaments. A natural salesman, he also promoted and sold Juventus home games and Champions League matches through packaged offers from 1995 to 1999 during a period spent in Milan.

In 1989, Vito married a Canadian woman and moved to Toronto, where he immediately met Paolo Canciani, who offered him a role as a roving reporter with OMNI-TV (Channel 47). Vito began covering local and international sports including soccer, motorsport, and tennis, before Canciani moved him to the evening news as an anchorman. Vito also began covering "sports" in local "LoSpecchio" newspaper... his first job in Canada that lasted 8 years.

Upon returning from Italy in 1999, Vito reconnected with Canciani at OMNI, hosting a one-hour show called "Pomeriggio Italiano." He also wrote weekly columns for "Lo Specchio," edited by Corrado Paini.

Over the next 15 years, Vito established himself as one of the GTA's leading sports and news journalists, travelling to major events and reporting live. In 1993 he was at Madison Square Garden for the 1994 World Cup draw, and he went on to cover the 2006 World Cup in Germany and the 2008 Euro Cup. He also fondly recalls covering the Toronto Blue Jays during their back-to-back World Series victories.

Vito has amassed an impressive portfolio of VIP interviews, including Jean Todt, Mario Andretti, Emerson Fittipaldi, Dino Zoff, Sven-Göran Eriksson, Paolo Rossi, Roberto Bettega, Francesco Totti, Marco Van Basten, Michel Platini, John McEnroe, and Pelé. Vito adopted the Toronto Azzurri Club as his second family. Since 1990, he has been a vibrant member – from Sunday mornings at Lamport Stadium to competitive league play and special club projects. Together with his best friends Luca Tomanelli and the late Roy Belluomini, Vito formed the original "Tre Amigos."

# *Congratulations*



**CORLAN ELECTRIC INC.**

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We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all six inductees who have been honored on the Toronto Azzurri Wall of Fame.



## MARIO BORSATO SPECIAL RECOGNITION



**B**orn September 25, 1946 in Paese, Treviso, Italy, Mario's life has been shaped by football, community and commitment. Mario began playing football as a young child. Between the ages of 11 to 16, Mario played competitive junior football with PASES Football Club under the guidance of Enzo Catarin & Eliseo Vendramin.

At ages 16 – 18, Mario advanced to PASESE's first team under coach Tedini, formerly of LANE Rossi Vicenza (Serie A). Mario's dream was to progress to higher competitive levels starting with PAESE FC in the Promozione Category serving as a feeder club for Treviso and Venezia clubs.

In July 1965, Mario emigrated to Toronto, Canada. Adjusting to a new country and discovering that football was now called soccer, he realized a responsibility of balancing work, education and sport. Mario went on to found and own a wood working company "ART MAGIC" that won National Architectural Awards from 1973 to 2011. After a brief opportunity to join Toronto Italia under coach Hector Marinoro, Mario made the difficult decision to prioritize building a career through work, stepping away from competitive soccer for eighteen months.

From 1967 to 1973, Mario returned to competitive soccer joining Clarkson SC in the T&D second division. His team quickly was promoted to T&D's first division. In 1982, the club became Mississauga West competing in the Peel Region over 35. At this time, Mario was also introduced to the Toronto Azzurri SC by Lucky RASO. Lucky invited Mario to join his group every Sunday @ Lamport Stadium where Mario enjoyed forging new friendships with quality individuals and players.

In 2000, at the Fogolar Country Club, Mario helped officially form the Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club (TASC), a club dedicated to teaching both soccer and character. Over the next 25 years, Mario served TASC with distinction ...15 years as a Board Member, 3 years as a President, and a key contributor to the club's headquarters, development, permits and financial planning. Mario also organized the annual charity Golf Tournament, now in its 27th year and the club's annual family picnic from 1995 – 2022.

Mario Borsato's legacy is one of loyalty, leadership, and lifelong dedication to soccer and community on and off the field.

# *Congratulations*



We would like to congratulate all of  
the 2026 inductees into the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Toronto Azzurri Wall of Fame

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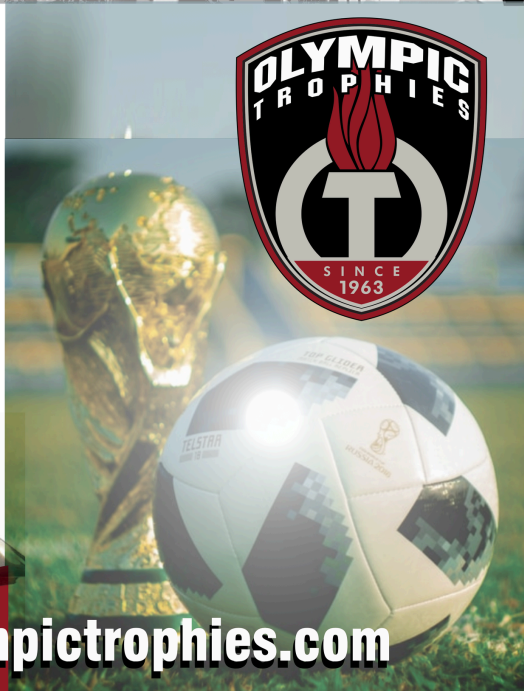
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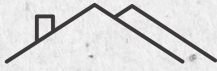


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## DANIELA CICCIA, RPA

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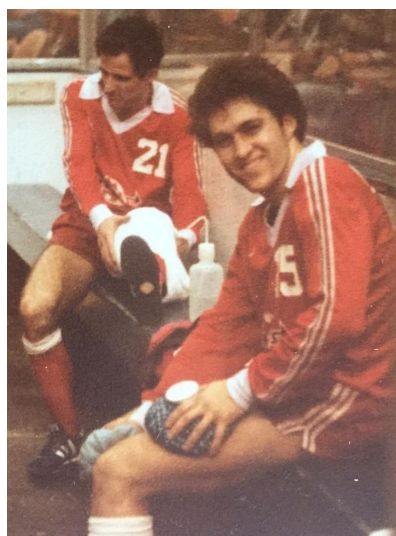
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questa la linea attaccante degli "Italiani" contro gli "Inglezi" venerdì sera al Varsity Stadium? Da sinistra: Piotti, Montaserin, Conti, Cigno.

non hanno ancora varato, sa non dovrebbe essere molto diversa da questa:

Schwartz

scrivere anche Lawlor, la pala sinistra degli Stati Uniti. Lawlor sta attraversando





2026  
*Wall Of Fame*

**7TH ANNUAL INDUCTION GALA**

