

HONOURS AND AWARDS 2021

NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT

RENO CALLEJA UOM

Born in 1944, Reno Calleja is renowned for his assiduous endeavour to promote Malta internationally, particularly with the People's Republic of China. He was a founding member of the Malta/China Friendship Society serving as President for a long number of years. He was also instrumental in setting up the Malta/China Chamber of Commerce.

Calleja is held in high esteem and serves as a point of reference with the Chinese Authorities and in particular the People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in the various Chinese provinces. Through his contacts he was instrumental in bringing about bilateral agreements and joint projects. His most recent achievement was the donation of respirators and masks of the Chinese government to Malta.

Calleja was elected in parliament in 1976 and served recurrently as a Member of Parliament for 20 years. In 1978, he was appointed Malta's ambassador to the Council of Europe and Chaired the Ministers deputies of the Council of Europe for six months. Between 1981 and 1983, he also served as Minister of Tourism.

He is currently an advisor about Chinese affairs to the Rector of the University of Malta and government representative to the Council of the University of Malta.

PROFESSOR SIR ALFRED CUSCHIERI UOM

Born in Sliema in 1938, Sir Alfred Cuschieri is a Maltese-British academic and surgeon. He is distinguished for his pioneering contribution to the development and clinical implementation of minimal access surgery, also known as key-hole surgery. In 1961, Sir Cuschieri obtained his medical degree from the Royal University of Malta and then he moved to the United Kingdom to undertake further research in his field at the University of Liverpool.

In 1976, he joined the Dundee's School of Medicine as Professor of Surgery and Chairman of the Surgery and Molecular Oncology Department, a position he occupied until 2003. He and his team, while working at the Ninewells Hospital, took advantage of small cameras which allowed insertion into the incision made in the skin. As a result of this development, the first minimal invasive surgery in the UK was carried out in 1987.

Between 1989 and 2003, he also occupied the role of Director of Surgical Skills Unit, at this University and between 1992 and 2003 he held the position as Director Minimal Access Therapy Training Unit for Scotland.

In 1980, Sir Cuschieri had also distinguished himself by establishing the first Skills Training Laboratory for safe practice of Laparoscopic (MAS) surgery worldwide, now called the Cuschieri Skill Centre. In 1992 he also instituted the National Minimal Access Therapy Training Unit (MATTU), which was copied in other UK Centres, several EU member States, the Indian subcontinent, Australasia and South America.

In 2003, Sir Alfred Cuschieri was appointed as Senior Scientific Advisor at the Institute for Medical Science and Technology, University of Dundee and Emeritus Professor of Surgery at the same University. In 2004 he was appointed as Professore di Chiara Fama by the MUIR Ministry of the Italian Government and as Professor of Surgery and Medical Technology, at the Scuola Superior Sant'Anna, Pisa Italy. All positions he is still occupying till the current day.

He is now Emeritus Editor of Surgical Endoscopy and serves on the Editorial Board of several peer review journals.

PROFESSOR LUDVIC ZRINZO UOM

Ludvic's parents, Sylvia and Lawrence, a neuroradiologist and neurosurgeon, introduced neurosurgery to the Maltese Islands. Inspired by their teamwork, especially when saving lives during the 1985 EgyptAir hijack, Ludvic pursued undergraduate studies at Malta Medical School and postgraduate studies at UCL, London. Awarded MSc in Clinical Neuroscience (Distinction) and PhD in Neurosurgery, he completed neurosurgical training and two fellowships at UCL, London and UCLA, Los Angeles.

Ludvic is Professor of Neurosurgery and Head of UCL Functional Neurosurgery at the National Hospital, Queen Square, London - a globally recognised centre of excellence and home to the world's first neurosurgeon, Sir Victor Horsley. An internationally renowned leader in his field, Ludvic is one of the UK's most accomplished academic neurosurgeons with over 300 peer-reviewed abstracts, book chapters and research papers and several national and international awards for his work as lecturer and researcher.

Professor Zrinzo enables gene and stem cell therapy research, introduced several novel neurosurgical procedures to the UK, and pioneered surgical approaches that improve the comfort, safety, and efficacy of deep brain stimulation (DBS). These procedures help patients with various brain disorders, including Parkinson's disease, tremor, dystonia, severe facial pain, obsessive-compulsive-disorder (OCD), and depression.

As regular Visiting Consultant, Professor Zrinzo also introduced many specialised neurosurgical procedures to Malta, including DBS, cranial nerve surgery for facial pain and hemifacial spasm, and stereotactic ablation for OCD. He also helped introduce novel procedures to other countries, including Greece, Portugal and South Africa and trained numerous other neurosurgeons who subsequently established successful functional neurosurgery services around the world.

HONORARY MEMBER

HON DARRIN QUIROZ CAMILLERI UOM

State Rep. Darrin Quiroz Camilleri was born in the United States to a Maltese father who moved to the US in the 1960s. Hon Camilleri is renowned for his political career becoming the first-ever Maltese-American and youngest Latino to serve in the Michigan Legislature, in 2016. He is one of the very few descendants of the Maltese diaspora who is elected or appointed to public office anywhere in the US. To honour the Maltese community in Michigan, he has introduced and passed resolutions to recognize Maltese-American Heritage Day every year since he's been in office. He has raised important awareness and recognition of our vibrant community in the United States and around the world.

Hon Camilleri is serving his third term representing the 23rd District in Michigan's state legislature. He is the Vice Chair of the House Education Committee and also serves on the Financial Services committee. He previously served as Democratic Whip. In his first few years, he has quickly emerged as a state-wide leader on education issues and as a champion for workers' rights. He has also worked extensively to protect our environment and highlight the state's literacy crisis and teacher shortage. Camilleri has been recognized for his work by local and state-wide organizations. Prior to getting elected, Rep. Camilleri was the first in his family to earn a college degree and taught high school social studies in Detroit.

PROFESSOR LINO BIANCO MOM

Born in 1965, Professor Lino Bianco is an architect and an engineer, an academic and a diplomat. He is the Ambassador of Malta to Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

Professor Bianco graduated with a BA in philosophy and human studies from the former Institute of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, Malta. He completed his BE&A (Hons) in architecture and civil engineering at the University of Malta, his MSc in industrial mineralogy at the University of Leicester and his MSc in architectural history at The Bartlett, University College London. He graduated with a PhD in architecture and politics from the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia. He holds the Eur. Ing. from the Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingénieurs and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (London) and of the Geological Society (London).

In 1997 Professor Bianco set up his professional practice with the overall objective to render consultancy services in architecture, urban design and environmental planning to private and public agencies. He is a full-time resident academic at the University of Malta at the grade of associate professor and is actively engaged in lecturing overseas. During his professional and academic career, he has authored over 250 technical and scientific reports; several publications are in international peer-reviewed academic journals.

Professor Bianco has served on several scientific and technical committees and in various public offices. He was the Chairman of the Planning Council, a member of the Planning Appeals Board and a member of the board of directors of public entities in Malta. He was Malta's Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria. For his significant involvement in the advancement of bilateral cooperation between the two nations, he was awarded the Order of the Madara Horseman (1st Class) by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

PROFESSOR JOSEPH CACCIOTTOLO MOM

Joseph Cacciottolo qualified in medicine in London, graduated MD from the University of Malta, and underwent postgraduate clinical training in England. He trained in cardiovascular epidemiology at the University of Dundee, as World Health Organization Fellow, and at the University of Eastern Finland from where he was awarded his DSc degree. He was appointed consultant physician in 1984, introduced bronchoscopy within a specialist pulmonary medicine service and leading it for many years. He was Principal Investigator for the WHO-MONICA Project, and was involved in the formulation of several national clinical management guidelines.

Professor Cacciottolo taught clinical medicine until 2014, and is Fellow of several medical professional Colleges. He was International Advisor for the Royal College of Physicians. During his tenures as Head of the University Department of Medicine, he introduced several novel teaching and assessment methods and was Deputy Dean between 2006 and 2011.

At the University of Malta, Professor Cacciottolo, is involved in all aspects of higher education as Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs, and is associated with the Faculty of Arts. He helped found the Humanities, Medicine and Science Platform, a cross-disciplinary programme which he led for 10 years. He is currently reading Classics on a part-time basis at the University of Cambridge.

Professor Cacciottolo was associated as advisor with the Scout Association, the Down Syndrome Association and the Live Organ Transplant Advisory Committee. Since 2014 he has been member of the Malta Guardianship Board.

FREDERICK FEARNE MOM

Frederick Fearne started his career teaching as an emergency teacher in 1958. He joined the Technical Education Department as a teacher of English and Maths at GITC level, helping prepare young adults wishing to emigrate, mainly to Australia. He next taught Maths for several years at the St Joseph Secondary Tech and at the Lyceum in Hamrun. Over many years he continued to help a lot of students pass their Maths exams through private lessons.

After completing specialised studies overseas, Fearne played an important role in the setting up of the technical education in Malta, initially through the opening of Trade Schools in the early seventies. He served as Headmaster of the Umberto Colosso Trade School for a number of years before moving on to the Education Department to become Education Officer responsible for Technical Education. During this period, he was instrumental in the setting up of the Extended Skill Training Scheme (ESTS) as well as the Technical Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS).

In the early eighties, Fearne was appointed first Director of Education, then Director General for Education, and finally Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education. During this period, he was responsible for the education sector in Malta, and played a key role in the setting up of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Fearne retired from the Civil Service in 2000 and took the post as the first Principal of MCAST, finally retiring in 2008, after fifty years of service.

NORMAN HAMILTON MOM

Born in 1941, Norman Hamilton's career spans almost 60 years in the Broadcasting media, both Radio & Television. In 1961 he became the first ever Maltese radio presenter with the British Forces Broadcasting Station (BFBS). Following this, he emigrated to London where, for 3 years, he was employed as a radio presenter with the UK Central Office of Information presenting a weekly Programme called Għal Malta minn Londra. Back in Malta he joined Rediffusion in 1967 where he produced and presented the first ever live Breakfast Show. He then moved on to become the voice on the brand new Radju Malta in 1973. Rediffusion & Radio Malta amalgamated, and he was appointed Head of Light Entertainment & Sports while still presenting his programme Antenna. In 1983, as Head of Television Programmes, he introduced daytime television in Malta by producing and presenting with his wife Josette the 7 hour marathon Saturday afternoon programme Sibtijiet Flimkien. In 1981 he was appointed Director General of the newly introduced Radio Mediterranean. He then joined Super One Radio & TV where he will be remembered for his talk show on television that ran for 20 uninterrupted years Bla Agenda.

For 50 years he has been actively involved in the local and international Festival-musical scene. Since the 1970's he has been a member of FIDOF - the International Federation of Festival Organisers. In 2002 he was elected Vice-President of FIDOF and later President of the World Artists Festivals Association (WAFA). Between 1996 and 1998, he was Chairman of Malta's Song For Europe as well as Head of Delegation for Malta at the Eurovision Song Contests in Dublin & Birmingham. He is still actively & currently involved as Chairman of Festivals Malta, Vice President of Muzika Muzika and Consultant to PBS of the Malta Eurovision 2022. In 1992 he founded one of Malta's top successful tourism agency - Hamilton Travel of which he is currently Chairman. In 2022 this Company will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary.

His proudest achievement is when the Government appointed him in 2013 as Malta's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom serving in London for 5 years up to 2018. Concurrently from 2015 and 2017 he also held the post of Maltese Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland.

DR. JONATHAN JOSLIN MOM

Dr. Jonathan Joslin was born in 1962. He is a Consultant Emergency Physician and Specialist in Emergency Medicine within the Emergency Department at Mater Dei Hospital.

Having qualified as a Medical Doctor in 1987 he subsequently specialised in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine and was conferred Fellowship status in Immediate Medical care in 2001 by the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. He is a founding member of a Specialist team of Emergency Physicians established in 2003 aimed at delivering rapid front line advanced medical management to seriously ill patients and the critically injured, developing a special interest in the emergency response to entrapped victims in serious road traffic collisions. Early Specialist Emergency Physician medical intervention in rescue has proven to decrease both mortality and morbidity in trauma patients. In addition, he remains deeply committed to the promotion of National road safety and injury prevention.

In 2015 he was presented with the Asmund Laerdal Award by the British Association of Immediate Care in recognition for his enduring contribution to Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine in Malta. He is visiting lecturer at the University of Malta delivering training in pre-hospital emergency care within the Malta Medical School.

Having served as Chair to the Malta Resuscitation Council he prioritised the widespread distribution of life saving Defibrillators amongst schools in Malta and the teaching of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to schoolchildren as a life skill.

DR MICHAEL SPITERI MOM

Dr Michael Spiteri was born in 1975. He graduated M.D. from the University of Malta in 1999 and furthered his studies through the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh by specialising in the field of Emergency Medicine. Subsequently, he developed a keen interest in Pre-hospital and Disaster Medicine, for which he obtained a European Masters by the Università del Piemonte Orientale.

Since 2000, Dr Spiteri has provided professional medical services within the Emergency Department at St. Luke's and Mater Dei Hospital. For the past five years, he fulfilled the post of Clinical Chairperson of the said department and led a large team of professionals through several challenging situations which included the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past years, Dr Spiteri spearheaded several important projects which are related to the provision of Emergency care across the Maltese Islands. These included the introduction of mobile major medical incident units, emergency department restructuring, launching of the first medical and nursing rapid response units in Malta together with a complete overhaul of the 112 Emergency Medical Services. He is also the co-founder of the Emergency Physician Response Unit network, which over the past twenty years provided on-site, voluntary, specialist emergency care for more than one thousand casualties. This service is currently being deployed more than two hundred times a year and provides a life-saving link in cases of severe trauma, mass casualty incidents and other life-threatening situations.

On an academic level, Dr Spiteri is a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta and an examiner on the European Board of Emergency Medicine.

FATHER ĠWANN XERRI MOM (POSTHUMOUS)

Fr. Ġwann Xerri was born in Valletta in 1947. He joined the Dominican noviciate in September 1964 and did his first profession a year later. Father Xerri was ordained on the 14th of March 1971.

Between 1971 and 1974, he served in the priory at Birgu and taught Religion at St Albert College. In 1974, he was sent to Brazil, where he worked in the parishes of Faxinal, Londrina, Curitiba, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and Goiania. In many of these places, he served as vice or parish priest. In 1978, he studied Liberation Theology and Pastoral Theology in the Jesuit University in Rio de Janeiro and was a theology lecturer in the Diocesan Seminary in Apucarana, Paraná.

Fr. Xerri worked with people who lost their land - Movimento sem Terra (MST) and the Christian Base Communities. Through and with the solidarity group, Sao Domingos, he helped raise awareness for several causes around the world like apartheid in South Africa and the huge sufferings of people in East Timor, Chiapas (Mexico), Palestine, Iraq, and Latin America. He was a strong, consistent, and forceful voice in favour of those who lost their land, the homeless, indigenous people, women, and homosexuals. He defended the rights of the poor and the marginalised even in those areas where he was threatened and in danger.

Fr. Xerri became a promoter of justice for the Dominican Order in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1986 and 1992. He was asked to be the Order's General Promoter of Justice and Peace and the Permanent Delegate of the Dominican Order in the United Nations (UN) from 2001-2008. When in Malta, Fr. Xerri worked with migrants and groups like The Third World, Drachma and Graffiti among others. He believed in collective responsibility and brought people together to work for the good of others especially those whose rights are taken away.

Fr. Ġwann Xerri died as he lived, in solidarity with the poor, the suffering, the marginalised and as a victim of Covid-19 in Brazil, on the 30th of May 2021.

PROFESSOR EDWARD ZAMMIT MOM

Edward Zammit has worked incessantly and beyond his call of duty towards the democratisation of labour and industrial relations in Malta. He is a pioneer of workers' and trade union education, and, as a result of his efforts, many industrial workers have been attracted to pursue higher studies at university.

He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Malta where he served for 45 years (1971 – 2016). During his tenure, he set up the Centre for Labour Studies (formerly known as the Workers' Participation Development Centre) which operates in close collaboration with the main trade unions of Malta and also at the European level. Through his research and educational activities, he has inspired the Centre and directed it to focus on the following main areas: human resources in productive organisations, gender roles at work and occupational health and safety.

In addition to his academic duties at the University, Professor Zammit has contributed significantly towards the development of social dialogue and fruitful collaboration among the social partners, the development of the Co-operatives' Sector, and the upgrade of industrial legislation particularly through the Employment Relations' Board which he has chaired since its establishment from 2002 to 2021.

During his tenure at the University he was also responsible for heading the departments of Public Policy, Tourism Studies, and Social Work. He is an established expert in the field of industrial sociology and has published widely in this field both locally and abroad.

ST JOHN RESCUE CORPS MOM

St John Rescue Corps was founded in 1986 as a new branch of St John Malta to provide an organised corps of adult volunteers who are full trained in rescue and first aid with the aim of supporting the civil protection mechanism in Malta.

Over the past 35 years the Rescue Corps has developed the ability to operate in Fire Rescue, High Angle Rope Rescue, Water Rescue, Medical Support Services and Humanitarian Aid. Complementing the broad skillset of its volunteers, St John Rescue Corps has also built a substantial cache of rescue equipment which is always ready for deployment if requested by the competent authorities. This includes fire trucks, rescue boats, a mobile incident command unit and lots of other specialised technical rescue equipment.

The instances where St John Rescue Corps volunteers have provided assistance are numerous. These include assistance during emergencies such as major floods and storms, industrial fires, searches for missing persons and lifeguard services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, St John Rescue Corps was at the forefront with the provision of logistical services which enabled essential services provided by local foodbanks to continue uninterrupted. In 2020, over 1,400 man-hours of service were contributed by the volunteers for this service alone. St John Rescue Corps volunteers also regularly provide community services such as on-site fire prevention and first aid assistance at events such as concerts, sports activities, and other mass events.

The organisation is also actively involved in education through the provision of fire and safety training for the public.

HONORARY MEMBER

PROFESSOR SANTE GUIDO MOM

Sante Guido is an art historian and art conservator. Since 1996 he has been carrying out studies, research, and restoration of works of art belonging to the Maltese heritage and in relation to Italian art and artists.

He started restoring numerous works in bronze and marble at the St John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta, which took about 9 years. He is also the author of the pilot project for the restoration of the entire co-cathedral with the first restoration, and the study, of the Italian Chapel. Sante Guido also organized two exhibitions dedicated to St. Catherine and also to works by Italian Baroque artists in Malta.

Over the years he has organized international conferences in Valletta and Reggio Calabria, on the Maltese art by Mattia Preti and the Grand Master Gregorio Carafa. Other exhibitions were also organized in Italy aiming at promoting works of art from the very rich Maltese heritage. This included several Maltese paintings by Mattia Preti which were exhibited in Rome, Calabria and Sicily and works by Melchiorre Gafà, the renowned Maltese Baroque artist, in Rome, at the famous Accademia di S. Luca. Between September and October 2021, he also organized an exhibition dedicated to Francesco Zahra at the Basilica of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome. Among his many articles and studies, one finds the volume *Mattia Preti 1613–2013. The masterpieces in the Churches of Malta* written by Guido Sante and Mantella to commemorate the fourth centenary of Preti's Birth, and *The Apostolato of the Order of St. John at the Cathedral of Malta* to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the archives and the museum of the Cathedral of Malta written by himself together with various others.

HONORARY MEMBER

GEORGE PROCOPIOU MOM

George Procopiou was born in 1946 and first entered shipping in 1971. He is a major international player and is considered as one of the most influential persons in the maritime industry.

His relationship with Malta started way back in 1982 when he formed a Maltese company through which he registered his first ship under the Maltese flag. Over the years, through his companies, Dynacom, SeaTraders and the IPO Dynagas, he has registered over 150 vessels of which 55 currently hoist the Malta flag on the stern. He was also pivotal in the development of several policies and legislation that resulted in the robust legal framework that Malta has in place as a leading maritime jurisdiction.

George Procopiou holds a degree in civil engineering from the National Technical University of Athens. He managed over the years a shipping fleet of more than 500 vessels, since first entering the shipping business in 1971 by purchasing one third of a vessel. He has served as Chairman of the North of England P&I Association and is currently Chairman of the Greek committee of Bureau Veritas, Chairman of CCS Mediterranean Committee, Chairman of the Yacht Club of Greece, as well as a member of the Greek committees of DNV GL, Lloyd's Register, RINA, and ABS.

MIDALJA GHALL-QLUBIJA

DR RAYMOND GRIXTI MRQ

Raymond Gixti was born in Imtarfa in 1966. Raymond is a doctor who distinguished himself for his rapid act of bravery where he managed to give first aid to a person who was seriously injured in a hostile environment and who was not easily reachable.

Since the injured person was still alive and time was critical for him, Dr Gixti refused to follow the advice of the Senior Medical Staff to wait for the officials from the Civil Protection Department (CPD) to help them go to the location of the injured. Gixti climbed down a rubble wall, one storey high and had to roll down in the ditch. Gixti had to pass through wild bushes until he reached the injured. In the process, Gixti also helped the Senior Medical Staff to arrive together on location and give the first medical assistance to the injured person. During this whole operation, Gixti was also injured with several wounds that needed medical attention, once the injured person was assisted, stabilised, and taken to hospital.

Raymond Gixti graduated in medicine and surgery and is very dedicated to his profession. He works as a Senior General Practitioner in the Department of Primary Care and lectures 4th year students in the course on Medicine and Surgery, and doctors during their second year after graduation.

SEAN MELI MRQ

Born in 1988 from Sliema, Sean Meli, became renowned for rescuing a young Chinese national who was swept to sea at Qui-Si-Sana, Sliema. After realizing that the person could not easily be seen by the Civil Protection Unit and District Police, Sean jumped into the rough seas without hesitation and with his rapid intervention he saved the life of a 14 year-old boy. He also managed to calm the young boy who was panicking in the water.

Sean has been playing water polo for several years and is a great swimmer, challenging himself in outdoor sports, surfing and snowboarding.

MIDALJA GĦALL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA

NEIL AGIUS MQR

Born in 1986, Neil Agius is a swimmer who specializes in long-distance freestyle events. He held three Maltese records each in the 400, 800, and 1500m freestyle until 2011

This year, Agius also broke the world record for the longest non-stop, unassisted swim where he swam 125.6km from Linosa, Italy back to Malta in just over 52 hours. The entire swim was live-streamed and drew over two million viewers aiming at raising awareness about plastic pollution at sea and is part of the Wave of Change campaign. He set out to establish the Wave of Change movement together with other swimmers and friends who had the same interests at heart. The movement was set out to fight for a behavioural change in attitude in society to be mindful of the effects of plastic use in our everyday lives.

PHILIP MICHEAL CHIRCOP MQR

Philip Michael Chircop, was born in St Venera in 1952. Following his early retirement from Central Bank Malta, he devoted a big part of his life militating in the Health & Elderly sectors, where he served on several Organisations' Boards. In 1994, Philip was elected First Deputy Mayor of his hometown with majority votes.

One of his great achievements was being instrumental in the acquisition of two 'Blood Freezers' for the National Blood Transfusion Centre, enabling long-term storage of rare blood, to be readily available for "life-threatening" emergencies.

Philip is an ardent promoter of European Days advocating for Patients' Rights, Rare Diseases, and non-remunerated Blood Donation. In May 2013, Philip founded the National Alliance for ME/CFS & Fibromyalgia Sufferers. To date, he leads the Central Bank of Malta Pensioners' Group.

In September 2013 he realised his dream when he founded the Grandparents Malta Foundation and a first-ever Grandparents' Day, celebrated annually at the national level on the 2nd Sunday of October, entrenched by a unanimous vote in Parliament. The Foundation is a full member of AGE Platform Europe in Brussels and is bestowed with the Presidential Distinguished Patronage, registering approximately 2,000 memberships (2.2% of the elderly population).

Philip incessantly advocates legal visitation rights for Grandparents who are being denied access to their grandchildren. His next objective is to establish a European Day for Grandparents.

LINO FARRUGIA MQR

After his tertiary studies at the University of Malta, in 1972, Lino Farrugia joined the Rediffusion Group of Companies, as a Producer/Director, whereupon he immediately embarked upon the production of a large number of radio programmes focusing mainly on culture.

During that year he was also commissioned to direct a satire by Francis Ebejer, Vumbarala Zungare, as part of the newly launched International Arts Festival. Shortly afterwards, Farrugia directed the first ever Maltese production for MADC, Erin Serracino Inglott's classic *Ir-Raheb*.

The seventies saw Farrugia, together with Karmen Azzopardi, Chevalier Paul Naudi and others, founding the Atturi Theatre Group, Malta's first Repertory Theatre Company. During these years Farrugia brought to the stage important works by major European playwrights including pieces from the classical Greek repertoire. He was also instrumental in bringing quality drama on the Maltese television screen. This included Malta's first TV series, the renowned *F'Baħar Wieħed*, which led to a long career in television production.

Farrugia wrote and directed numerous works for both stage and screen, amongst which the original Maltese series *Wirt and Villa Sunset*. For some time, Lino Farrugia served as Managing Director at the Manoel Theatre, and later as Chairman of the Malta International Arts Festival. More recently he also worked on several docudramas, besides passing on his long experience to students at the Malta Drama Centre, several of whom have gone on to make their own name on stage and the screen.

Lino Farrugia is still actively working on various new projects related to the performing arts, radio and television.

ANTON GRASSO MQR

Anton Grasso was born in Paola in 1952. Between 1975 and 1981, he taught Religion, Maltese, and English at the Trade School in Senglea, and then at Ta' Bighi School in Kalkara.

From an early age, Grasso was already renowned by the Maltese, having already written several novels, essays and poems which were published in local newspapers. He was also a regular contributor in newspapers and with works published in magazines. Grasso was the author of several books. The first one, *Iljieli bla Qamar*, was the first volume of horror stories in Maltese that was published in 1974 and then again in 1997. Most of his books were quickly sold and re-published. His books include novels, translations, essays, poems, studies, twenty-seven volumes of stories and an autobiography. *Enigma* is one of his many works and is a study of the paranormal which was published in 1987 and twice more in 1994. It was such a great success as a television series that another new series was produced. Anton Grasso's favorite subject is horror. He wrote more than 1000 novels, most of them ghastly which became very popular with his readers and Maltese radio listeners alike. His interest in horror stories aroused the interest of many and he developed a cult in this genre. Grasso is one of the best authors and is considered the best on horror stories in Malta. In 1978, he started reading his stories on Radju Malta with the programme *Stejjer tal-Waħx*. This program has been popular for over twenty years. For a few months, Grasso also read his stories on television. In 1981 he started working as Programmes' Director with the National television station until 2004. At 22 years of age, he contacted Ira Levin to grant him permission to convert the classic novel *Rosemary's Baby* to Maltese. Grasso also translated to Maltese writings of other foreign authors like Fred Mustard Stewart, H.E. Bates, and William Katz.

In 2018, the Horizons publishing house published a book with several stories, poems, photographs as well as excerpts from 10 authors who shared their views on Grasso's literary career, titled *Anton Grasso...40 sena ta' waħx u aktar*. This year, Grasso was contacted by a publishing house in America called Valancourt Books as in 2022, they will be publishing the second volume of the best horror stories from around the world, including work by Anton Grasso translated into English by lawyer Joseph Camilleri.

LILIAN MAISTRE MQR

Born in 1939, Lilian Maistre, started her working career as an Emergency Teacher in Government Primary Schools. Her involvement with broadcasting started in the sixties when she was offered her first radio programme with Redifusion, broadcasting in English with a popular magazine styled programme, Feminine Touch. She was also given the opportunity of visiting the BBC as radio programme presenter.

Subsequently, she was asked to present and produce the magazine programme Familja Waħda, a programme which she continued to produce until she was forced to retire given the Covid pandemic. This programme brought together several professionals in various fields, where virtually every walk of life was represented. The programme undoubtedly proved popular with listeners of Radju Malta, appealing as it did to a wide audience, as consistently indicated in the Listenership Surveys relating to it.

Lilian Maistre's ability to produce a magazine programme, free of gender, racial and age stereotypes is now a matter of record. She gained the respect of colleagues and listeners alike for her endeavors to ensure accuracy, fairness, and balance within her programme, throughout her long years of service with Xandir Malta.

The popularity of the programme has always been a source of personal pride and job satisfaction and encouraged Lilian to work well past retiring age until Covid struck and at the age of 81 Lilian reluctantly had to let go of the microphone.

JANE MARSHALL MQR

Born in 1951, Jane Marshall's theatre and television career spans over 50 years. It started in 1967 with her debut in a series of Classical Greek pieces for the theatre. Jane was caught up in the innovative cultural frenzy of the late sixties and her work for the theatre at that time was a substantial contribution to the 'new wave' of the Maltese performing arts.

In 1970, Jane moved to London to pursue professional theatre studies at the renowned Italia Conti Stage School. Back in Malta three years later, Jane became heavily engaged in work for the theatre, television and radio. By 1980, she had become a household name and her acting career was at a peak, especially after the screening of the controversial television series, *Il-Madonna Ta' Ċoqqa*, with Jane's interpretation of the rebel Rita touching the heart of a nation and is considered a classic in the history of Maltese drama for television.

In 1981, Jane emigrated to Australia with her family where she lived for fifteen years. There she worked for ABC Television, and the Special Broadcasting Services Radio & Television. In 1994, she experienced what she describes as one of the highlights of her career when she was hired to work at the Sydney Opera House. She also worked in Musical theatre for the Maltese Community in Australia. Jane returned to Malta in 1995 to resume her work in theatre and television, twenty-six years later, still sought after for her unique talent.

Apart from her passion for the theatre and television, Jane Marshall considers her work with Special Needs Students at Primary and Secondary levels in Australia as work which gave her the huge satisfaction. When back to Malta, she was also engaged by the University of Malta to work with students with special needs throughout their university years and now she is considered a pioneer in this sector.

CHARLES PAUL MUSCAT MQR

Born in 1944, Charles Paul Muscat migrated to Australia in 1962 and has been a link between the Maltese communities in Australia and Malta for decades. Charles assisted many Maltese migrants to find employment and he often sat on committees convened by the Federal Ministries for Immigration where again he was able to offer advice to the relevant authorities as this made it much easier to connect with the various politicians on matters to do with migrants' issues.

Charles Muscat also served for several years as the High Commissioner for Malta of Australia and New Zealand.

MICHAEL PACE MQR

Born in 1932, Michael Pace distinguished himself for his pioneering work in the field of local Physical Education and Sport, particularly his voluntary work with persons with disability, at a time when certain principles, which are now widely accepted, were considered unorthodox and frowned upon.

In 1951, Pace joined the Cottonera Barbell Club, Vittoriosa and acted as its secretary for 65 years. He was one of a handful of individuals who dedicated their energy in procuring adequate resources to promote bodybuilding as a sports discipline particularly among youths. He started his teaching career in 1958, receiving a British Council Scholarship in Physical Education at the Teachers' Training College of Physical Education, Loughborough, UK. During his 35 years of service he occupied various leadership roles in Physical Education. He was instrumental in shifting the focus of physical education from the traditional drill-based military style methods towards a more holistic experience that promotes physical, mental and social health.

For over 57 years, Pace uninterruptedly acted as the National Coach for the Physically Disabled Rehabilitation Centre, Kordin on a voluntarily basis. At a time when sports for persons with disability was still a novel idea, he prepared athletes to represent Malta during the Stoke Mandeville Games for disabled persons where they won various medals.

CONNIE VELLA MQR

For the last 30 years, Ms Vella has been helping patients from Malta, who are receiving medical treatment in British hospitals. She supports patients and their dependents accompanying them in Britain. Ms Vella is always on call to assist, whether it is related to language problems or other serious matters.

In the late 80's Connie Vella joined a hospital visiting committee dedicated to visiting Maltese patients receiving treatment in the UK. She soon became a major player (in that committee) and this soon led to organising functions for fund raising to help and assist the same patients. Many times Connie would host relatives of patients in her house especially those who had difficulty in finding accommodation. Her door is always open for those who need assistance. Now in her 90's, she still works tirelessly for the goodwill of the Maltese community, especially, for sick people.

DR ETHEL VENTO ZAHRA MQR

Dr Ethel Vento Zahra is a dental surgeon with a special interest in Public Health, a partner with her sister in private practice and a Visiting Senior Lecturer at the Department of Oral Rehabilitation at the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the University of Malta. She is very committed towards her work which focuses on striving towards providing better health to the Maltese population, and she was presented with an Award in Recognition for a High Level of Service in the Public Service in June of 2021.

Ethel was diagnosed with Breast Cancer in 2015 at the age of 36 years and furthermore with Metastatic Breast Cancer in 2018. She is a breast cancer advocate and is very active as a committee member of Europa Donna Malta which is an NGO that advocates for breast cancer patient rights, raises awareness about breast cancer and provides support to women and their families when they are diagnosed with anything related to breast cancer from positive genetic testing results to metastatic breast cancer diagnoses. Being a Metastatic Breast Cancer patient herself, she is very committed to raising more awareness about the realities of women living with this condition and provide support to women going through the same issues to be able to have a more positive outlook and thrive while going through these difficult situations.

DR JOE ZAMMIT CIANTAR MQR

Born on 8 May 1942, in Ta' Sannat, Gozo. Joe Zammit Ciantar is Teacher by profession with the Education Department. He was appointed as Master of Maltese, Head of Department, Education Officer, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer with the University of Malta Junior College.

Zammit Ciantar has also organized several exhibitions on Maltese books and Maltese authors, a course on Maltese literature, and he also taught Maltese to adults and foreigners. He is also President of Grupp Awturi and Vice-President of Akkademja tal-Malti. He is a member of the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), the Editorial Board of Atlas Linguarum Europae (ALE), organizing a meeting in Malta 1999, and the International Society for Dialectology and Geolinguistics (SIDG). He has also represented the Maltese Government on the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Regional or Minority Languages in Europe, of the Council of Europe.

Apart from having published several poems, researched articles in local and foreign journals, and delivered papers in international conferences in Copenhagen, Dublin, Belfast, Pisa, and Boston (USA), he has also co-edited magazines like Grufan, Sagħtar, Hyphen and Il-Malti and edited others like Eku, Delitti u Misteri, Fora Melitensia, and Symposia Melitensia.

Zammit Ciantar is a regular contributor with articles in The Malta Independent on Sunday, Times of Malta and The Sunday Times of Malta. He has also published several books among them Merħba; Sirenella u Stejjer Ohra; Il-Ħajja ta' Duminku Savio; A Benedictine's Notes on Seventeenth-Century MALTA; Life in Għar il-Kbir; The Placenames of the Coast of Gozo (Malta); Il-Priedki bil-Malti ta' Ignazio Saverio Mifsud; The Holy Eucharist and the Hymn 'T'Adoriam Ostia Divina' [with Hector Xerri]; and The false domes of the Gozo Cathedral and other churches.