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True to her roots
**ROSANNA
SCOTTO**

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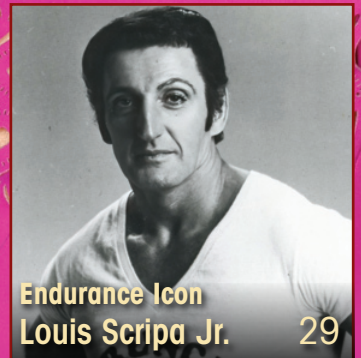
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True to her ROOTS

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-owned WNYW-Channel 5 since 1990, she’s 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 Kathie Lee.” Philbin allowed her to be on camera once a week, which led her to sign on with WABC-TV’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 as 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 business-people. 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 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,” Scotto explains. “Looking back, I think about how brave my parents were.”

The clientele at Fresco by Scotto 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,” Scotto enumerates.

The momentum the restaurant gained came to a screeching halt when the pandemic struck and the Scotto family was forced to close the business in response to the health crisis.

“We weren’t sure if they were ever going to reopen,” Scotto says. “Instagram was our way of comforting and connecting with people during the pandemic.”

The Scotto Sisters Instagram page grew a dedicated following during the lockdown, and when Fresco by Scotto reopened, those same followers showed their support by becoming patrons of the restaurant.

“It’s amazing to see that even four years after the start of the pandemic, our followers are still eager to hear from us,” Scotto says.

Their popular food-centered social



▲ ROSANNA SCOTTO

A rising star in the Fox News firmament, she maintains close ties to her Italian-American family and community.

media campaign caught the eye of the New York City Wine & Food Festival, which has teamed up with the family to host a Schmoozing with The Scotto Sisters fundraiser for the last 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.

“This was a fun way of giving back to the community,” Scotto says. “It’s become a tradition now.”

Fresco by Scotto recently hosted a 30th anniversary celebration that was packed with many prominent New Yorkers, including James Dolan, Katie Couric, Tony Danza, Al Roker and Andrew Cuomo.

“Thirty years in the restaurant business is quite a feat in any city, especially New York City,” Scotto says.

When asked about plans for the future of the restaurant, Scotto 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 Scotto family to take over the business.”

Scotto’s daughter, Jenna Ruggiero, will be the new face of Fresco by Scotto, as her mother achieves another milestone in her career as a broadcast journalist. In the course of this year, Scotto 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,” Scotto says. “It will focus on current events, not politics.”

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

In 2019, 14 members of the Scotto 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 Scotto’s paternal grandfather was raised.

“I always keep my finger on the pulse of Brooklyn,” Scotto says, “and my Italian roots.”