



## **The National Organization of Italian American Women Honors Three Wise Women**



National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW) will honor three of the New York area's influential and prominent women. - Paola Prestini, Co-founder and Artistic Director, National Sawdust. - Elizabeth Defeis, Law professor and lawyer, Expertise in human rights. = Teresa Ghilarducci, Professor, labor economics; Nationally-recognized expert in retirement security.

New York, NY — The Greater New York Region of the National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW) will honor three of the New York area's influential and prominent women at its ninth annual Epiphany Celebration on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at Columbus Citizens Foundation Townhouse, 8 East 69th Street, New York, NY 10021

Wise Women Awards will be presented to Elizabeth F. Defeis, Distinguished Scholar and Dean Emeritus, Seton Hall University School of Law; Teresa Ghilarducci, Ph.D., Bernard L. and Irene Schwartz Professor of Economics, The New School for Social Research and Paola Prestini, Composer, Artistic Director and Co-founder, National Sawdust.

**Elizabeth Defeis's** career as a lawyer, scholar and dean have sent her around the world in

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countries ranging from Azerbaijan, Russia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, Guinea Bissau, Nepal, Italy, Egypt and Germany. Her expertise on human rights, rule of law, democracy and constitution building has been requested by governments and intergovernmental institutions. She is currently Advisor to The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. Professor Defeis served as Dean of the Seton Hall Law School from 1983 to 1988, after joining the faculty in 1971. Prior appointments include her selection for the Honors Program with the United States Department of Justice and an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York.

**Teresa Ghilarducci** is a labor economist and nationally-recognized expert in retirement security. She holds the Bernard L. and Irene Schwartz Chair in economic policy analysis at the New School in New York and serves as Director of the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis (SCEPA) and The New School's Retirement Equity Lab (ReLab). Professor Ghilarducci is a pension reform advocate who calls for the creation of Guaranteed Retirement Accounts (GRAs), a reform proposal noted as one of the defining ideas of 2008 by The New York Times. She has authored works published by Princeton University Press, MIT University Press and has a forthcoming book by Columbia University Press.

**Paola Prestini** has been named one of Musical America's "Top 30 Musical Innovators 2016" and one of the "Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music" (The Washington Post). Prestini's music has been commissioned by and been performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, BAM, and the Barbican Centre, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, The New York Philharmonic, among others. She is the co-founder and Artistic Director of National Sawdust, a nonprofit Brooklyn-based space for arts incubation and performance, and the "visionary-in-chief" (Time Out New York) of VisionIntoArt, the multimedia production company she co-founded in 1999, now merged with National Sawdust. Epiphany, a large scale immersive theater, music and visual installation, composed by Paola Prestini, Netsayi, and Sarah Kirkland Snider will be performed in London, England this Spring. Art and Culture Today describes this piece as "exuberant...an extreme expression of female agency."

President of Greater New York Region of NOIAW MaryRose Barranco Morris, Ed.D., noted "The Greater New York Region of the National Organization of Italian American Women is proud to honor these Three Wise Women of distinction and prominence in their respective fields. Their success is an inspiration to all Italian American women and they serve as role models to our young women."

Tickets for the Epiphany Celebration start at \$130 and are available at [noiaw.org](http://noiaw.org), or by calling 212-642-2003. For sponsorship information, email [noiaw@noiaw.org](mailto:noiaw@noiaw.org) or call 212-642-2003. Proceeds from the Epiphany Celebration help to support NOIAW programs such as the Scholarship Program which provides financial assistance to students to help them realize their dreams; the Cultural Exchange Program which sends young Italian American women on culturally enriching experiences to Italy; and the Mentor Program which pairs young Italian American women with established professionals.

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[The National Organization of Italian American Women \(NOIAW\)](#) [2] is the only national organization for women of Italian ancestry. The mission of NOIAW is to unite and connect women through Italian culture and heritage; to celebrate the achievements of women of Italian ancestry; to inspire and enrich members with shared interests in cultural programs; and to empower and advance the educational and professional aspirations of current and future generations.

For more information about NOIAW, its members and programs, or to become a member, visit [www.noiaw.org](http://www.noiaw.org), call (212) 642-2003, or follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The National Organization of Italian American Women, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by law.



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