



TRUE^{TO HER} ROOTS

A rising star in the Fox News firmament, Rosanna Scotto maintains strong ties to her Italian American family, heritage and community.

by Anthony Sciaratta

There is more to **Rosanna Scotto** than meets the eye. Not only has the host of “Good Day New York” been a lead news anchor at Fox since 1990, but she is also a pillar of the state’s Italian American community. Born in Brooklyn, Scotto is a third-generation American, with roots to Calabria on her mother’s side and to the island of Ischia on her father’s.

Raised in Brooklyn’s Dyker Heights Italian enclave by parents Anthony and Marion (Anastasio), Scotto was surrounded by the culture of her forebears from birth. At family dinners with siblings Elaina, Anthony Jr. and John every Sunday, the sauce was never store-bought and recipes were well-kept family secrets. One of the many qualities her family instilled in her is the drive to succeed, and the message was delivered with an Italian twist.

“My family always celebrated Italian Americans who made it in this country,” she recalls. “Anyone who was successful and of Italian descent served as a role model for us.”

Scotto began her journalism career working for Ted Turner at TBS in Atlanta. In 1982, she returned to New York, initially working as a production assistant for Regis Philbin on “Live

with Regis and Kathy Lee.” Philbin allowed her to be on camera once a week, which led her to sign on with ABC’s “Eyewitness News” full-time, where she worked until 1985.

“I struggled to look for work after ‘Eyewitness News.’ On St. Patrick’s Day in 1986, I received a phone call to fill in at Fox 5 and the rest is history,” Scotto says. “I’ve been with Fox for over 35 years.”

Since working with Fox, Scotto has won four Emmys for anchoring “Fox 5 News at 10” and “Good Day New York.” In 1995, she earned top honors among New York news anchors from the Associated Press as well three other first-place nods.

Now in the prime of her career, Scotto cherishes the lessons her family taught her and gives back to the Italian American community in any way

she can. She frequently uses her platform at Fox to spotlight and defend Italian culture in America.

“I feel that Italian Americans are coming together now more than ever,” Scotto says, “especially in light of the controversy around Columbus Day. On ‘Good Day New York,’ we’ve covered many stories on Columbus Day and why it should stay.”

Scotto works alongside Lew Leone, the general manager of Fox 5, to assemble and air these stories. Leone is also a proud Italian American.

“I have a big advocate with Leone,” Scotto says. “He gives me carte blanche to cover hardworking Italian Americans.”

Many of Scotto’s segments on “Good Day New York” feature small businesses with owners of Italian descent.

“It’s not easy to keep your business afloat in New York,” Scotto says. “I always make it a point to highlight local businesspeople. It doesn’t matter whether they are the neighborhood pizzeria, restaurant or legal practice.”

The Scotto family knows the struggle of sustaining a business in New York. Her mother mortgaged their home to open Fresco by Scotto, an Italian restaurant with a menu inspired



La famiglia Scottto



Young Rosanna



Rosanna (center) on the set of "Good Day New York"

Courtesy of Fox 5 New York

by family recipes. Thirty years later, their restaurant is thriving in the heart of Manhattan.

"My mom wanted to open a restaurant to lure my brothers, who were in the restaurant business, back home from California," Scottto explains. "Looking back, I think about how brave my parents were."

The clientele at Fresco by Scottto includes a wide range of notables, from presidents to movie stars. "Bill Clinton, Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Jennifer Aniston, Sylvester Stallone and Derek Jeter have all dined at Fresco," Scottto enumerates.

The family has been hosting a Schmoozing with the Scottos fundraiser under the auspices of the New York City Wine & Food Festival for the past couple of years. Proceeds benefit God's Love We Deliver, which provides nutritious, medically tailored meals to people who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves.

When asked about plans for the future of the restaurant, Scottto was open to any possibility. "We're always open to opening a second restaurant," she says. "It doesn't matter if it's in New York City, down South, or in a completely different location. Now we're getting ready for the next generation of the Scottto family to take over the business."

Scottto's daughter, Jenna Ruggiero,

will be the new face of Fresco by Scottto, as Rosanna achieves another milestone in her career as a broadcast journalist. In the course of the year, Scottto will do double duty as a special correspondent for Fox News and Fox Nation.

"I will be covering national stories for Fox News. It will be more along the lines of long-format interview style," Scottto says. "It will focus on current events, not politics."

Despite her extremely busy schedule, Scottto always makes time to explore her roots in Italy.

In 2019, 14 members of the Scottto family traveled to the Boot in pursuit of their roots. A cousin managed to trace them to a small town in Ischia, where they visited what they believe to be the home in which her paternal grandfather was raised.

"I always keep my finger on the pulse of Brooklyn," Scottto says, "and my Italian roots." ▲

Anthony Sciaratta is a writer, filmmaker and entrepreneur. His debut novel, "Finding Forever: A 1970s Love Story," was originally self-published before achieving a major-market presence through Post Hill Press. He is the president of Sciaratta Public Relations, a marketing company specializing in promoting Italian American-owned businesses. (sciarrattapr.com)



Rosanna, Marion, Elaina and Jenna at Fresco by Scottto (above); a dish from the restaurant (below)



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