

# 77th National Convention

## ALBANIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

**New York Chapter**

**The Westin**

Jersey City, New Jersey

**August 8-10, 2025**

# PLATINUM SPONSOR



Our sincerest appreciation of the AANO and its legacy and worthwhile mission for the future.

lukajfoundation

# BANQUET *Program*

6pm-7pm

Cocktail Reception

6pm-8pm

**Shopping**- *Boutique Albanian vendors*
**Cultural Display of Albanian Costumes**- *Courtesy of Besnike Zelka*

7pm

**Dinner Program Begins**

**Anthems- Sung by Altea Ali & Roberta Panariti**

- Star Spangled Banner
- Hymni I Flamurit
- O Canada

**Invocation**

**Introduction**

- of National Officers, Past Presidents & Past AANO Queens

**Speakers**

- National President - Jana Foundos
- National Queen- Allonja Wilson

**Scholarship Award Presentations**

- Christina Foundos

**Honoree Award Presentations**

- Lifetime Achievement- Lou Foundos
- Albanian of the Year- Avni Mustafaj
- Community Service- Beti Beno

**Dance performance** by Tony Dovolani & Dodona Roboci

**8pm- Midnight**

Dance to DJ Alban
Performances by Barbana Dini & Ilsi Ademi

# National PRESIDENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **1946 - 1947** | Vincent L. Theodos |
| **1947 - 1949** | Thomas Detskas |
| **1949 - 1950** | Dr. Augustus Valauri |
| **1950 - 1951** | Castor Notskas |
| **1951 - 1953** | Piro Spiro |
| **1953 - 1954** | Thomas Detskas |
| **1954 - 1955** | Castor Notskas |
| **1955 - 1956** | George Vasil |
| **1956 - 1957** | Peter Mallios |
| **1957 - 1958** | Piro Spiro |
| **1958 - 1959** | Peter Borzuku |
| **1959 - 1961** | Peter Theodos |
| **1961 - 1964** | Demetri Plasari |
| **1964 - 1966** | R. Norman Peters |
| **1966 - 1968** | James Lukes |
| **1968 - 1969** | Paul Costa |
| **1969 - 1971** | Louis (Ilia) Foundos |
| **1971 - 1974** | Constantine Pillary |
| **1974 - 1977** | Louis Pero |
| **1977 - 1978** | Nicholas Leacu |
| **1978 - 1981** | Paul Apostol |
| **1981 - 1983** | John Anas |
| **1983 - 1986** | Richard Rafail |
| **1986 - 1989** | Luan Banka |
| **1989 -1994** | Andrew Tanacea |
| **1994 - 1995** | Irene V. Lepi |
| **1995 -1997** | Jonathan Michael |
| **1997 - 1998** | Mary Anastas Tona |
| **1998 -2000** | Julia Black |
| **2000 - 2004** | Philip Christo |
| **2004 -2006** | Julia Black |
| **2006 -2008** | John Lulgjuraj |
| **2008 -2010** | Harry Merty |
| **2010 - 2013** | Ferit Nazarko |
| **2013 -2015** | John Lulgjuraj |
| **2015 - 2017** | Julia Black |
| **2017 -2021** | John Lulgjuraj |
| **2021 - 2022** | Lea Bitta |
| **2022-2025** | Johanna Foundos |

# National President's MESSAGE



Distinguished Guests, Honored Members, and Friends,

Mirserdhet! Welcome to the 77th National Convention of the Albanian American National Organization, hosted this year at the beautiful Westin Hotel in Jersey City, NJ. A special thank you to the dedicated NY chapter for their tireless efforts in organizing this remarkable event.

Since our founding in 1946, the AANO has remained steadfast in its mission to celebrate and support our rich Albanian heritage. We are proud to serve as a unifying force for Albanian Americans across North America, fostering cultural pride, community involvement, mutual support and lifetime friendships. Whether you are one of our nine active chapters or a member-at-large, your involvement helps strengthen our collective identity and ensures that our traditions endure. Especially in today's world, providing a solid foundation for our youth is even more important. A strong identity and feeling of belonging are part of that foundation. The AANO is a part of that effort.

One of our proudest accomplishments is our commitment to education. Each year, through the generosity of our community, we award thousands of dollars in scholarships to Albanian American deserving students. These scholarships empower our youth to reach their academic goals and is a springboard to future success.

Congratulations to this year's Scholarship Winners and our distinguished Honorees. Each one of them exemplifies what is means to use your life to make a difference. Each small step in a positive direction contributes to lifting up our community.

As we gather here today, let us renew our commitment to our heritage, our community, and one another. I look forward to meaningful discussions, inspiring experiences, and the strengthening of bonds that unite us all. Thank you for your continued support and commitment. Enjoy the convention!

*Johanna Foundos*
prezaano@gmail.com

# *In Loving Memory*

## Perry R Pero

July 1, 1939- May 19, 2022



**To a successful**

**77th AANO Annual National Convention**

Jersey City, New Jersey

## The Pero Family

**Diane Pero**
Chicago, Illinois

**Arthur, Lauren, Ava, and Mila Pero**
Oak Park, Illinois

**Alexis Pero and Austin Burroughs, Audrey Burroughs**
Raleigh, North Carolina

# *Albanian of the Year* AWARD



## Avni MUSTAFAJ

Avni Mustafaj is a distinguished leader, advocate, and strategist whose lifelong commitment to the Albanian people—both in the Balkans and throughout the diaspora—has made a lasting impact on diplomacy, education, civic engagement, and humanitarian aid.

Currently serving as a lobbyist for the Kosovo Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora in Washington, D.C., he has worked tirelessly to strengthen Kosovo's presence on Capitol Hill. His efforts include high-level meetings with U.S. State Department officials, members of Congress, and Foreign Affairs Committee staff, all while maintaining active coordination with Albanian-American leaders across the United States.

As Executive Director and later President of the National Albanian American Council (NAAC), he was instrumental in shaping U.S. foreign policy in support of Kosovo and Albanian rights in the region. He played a vital role in advocating for U.S. intervention during the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, met with President Clinton at the White House, and contributed to the drafting of the Ohrid Agreement that secured rights for Albanians in North Macedonia. Under his leadership, NAAC secured over $10 million in U.S. government grants to train hundreds of women leaders in the Balkans—many of whom now serve as senior government officials, diplomats, and prominent activists.

His deep commitment to education began as Deputy Director of RIT-Kosova in Prishtina, where he helped establish a U.S.-affiliated university that continues to empower young leaders in the region. As Executive Director of the Open Society Foundation for Albania, he oversaw more than $12 million in programs—including the foundational Albanian Education Development Program, which built or renovated over 275 schools, serving approximately 70% of Albania's students today.

His leadership during the Kosovo War extended to humanitarian efforts as Vice President of the Kosova Relief Fund. He organized nationwide food drives, distributed aid in refugee camps, and mobilized U.S. media and public support through outreach and advocacy.

He has also served as campaign manager for Vedat Gashi's NYS Assembly campaign, co-chaired Germin, an organization that connects Albanian diaspora professionals with opportunities in the homeland, and helped launch youth engagement programs such as OriginAL and Diaspora Flet—bringing together hundreds of young Albanians from over 27 countries.

From the front lines of political advocacy to the grassroots of community service, Avni Mustafaj has demonstrated an unwavering passion for advancing Albanian causes around the world. His visionary leadership and lifelong dedication embody the very spirit of this award.




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# Community Service AWARD



# Beti BENO

Beti Beno, Esq. was born in Tirana, Albania, and immigrated to the United States in her late teens. Since arriving in the U.S., she has dedicated herself to excelling in the legal profession while remaining deeply committed to supporting and uplifting the Albanian- American community. Her life's work reflects a powerful blend of professional excellence, cultural preservation, and compassionate service.

Ms. Beno has served as President of the Albanian American Women's Organization "Motrat Qiriazi" since 2016. Under her dynamic and visionary leadership, the organization has expanded its reach and impact, strengthening its mission to promote Albanian heritage, support immigrant families, and empower Albanian-American women through education, advocacy, and mentorship. She has spearheaded initiatives such as scholarship programs, professional development workshops, and cultural events that celebrate Albanian identity and foster intergenerational connections. During her tenure, AAWO has been honored with numerous commendations from the New York City Council, the New York State Senate and Assembly, and members of the U.S. Congress.

A practicing attorney for over 22 years, Ms. Beno is the founder of Beti Beno Law, P.C., a respected law firm based in New York specializing in immigration law, real estate, matrimonial matters, and estate planning. Since opening her firm in 2003, she has helped hundreds of immigrants, particularly from the Albanian diaspora, navigate the complexities of the U.S. legal system and achieve their dreams of legal residency and citizenship. Her clients often speak not only of her legal skill, but of the compassion, respect, and personal attention she brings to every case.

In addition to her work with AAWO, Ms. Beno has played an active role in the Albanian-American faith community, serving as a board member of St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church. Her engagement reflects a lifelong dedication to preserving Albanian cultural and religious traditions and strengthening community bonds. Beti Beno is widely regarded as a role model for younger generations of Albanian- Americans. Through her tireless work and generous spirit, she has helped countless individuals and families find stability, pride, and a sense of belonging. For her unwavering commitment to service and her transformative impact on the lives of others,
Beti Beno is a truly deserving recipient of the Community Service Award.

# Best wishes as you celebrate your 77th Convention!

**Congratulations to this year's Scholarship Recipients and our Honorees:**

**Lou Foundos - Avni Mustafaj - Beti Beno**

*Per shume vjet gëzuar!*



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**Investment Counsel**
mfoundos@everettharris.com
(858) 914-4100 San Diego, CA

**The Foundos Family**
Mark, Amy, James and Evan
San Diego, California

# Lifetime Achievement AWARD



## Lou FOUNDOS

*Ilia Fundo*

Lou Foundos has dedicated a lifetime to service, leadership, and the advancement of the Albanian-American community. Born in 1943 in Korçë, Albania as Ilia Fundo, Lou's early life was shaped by global events. While visiting Greece in 1944, the Albanian borders closed, and his family remained in Greece until 1948, when they immigrated to the United States in pursuit of a better future.

A gifted student, Lou graduated from the prestigious Bronx High School of Science in 1961 and went on to earn a degree in Electrical Engineering from City College in 1966. He later completed an MBA at Harvard University, laying the foundation for a successful career in business.

Throughout his life, Lou has remained deeply committed to the Albanian-American community. He became active in the Albanian American National Organization (AANO) in the 1950s and went on to serve at the national level as Treasurer, President, and longtime Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. Lou even met his wife Linda at the 1972 AANO Convention in Chicago, Illinois. He has also been a cornerstone of St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church in New York, serving on its board for over 60 years and holding numerous terms as Parish Council President.

Lou was a founding member of the National Albanian American Council (NAAC) and provided mentorship to the Albanian Professional Entrepreneurs of New York (APEN), helping to guide the next generation of Albanian-American leaders.

His work in Albania has been equally impactful. When Communism collapsed in Albania in 1990, Lou was eager to contribute, despite the initial chaos of the country. By 1993, he invested in a clothing factory and in 1997 a hotel, both of which are in Korçë and remain operational today.

In 2006, Lou helped organize the first AANO convention in Tirana, celebrating the organization's 60th anniversary and creating a meaningful bridge between Albanians in the diaspora and those in the homeland.

Currently, Lou is playing a key role in helping to establish the first American university in Albania. Set to open in Tirana in September 2025, the university will launch with 150 students in STEM programs. Lou is actively leading fundraising efforts to build state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories for the inaugural campus.

Lou Foundos's life stands as a testament to vision, perseverance, and unwavering dedication to community—both in the United States and Albania. We are proud to honor him with this Lifetime Achievement Award.

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# Congratulations!

Lou has dedicated his life and career to excellence, integrity, and innovation. Now, he is being honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award. It is a testament to decades of leadership, passion, and lasting contributions to the Albanian community.

**With love,**
**The Kallinikos Family**

Steve, Rosanne, Amanda,
Andrew, Ashley, and Theodore

# Congratulations

## Beti Beno Esq, President of AAWO

## Motrat Qiriazi

Her dedication and deep commitment to justice and community empowerment inspire us all. Her steady leadership continues to guide and influence our work.

*From,*

*All your sisters in the Florida Chapter!*



# 2025 National OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**
Johanna Foundos
*prezaano@gmail.com*

**VICE PRESIDENT**
Mia Orlow
*morlow1519@gmail.com*

**SECRETARY**
Gabrielle Vollrath
*gabrielle.vollrath@gmail.com*

**TREASURER**
Spartakus Brahollari
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**ASSISTANT TREASURER**
Rich Rafail
*rrafail@yahoo.com*

# Appointed OFFICERS

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*aanoscholarship@gmail.com*

# 2025 Board of GOVERNORS

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**Congratulations to Our Dear Friend**

# LOU FOUNDOS

**on the prestigious**
**Lifetime Achievement Award.**

**We are very proud of you and are truly thankful for all that you have done for our people.**

**Congratulations to this year's other honorees.**

**Congratulations to the Albanian American National Organization on the 77th Convention.**

# GEZUAR!

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# 2025 Scholarship
# WINNERS

**Amy Kollcinaku**
Hometown: Estero, Fl
University of Florida

**David Kadiu**
Hometown: Sterling Heights, MI
University of Michigan

**Briana Lumani**
Hometown: Livonia, MI
University of Michigan Dearborn

**Edona Vuli**
Hometown: Brighton, MI
Michigan State University

**Camilla Nametti**
Hometown: Chicago, IL
DePaul University

**Esion Palluci**
Hometown: Texas
University of Houston

**Aulona Misini**
Hometown: Hartford, CT
University of Connecticut

**Lorena Mreca**
Hometown: Norwalk, CT
Rutgers University

**Rea Hajredini**
Hometown: Troy, MI
University of Michigan

**Irini Kollcinaku**
Hometown: Braintree, MA
Bentley University

**Rachelle Lito**
Hometown: Worcester, MA
Tufts University

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# In Loving Memory of Albert & Joan Foundos



## Congratulations to Uncle Lou on your deserved award!

*With much love,*

Kim Villa,
Dan and Alex Oswald

Matt, Christina, Andrew,
and Nicholas Foundos

James and Daniela Beno

# Scholarship Chairperson's MESSAGE

As Chairman of the Scholarship Fund, I would like to welcome you to the 77th AANO Convention hosted by my own chapter! The AANO is dedicated to empowering the next generation through education. Our scholarship fund plays a vital role in providing financial assistance to talented and deserving students within our community.

Each year, our organization proudly awards scholarships to deserving students who not only excel academically but also embody the values and resilience of the Albanian community. This year, we are proud to announce that we awarded scholarships to 11 applicants, totaling almost $28,000. These recipients were selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants, each demonstrating exceptional academic achievements, leadership skills, and a commitment to community service. Their diverse fields of study range from medicine and engineering, to the arts and humanities, showcasing the incredible potential within our community.

As the Scholarship Chair, I have the privilege of reviewing their stories, both challenges and triumphs. I can tell you with certainty: your support makes a real and measurable difference. By donating to the AANO Scholarship Fund, you are investing in the future leaders of our community. Your generous contributions enable us to continue this important work and support even more students in the coming years.

Every donation, big or small, makes a significant impact. Together, we can help more students achieve their educational goals and build a brighter future for the Albanian American community.

Thank you for your donations and enjoy your evening!

*Christina Foundos*

aanoscholarship@gmail.com




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# AANO National
# QUEENS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2023 | **Allonja Wilson** | Detroit, MI |
| 2019 | **Klea Gjonaj** | Chicago, IL |
| 2017 | **Georgya Borova** | Chicago, IL |
| 2013 | **Anxhela Mile** | New York, NY |
| 2010 | **Blerina (Vila) Lumaj** | Detroit, MI |
| 2007 | **Zamira Aliko** | Detroit, MI |
| 2004 | **Gabriella Aquilino** | New York, NY |
| 2001 | **Alexandra Liolin** | New York, NY |
| 1998 | **Lirika Mestani** | Ontario Canada |
| 1995 | **Alexandra Ahmet** | Ontario Canada |
| 1992 | **Michelle (Pero) Vasil** | Worcester, MA |
| 1989 | **Laura Giantris** | Worcester, MA |
| 1986 | **Alexandra (Bendo) Fiss** | Aston, PA |
| 1982 | **Lisa V. Tasi** | Easton, CT |
| 1980 | **Sandra (Dimitri) Bisceglia** | Worcester, MA |
| 1979 | **Marlene (Koltse) Catanese** | Niles, IL |
| 1977 | **Barbara (Kelapire) Filis** | East Williston, NY |
| 1975 | **Cindy (Nicholas) Marcinkowski** | Mt. Prospect, IL |
| 1973 | **Cynthia (Vangel) Bradbury** | Worcester, MA |
| 1969 | **Cathy (Nicholas) Balinski** | Mt. Prospect, IL |
| 1966 | **Chrys Slider** | Stamford, CT |
| 1963 | **Nancy (Peters) Dhoku** | Burlington, MA |
| 1961 | **Pamela (Stavrou) Dove** | Frederick, MD |
| 1957 | **Barbara (Steffon) Clayton** | Manasquan, NJ |
| 1951 | **Dolores (Vishnja) Obert** | Akron, OH |
| 1949 | **C. Gloria (Lambert) Kesler** | Worcester, MA |

# National Queen's MESSAGE



It's with great excitement and pride that I invite you to the upcoming Albanian American National Organization Convention! This is more than just a gathering; it's a celebration of our culture, our heritage, and the vibrant spirit that defines us as Albanian Americans. Whether you're joining us for the first time or returning to renew old connections, this convention promises to be a memorable experience filled with joy, unity, and learning. Together, we'll share stories, honor our traditions, and continue to build the legacy of the Albanian community in America. I look forward to seeing you all and celebrating our roots with pride and love!

*Allonja Wilson*

# Best Wishes to everyone at the 77th AANO Convention!

*In Loving Memory of our*

*Beloved Husband, Father, & Grandfather*

LOUIS R. PERO

(1945-2020)



Lou was a lifetime member of the AANO, holding many positions in the local Worcester chapter and at the national level, serving as the National President from 1974 to 1977, and awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009. He was truly dedicated to the organization to foster and preserve Albanian friendships, culture, and scholarship.

**Barbara and Steven Pero**
**Michelle, Charlie and Sophia Vasil**
**John, Stephanie, David and Matthew Fournier**
Worcester, Massachusetts

# AANO History

The Albanian American National Organization (A.A.N.O.) was founded to unite and empower Albanian-Americans through community, culture, and education. Its origins trace back to December 15, 1946, when 27 Albanian-American youth from nine cities met at St. Nicholas Church Hall in New York City. Their goal was to foster unity, preserve Albanian heritage, and promote cultural, social, and educational advancement.

In 1947, the first official convention was held in Philadelphia, where the organization (then called the American-Albanian Youth Organization) adopted its constitution. Over time, annual conventions expanded to cities across the U.S. and grew in attendance and importance.

A major milestone was the establishment of the A.A.N.O. Scholarship Fund in 1950, under the guiding principle:

"*Sa më tepër Shqiptar të edukuar jemi, sa më tepër Shqiptar jemi ne.*"

*(The more educated Albanians we are, the more Albanian we become.)*

Scholarships helped Albanian youth advance into professional fields like medicine, law, science, and government. The first awards were given in 1955.

The A.A.N.O. has thrived due to the tireless efforts of volunteers, from national leaders to local chapter members. Events such as conventions, tournaments, queen pageants, cultural weekends, and scholarship initiatives have kept the organization vibrant.

The Annual Convention is the organization's centerpiece—an event that brings together members from across North America. Highlights include the 50th Convention in Cape Cod and the 60th Convention in Tirana, Albania, attended by over 400 people tracing their roots and celebrating their heritage.

The A.A.N.O., chartered in New York in 1951, has had chapters in cities such as Albany, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Toronto, and Worcester. Former chapters included Jamestown, Southbridge, Washington, and others.

In the 1990s, with the opening of Albania's borders, new immigrants joined the A.A.N.O., received support, and contributed to its mission. The organization remains committed to welcoming new generations and sustaining Albanian identity in North America.

The A.A.N.O. stands as a symbol of unity, heritage, and progress for Albanian-Americans. As it looks toward its 100th anniversary, it remains dedicated to its founding values of education, cultural preservation, and community service.

# Congratulations to Lou Foundos

## For the Lifetime Achievement Award!

This is a beautiful reflection of his dedication, passion, and lifelong contribution. His hard work, leadership, and spirit have touched generations.

# Congratulations to Avni Mustafaj

## For the Albanian of the Year Award!

This is a tribute to his integrity, tireless effort and the impact he has made on so many lives. Avni , you carry our heritage with pride and grace. You inspire us all.

**Warmest congratulations to Lou and Avni for their well-deserved awards.**

Dr. Anna Kohen

AAWO Florida Chapter President

# OASIS HUMIDIFICATION

Gezuar to the New York Chapter
on the 77th annual convention!!



Hats off to the honorees
Lou Foundos
Beti Beno
Avni Mustafaj
on the well-deserved recognition!

*Donna Fundo-Oswald*
*Jim Oswald*

*Christine Fundo-Beno*
*Tomi Beno*

Since 1946, the Albanian-American National Organization (AANO) has been perpetuating the Albanian ethnic identity in the United States and Canada. With no religious or political affiliation, the objectives of the AANO are to maintain Albanian traditions and language and to engage in cultural, educational, and social activities.

## OUR *Mission*

- Perpetuate our ethnic identity in America and Canada.
- Provide scholarships to students of Albanian descent.
- Educate people about Albanian history and literature.
- Maintain Albanian traditions.
- Preserve the Albanian language.
- Establish fellowship.
- Develop friendships.
- Instill pride in our roots.

## TRUMBETA *Shqiptare*

The Trumbeta Shqiptare is the official AANO publication mailed to all AANO members. Through it, members exchange news and events from chapter to chapter. The Trumbeta also includes ethnic songs, recipes, historical and educational articles regarding language and literature and much more.

## SCHOLARSHIP *Fund*

Our youth is our future. The education of our youth is of the greatest importance. For this purpose, the AANO Scholarship Fund was founded in 1950 to support the educational pursuits of students of Albanian descent.

# PLATINUM SPONSOR

## Best Wishes and Congratulations on a Successful 77th Convention!

## Per Shume Vjet Gezuar!



from a Friend of the AANO

# GOLD SPONSOR

## Congratulations to the Honorees

**Lou Foundos**
Lifetime Achievement Award

**Beti Beno**
Community Service Award

**Avni Mustafaj**
Albanian of the Year



**THE FOUNDOS FAMILY**

**Phil, Jana, Christina, Andrew, Nicholas**

# GOLD SPONSOR




## *Congratulations*

*to the*

*Albanian American National Organization*

*On the occasion of your 77th Annual Convention, we commend your decades of dedication to preserving Albanian heritage and empowering future generations through education. Your ongoing support for Albanian-American students through scholarships is a lasting contribution to our community. Thank You for your unwavering commitment and inspiring leadership!*

**— HARRY BAJRAKTARI—**
**AND FAMILY**

# GOLD SPONSOR

We salute the AANO for its
perseverance and dedicated effort to serve
the Albanian American community!!
Our hopes are that the AANO continues to ensure
that our youth, our future, holds on to our heritage,
our culture and takes pride in it.



**Congratulations to this year's Scholarship Recipients and My Fellow Honorees:**
**Avni Mustafaj & Beti Beno**

The AANO has provided our family with many years of good fellowship, wonderful memories and lifelong friends.

*Per Shume Vjet, Gezuar!*

**Lou & Linda Foundos**

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## In Memory of Lumteri Bardha

*For over fifty years, Lumteri has been a great support to me in creating and sustaining our happy family. She is an exemplary woman who has backed me unceasingly both in business and in my work for Albania and Kosova. In Lumteri, I have found serenity, the positivity to see the best in everything that has happened to me, and the inspiration to move on. Only an extraordinary woman like Lumteri could have managed to live for so long with a husband as difficult (sometimes) as myself.*

**Ekrem Bardha**



# BRONZE SPONSOR

GLOBAL ALBANIANS foundation

Korçarët
Ndihmojmë Korçarët

Global Albanians Foundation
Korçarët Ndihmojmë Korçarët
The First Community Foundation in Albania

germin

Germin
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Albanian Diaspora Youth Finding Their Roots

ORIGINAL
FIND YOUR ROOTS

# Congratulations

**to the Albanian American National Organization on 77 years of preserving Albanian heritage and empowering future generations through education and scholarships.**




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This "family first" guy has
always lived by the rule,
"If you think it's important, just do it."

With deep pride, we celebrate the pillar of our family, Lou Foundos, on this well-deserved honor. He leads by example, humbly and diligently helping others with a wise, loving, and generous heart.



All our love,
Steven, Lauren, Heidi & Zoe

***Congratulations to the Fabulous***
***Albanian American***
***National Organization***
***& The Amazing New York Chapter***
***on the 77th Annual Convention***
***in Jersey City, New Jersey***
***August 8, 9 & 10, 2025***

With much love from your Brothers and Sisters
in The Albany Chapter as we celebrate
our 58th year of membership
in the AANO, Inc. having been inducted at
the 1967 Washington, D.C. convention.

# RROFTE AANO!

**The Albany Chapter**
Albanian American National Organization

# DID YOU *know?*

**Albania sent a female delegate to the League of Nations in the 1920s.** King Zog's sister, Princess Senije, represented the country in Geneva decades before many western nations included women in diplomacy.

**Albanian is one of the oldest languages in Europe.** It's part of its own unique branch of the Indo-European family, with no close relatives.

**There are over more bunkers than people per capita in Albania.** Over 170,000 were built during Enver Hoxha's regime.

**There are over 2,000 species of plants in Albania.** Many of which are found nowhere else in Europe.

**Albanian was used as a "code language" by the US Army during WW II.** Its obscurity made it valuable for encoding tactical information.

**The southern tip of Albania is closer to Africa than to Germany.** Ksamil is just 70km from the northern coast of Corfu, and not far beyond that: Libya and Tunisia. Berlin is nearly triple the distance.

**Albania is one of the only countries in Europe where you can ski and swim in on the same day.** You can hit the Dardha ski slopes in the morning, then drive to Durres or Vlora and be at the beach in the afternoon.

**Korçë has the first Albanian- language school in the entire country.** Opened in 1887, the *Mësonjëtorja e Parë Shqipe* was a revolutionary act during Ottoman rule when Albanian education was actively suppressed.

# National CONVENTIONS

**1947** Philadelphia, PA
**1948** New York, NY
**1949** Worcester, MA
**1950** Bridgeport, CT
**1951** Jamestown, NY
**1952** Philadelphia, PA
**1953** New York, NY
**1954** Boston, MA
**1955** Bridgeport, CT
**1956** Hartford, CT
**1957** Rochester, NY
**1958** Philadelphia, PA
**1959** New York, NY
**1960** Boston, MA
**1961** Cleveland, OH
**1962** Rochester, NY
**1963** Philadelphia, PA
**1964** Chicago, IL
**1965** Boston, MA
**1966** New York, NY
**1967** Washington D.C.
**1968** Albany, NY
**1969** New Haven, CT
**1970** Hyannis, MA
**1971** Boston, MA
**1972** Chicago, IL
**1973** New York, NY
**1974** Toronto, Ontario
**1975** Albany, NY
**1976** Philadelphia, PA
**1977** Sturbridge, MA
**1978** Boston, MA
**1979** Chicago, IL
**1980** Detroit, MI
**1981** White Plains, NY
**1982** Worcester, MA
**1983** Toronto, Ontario
**1984** Albany, NY
**1985** Cherry Hill, NJ
**1986** Boston, MA
**1987** Toronto, Ontario
**1988** Rye Brook, NY
**1989** Clearwater, FL
**1990** Cape Cod, MA
**1991** Stamford, CT
**1992** Detroit, MI
**1993** Washington D.C.
**1994** Chicago, IL
**1995** Cambridge, MA
**1996** Cape Cod, MA
**1997** Tamiment, PA
**1998** Chicago, IL
**1999** Rye Brook, NY
**2000** Dearborn, MI
**2001** White Plains, NY
**2002** Boston, MA
**2003** White Plains, NY
**2004** Clearwater, FL
**2005** Schaumburg, IL
**2006** Tirana, Albania
**2007** Las Vegas, NV
**2008** Philadelphia, PA
**2009** Worcester, MA
**2010** Washington D.C.
**2011** Detroit, MI
**2012** Oak Brook Hills, IL
**2013** New York, NY
**2014** Naples, FL
**2015** Boston, MA
**2016** Tirana, Albania
**2017** Dallas, TX
**2018** Washington, D.C.
**2019** Rosemont, IL
**2020** None (COVID-19)
**2021** None (COVID-19)
**2022** Philadelphia, PA
**2023** Detroit, MI
**2024** Naples, FL
**2025** Jersey City, NJ

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GLOBAL 100

CLASS OF 2025

# THE POWER LIST

SPIRO HAXHI

## THE EVOLUTION OF QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE: SPIRO HAXHI'S PIONEERING VISION

For over five decades, Spiro V. Haxhi has devoted his professional life to solving one of the most complex challenges in engineering, economics, and governance: the quantification of quality and its application in defining general welfare. From his early beginnings as a mechanical engineer in Eastern Europe to becoming a thought leader in the United States, his journey reflects resilience, intellectual rigor, and a passion for bridging theory with practice.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1967, Spiro's early career in inspection and management gave him hands-on exposure to quality assessment in manufacturing. However, his lasting contribution lies in his decades-long pursuit to mathematically define quality, a concept central to both industry and society.

His groundbreaking theories are presented in Quality Quantification Theory (2010) and Quality and General Welfare Codification (2014). These works challenge traditional economic models by integrating technical, economic, and social dimensions to measure well-being and success. His framework offers a structured, multidimensional approach to assessing general welfare beyond GDP or profit.

In his latest book, CHANGE GOVERNING SYSTEM, Spiro unveils a formula for the general welfare law, laying a logical foundation for governance. His concept of Logic Tax Law further proposes a taxation system that ties economic incentives to measurable societal benefits, promoting transparent and adaptive policymaking.

As Founder of Save Humanity Solution Inc. in Chicago, Spiro continues to question conventional academic and legal frameworks. His mission extends beyond theory, offering a practical roadmap for a new economic system, governance structure, and global policy model.





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With unmatched expertise and visionary thinking, Spiro V. Haxhi stands at the forefront of redefining quality and general welfare, delivering innovative, data-driven solutions that aim to transform how societies define and achieve progress.

# CONGRATULATIONS

to the AANO on its 77th Anniversary!

*In loving memory of my parents*

## Steve and Eleni S. Pero



Shirley A. Pero

Worcester, MA

# Congratulations

## to the AANO & the New York Chapter on the 77th National Convention in Jersey City, New Jersey on August 8, 9 and 10, 2025

*In Loving Memory of and to Honor Our Family*

**Louis (Xheka) Apostol 1903 - 1992**
Born in Vithkuq, Korce
Lifetime AANO Member

**Elnor (Engwer) Apostol 1919 - 1994**
Main founder of the AANO Albany Chapter
Lifetime AANO Member

**Dhimitra (Xheka) Kita 1928 - 2016**

**Janet (Apostol) Baloglou 1939 - 2020**

**Alexandra (Apostol) Lemoine 1944 - 2022**

**Louise (Apostol) Mabin 1947 - 2022**

**Paul Apostol 1946 - present**
Lifetime AANO Member
Past National President & Treasurer

# 2001 Convention









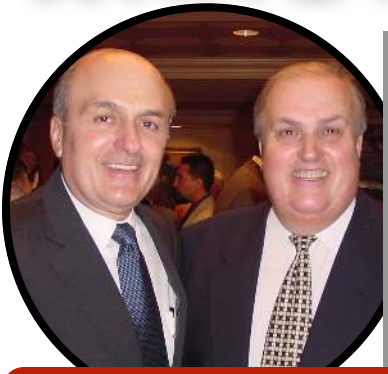








# WHITE PLAINS, *NY*















**Congratulations to the New York Chapter for hosting the AANO 77th Convention!**

Best wishes for a successful event!

Per Shume Vjet!



Spiro and Eleni Bitta attended these wonderful conventions.

We thank you for the many memories.

*Bitta & Nicholas Families*

Albanian American National Organization

# Thank you to the **AANO New York Chapter** for hosting the AANO 77th Annual Convention.

## Greetings from the 2025 **AANO Chicago Chapter Members**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Feti Boytoya | Diane Pero | Paskal Gjikdhima |
| Lea Bitta | Olga Titos | Lirika Gjikdhima |
| Arjana Jaupi | Merita Gjata | Nikoleta Poni |
| Jani Gjoni | Thea Pommier | Jimmy Poni |
| Edlira Gjoni | Violeta Sterjo | David Sosnowski |
| Klea Gjoni | Sandra Wasinski | Etleva Teli |
| John Iskali | Albana Romacka | Llambi Teli |
| Maria Iskali | Camila Nameti | Erla Teli |
| Alex Iskali | Ledia Silvestri | George Teli |




Chicago



# The Regency Korçë Hotel
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We are inspired by your dedication, enthusiasm, and spirit with which you embrace your heritage.

**Gëzuar as you celebrate your 77th Annual AANO Convention!**

Congratulations to all this year's honorees and scholarship recipients! You do yourself and us proud!

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*May God continue to bless the good works of the AANO for many years, especially in your efforts assisting students to further their education and embracing the Albanian community.*

Urime to the honorees, the scholarship recipients, and the New York Chapter for hosting a beautiful event.




**St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church**
Fr. Nicholas Skhulukhia, Pastor

181-14 Midland Parkway
Jamaica Estates, NY 11432







Gezuar & Faleminderit
to the

# New York Chapter

**For hosting our 77th Annual AANO Convention**

We look forward to seeing our community come together to celebrate shared traditions.

Our congratulations to the 2025 Honorees and Scholarship Recipients.

***The Naples Chapter***
***of the***
***Albanian American National Organization***

# VESHJE *popullore*



## Plis/ Qeleshe

***A white felt cap worn by men, most common in northern Albania and Kosovo***

-Symbol of Albanian identity and resistance, dating back to Illyrian times

-Worn by patriots and freedom fighters

## Xhamadan

***A short, embroidered vest worn over a shirt.***

- Common for men throughout Albania, but especially in the north.

-Embroidery denoted social status, wealth, or tribal identity.

## Fustanella

***A pleated white skirt traditionally worn by men in southern Albania***

-Number of pleats could represent historical or regional significance.

-A national symbol of heroism, associated with Skanderbeg.

## Brezi

***A wide fabric sash worn around the waist by men and women.***

- Practical for holding small tools, money, or weapons.

-Symbolically tied to the concept of honor and responsibility.

## Tirqe

***Tight-fitting wool trousers, usually gray or white, worn by men***

- Especially common in Kosovo and northern Albania
- Some patterns acted like “tribal barcodes,” identifying regional origin.

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**Proud to support our community with dependable financial expertise.**

# Best Wishes



to the New York Chapter for a Successful

77th AANO Convention

*Olga and Victoria Titos*

# *In Loving Memory of Nicholas Adams*



**Loving husband father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and Korean War Veteran.**

*with love,*

**Wife**
Marion Adams

**Children**
Matthew & Susan Adams
Christopher & Debbie Adams
Johanna & Phillip Foundos

**Grandchildren**
Matthew & Brooke Adams
Brooke Adams
Nicholas Adams
Christian Adams
Andrew Foundos
Nicholas Foundos

**Great Grand Daughter**
Sophia Adams

# Cano Immigration PLLC









# Congratulations to the AANO on its 77th Convention!

## *In Loving Memory of Our Parents and Grandparents*

Thomas and Alexandria Laska
Wife, Mother and Sister-In-Law
Christine Laska



**Carol, Robert, Philip, Kevin and Kerry Laska**
Worcester, MA & Billerica, MA

# CONGRATULATIONS ON CELEBRATING THE 77TH ANNUAL AANO CONVENTION!



Urime to the Scholarship Recipients
and this year's Honorees:

Lou Foundos
Avni Mustafaj
Beti Beno

Best Wishes,

**The Philadelphia Chapter**

Albanian American National Organization

# BESNIKE ZELKA

## A Lifetime Devoted to Authentic Albanian Folk Costumes

Since the early 1980s, Besnike has passionately traveled across Albania, seeking out hidden treasures of cultural heritage. Her relentless pursuit has led to the creation of a stunning collection of authentic folk costumes and relics that truly celebrate the spirit of Albanian tradition. Today, her spectacular collection not only captivates the hearts of Albanians at home but also dazzles those living abroad, igniting a deep pride in their rich heritage.

Best wishes as you celebrate the 77th Annual Albanian American National Organization convention. Congratulations to the Scholarship Recipients and Honorees.



# CONGRATULATIONS ON CELEBRATING THE 77TH ANNUAL AANO CONVENTION!



Urime to the Scholarship Recipients
and this year's Honorees:

Lou Foundos ✦ Avni Mustafaj ✦ Beti Beno

**The Washington D.C. Chapter**

Albanian American National Organization


In these difficult times for America & the world, we would like to extend a heartfelt
Thank You to Our Troops
that are serving throughout the world.
Thank You also to Our First Responders.
We certainly do appreciate your service.
We pray for peace.
GOD BLESS AMERICA!

**The AANO Detroit Chapter sends Best Wishes and Congratulations to the New York Chapter for hosting this event where most of our ancestors first set foot on American soil. They came to help their families in Albania and future families here. They accomplished both missions.**

Congratulations to this year's Scholarship Winners and Award Recipients, a few of which are near and dear to the hearts of Detroiters!





**WE LOVE NEW YORK!**

**RROFTE SHQIPERIA!**

# The Detroit Chapter

Albanian American National Organization

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# 2001 Convention













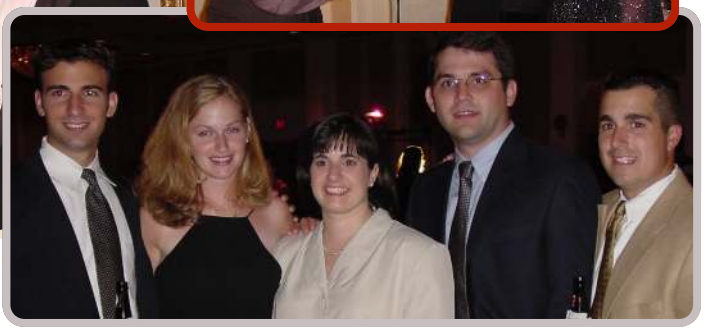

# WHITE PLAINS, *NY*



















The New York Chapter is excited and honored to host the **77th AANO Annual Convention**!
It's quite an accomplishment to have endured for so many decades. It has only become even more essential that we remain a tight, strong, and proud community in this ever-changing world, especially for our youth.

*We hope you all enjoy great fellowship during the weekend's events.*

**Congratulations to this year's Scholarship Recipients and our Honorees:**
**Lou Foundos - Avni Mustafaj - Beti Beno**

Our enthusiasm and Albanian/American spirit remain strong. We have much for which to be proud.

# The New York Chapter
Albanian American National Organization

# CONVENTION *team*

Faleminderit shume to our convention team. We sincerely appreciate all the time and effort of the following individuals. Thanks to them we enjoyed a successful, fun-filled, beautiful weekend of friendship. They did it all for the love of our people!

Christine Fundo-Beno
George Beno
Tomi Beno
Fadil Berisha
Christina Foundos
Donna Fundo-Oswald
Jana Foundos
Linda Foundos
Lou -Ilia Fundo
Phil Foundos
Avni Mustafaj
Soina Preka
Iliriana Sela
Ervin Toro



# National Anthems



## THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Oh, say can you see
By the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
At the twilight's last gleaming.
Whose broad stripes and bright stars
Through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched
Were so gallantly streaming.
And the rockets' red glare
The bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star spangle
banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free, and the
home of the brave.



## HYMNI I FLAMURIT

Rreth flamurit të përbashkuar
Me një dëshir' e një qëllim,
Të gjith' atij duke iu betuar
Të lidhim besën për shpëtim.
Prej lufte veç ai largohet
Që është lindur tradhëtar,
Kush është burrë nuk frikësohet,
Po vdes, po vdes si një dëshmor!
Prej lufte veç ai largohet
Që është lindur tradhëtar,
Kush është burrë nuk frikësohet,
Po vdes, po vdes si një dëshmor!



## O Canada

O Canada!
Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide,
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

# PLATINUM SPONSOR



## SAL RUSI AND FAMILY

Urime to the AANO on its 77th convention!
It is admirable how keep the
Albanian spirit alive and bring together
Albanians from far and near.
May you continue your commitment to preserve
our pride in our roots and the education of our youth.

Congratulations to
this year's
Scholarship Winners
and the Honorees.

# DIAMOND SPONSOR



## KOSLOSKI FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

**And their trustees Fotini Allteni,**
**Kristi Allteni and Britney Allteni**

Continuing the legacy of the Kosloski Family Foundations is not just an honor; it's a profound commitment for Me, Britney and Kristi.
We are determined to carry forward this vital mission.