



**For Immediate Release**

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## **WTTW11 and NBC5 Form an Unprecedented Partnership**

**The two stations will present and broadcast  
*And They Came to Chicago: The Italian American Legacy*,  
a new documentary tracing the history of Italians in Chicago from 1850 to the present  
Well-known Chicago actor Joe Mantegna to narrate**

Chicago – May 22, 2007 – In an effort to reach an expanded and more diverse audience, WTTW11 and NBC5 Chicago have formed a partnership to present a new documentary, ***And They Came to Chicago: The Italian American Legacy***, a program that will paint an unforgettable portrait of the Italian immigrant experience in Chicago. The joint announcement was made today by NBC5 President and General Manager Larry Wert and WTTW11 President and CEO Dan Schmidt.

NBC5 will premiere the program on **Sunday, May 27 at 11:05 p.m.**, with a repeat on **Monday, May 28 (Memorial Day) at 12:00 noon**. After these two airings on NBC5, ***And They Came to Chicago: The Italian American Legacy*** will be seen on WTTW11 in an expanded version airing on **Tuesday, June 5 at 7:30 p.m.** with possible additional telecasts later in the schedule. In addition, WTTW11 will offer an exclusive DVD version of the program that evening. The two stations will collaborate on promotional and outreach activities and special events, and the program will have an on-line component -- streaming video segments, historical and additional information will reside on both [nbc5.com](http://nbc5.com) and [wttw.com](http://wttw.com).

"We are excited about the prospect of working with NBC5 to share this significant program with the widest possible audience," said Schmidt. "WTTW has always made it part of our mission to celebrate the rich cultural life of our communities and embrace diverse perspectives, and we are pleased that this partnership will help us fulfill that promise," he added.

"This program will highlight the positive contribution of Chicago's Italians to an extent that has never been seen before," said Larry Wert, President and General Manager of NBC5. "NBC5 is proud to partner with WTTW11 to bring the rich and vibrant history of Italians in Chicago to a broad audience both on-air and on-line."

The documentary combines archival footage, photographs and oral history records, interviews with noted historians, community activists, civic leaders, residents of Chicagoland's Italian colonies, and present-day footage of their cultural practices and customs to celebrate the proud heritage of this very important segment of our population. It also focuses on some of its most influential historical figures, and highlights many of the social, political and economic issues vital to their modern-day descendants. Participants in the documentary include actors Dennis Farina; Renato Turano, Senator to the Republic of Italy; author and historian Dominic Candeloro; Players Workshop founder Josephine Raciti Forsberg; Dominic Pacgya, Acting Dean of the Liberal Arts and Sciences at Columbia College; Father Gino Dalpiaz C.S.; author and cultural commentator Gloria Nardini; author Fred Gardaphé, Director of the Italian American Studies Program at the State University of New York, Stony Brook; [Rosemarie Andolino, Executive Director, O'Hare Modernization](#)

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[Program](#); *Fra Noi* editor Paul Basile; Kathy Catrambone, co-author of *Taylor Street: Chicago's Little Italy*; and many more.

Local award-winning writer, producer and director **Gia Marie Amella** is Executive Producer of ***And They Came to Chicago: The Italian American Legacy***. "My Italian heritage has always been an important part of my identity and plays a vital role in my personal and professional life," she said. "It is a labor of love to pay tribute to this community, and this unique partnership will help to bring our rich and complex story to a new generation of Italians in our city and beyond," she added.

A former Fulbright Fellow in Italy, her work includes *The German Americans*, a one-hour episode of WLIIW/21-Long Island's popular *American Heritage* series seen on PBS stations nationwide, which went on to become the second highest grossing pledge show in the station's history. Her television credits include A&E, PBS, National Geographic International, HGTV, and The Weather Channel, Fox Family Channel, among many others. Additional background information on Ms. Amella and the production team may be found at [www.modiomediamedia.com](http://www.modiomediamedia.com).

**Modio Media, LLC** has produced the program with WTTW, in partnership with the **Chicago History Museum**. The **Italic Institute of America** is the presenting organization and the fiscal sponsor. Additional funding is provided by **the Illinois Humanities Council** and the **Order Sons of Italy Commission for Social Justice**. A major on-air sponsor is the **National Italian American Foundation**. Other sponsors include **Hostmark Hospitality Group, Gullo International Development Company, the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Turano Baking Company, Wilton Industries, Osteria Via Stato Restaurant, and Romanucci & Blandin**.

For more than 50 years, viewers have turned to **WTTW11** for distinctive programming that informs, inspires, educates and entertains. Recognized for its award-winning local and national productions, WTTW11 is committed to presenting the very best in cultural, nature, science, public affairs and children's programming across its four distinct television channels: **WTTW11, WTTWD**, its Spanish-language channel **V-me**, and **WTTW Create**.

**NBC5 (WMAQ-TV)** is the owned and operated NBC station in Chicago. On October 8, 1948, the station, then called WNBQ-TV, transmitted its first telecast from the Merchandise Mart -- the third game of the Indians-Braves World Series in Cleveland, Ohio. The station's current call letters, WMAQ-TV, were established in 1964. During NBC5 Chicago's rich history, the station pioneered a number of television "firsts." On April 15, 1956, NBC5 became the world's first all-color station. In September of 1986, NBC5 became the first Chicago commercial station to broadcast in stereo. In 1989, NBC5 was the first Chicago station to present closed captioning of all local newscasts and in 2004 was the first television station to launch a streetside studio at 401 N. Michigan Avenue, Studio 5.

Currently, NBC5 airs 30 hours of local news per week. NBC5 News has over 30 reporters and anchors covering the Chicago area. NBC5 News covers local news on-air and on-line at [nbc5.com](http://nbc5.com).

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