



NECO Medalists Press Release
The 23rd annual Ellis Island Medals of Honor
Saturday, May 9, 2009 [Read all about it](#)

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NECO Medalist Press Release

**THE NATIONAL ETHNIC COALITION OF ORGANIZATIONS (NECO)
TO PRESENT THE 23rd ANNUAL ELLIS ISLAND MEDALS OF HONOR
ON SATURDAY, MAY 9 AT ELLIS ISLAND
VETERAN JOURNALIST MARVIN SCOTT
WILL SERVE AS THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

*Ceremony Pays Tribute to American Citizens of Diverse Ethnic Origins
Whose Influence and Achievements Inspire and Touch the Lives of People
Everywhere*

NEW YORK, NY -- The National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO) will present the *23rd Annual Ellis Island Medals of Honor* on Ellis Island, Saturday, May 9, 2009 at 6 p.m. Veteran journalist Marvin Scott, the Senior Correspondent for the WPIX News At Ten and anchor/host of the weekly issues-oriented program, "PIX News Close Up" will serve as the Master of Ceremonies. The ceremony will be followed by the annual Gala Awards Dinner in the historic Great Hall.

Each year since 1986, NECO – whose mission is to **honor our diverse Past, to advocate for positive change in the Present, and to build strong leaders for the Future** – has honored our nation's diverse past by sponsoring the *Ellis Island Medals of Honor*. The *Ellis Island Medals of Honor* annually pays tribute to the ancestry groups that comprise America's unique cultural mosaic. The Medals are presented on Ellis Island, in a dramatic ceremony, to American citizens of diverse origins for their outstanding contributions to their communities, their nation and the world.

According to Nasser J. Kazeminy, Chairman of NECO, "NECO is about investing in the power of caring, whereas people from all cultures and walks of life stand together arm in arm to make a real difference in our world through shared compassion and philanthropy – not just for now, but to also inspire future generations who will continue to preserve and build upon the legacy that each of our cultures has contributed. With our Medalists, we will see America – at its best. We will see every color, every race from so many walks of life – together – celebrating – the magic that is America. Our Medalists' influence and achievements truly inspire and touch the lives of people everywhere."

Past *Ellis Island Medal of Honor* recipients include six Presidents of the United States, Nobel Prize winners, athletes, leaders of industry, artists and others whose work has made a lasting impact on humanity. They are awarded annually to outstanding American citizens, from all walks of life, who have distinguished themselves through their significant contributions to this country. The *Ellis Island Medal of Honor* ranks among the nation's most prestigious awards. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have officially recognized the *Ellis Island Medals of Honor*, and each year the recipients are listed in the Congressional Record. To date, more than 1,500 American citizens have received *Ellis Island Medals of Honor*.

Some previous Medalists include: U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist; Generals Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell; Sen. John McCain; Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno; Lee Iacocca; Dr. Michael E. DeBakey; Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao; Rosa Parks; Elie Wiesel; Frank Sinatra; Bob Hope; Opera diva Renee Fleming; Yogi Berra; Muhammad Ali; Arnold Palmer; Tom Brokaw; Walter Cronkite; Barbara Walters; Mike Wallace; Quincy Jones; Gloria Estefan, Gary Sinise and Siegfried & Roy, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, President – United Nations 61st Session General Assembly (International Recipient), just to name a few.

For further information about NECO and the *Ellis Island Medals of Honor*, please visit: www.neco.org.

[About NECO](#)

NECO was created in 1984 on the conviction of its founder, William Denis Fugazy, Sr. that the diversity of the American people is what makes this nation great.

NECO's mission is simple: **to honor our diverse Past, to advocate for positive change in the Present, and to build strong leaders for the Future.**

NECO does this with one goal in mind: *Unity through Diversity: Investing in the Power of Caring.*

NECO is a non profit 501(c)(3) organization with strategic alliances that allow us to support a range of diverse programs and insure that every dollar we spend goes to creating a better world in the future for us all.

In addition to hosting the *Ellis Island Medals of Honor*, NECO is proud to have formed meaningful and lasting partnerships with some of the most revolutionary humanitarian causes in the world. In these uncertain and difficult times, our promise to make the world a better place and uphold the integrity of all contributions still rings true. Some of these include the Gift of Life International, Children In Need Institute (CINI), The Ellis Island Immigration Museum, The Peopling of America Center, National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, Boys Hope Girls Hope and Concern Worldwide.

This Year's Medalists:

John	P.	Abizaid, USA (Ret)
Eduardo		Aguirre
IMAM Shamsi		Ali
Kaveh		Alizadeh
Robert	V.	Allegrini
Victor	G.	Atiyeh
Vicken	N.	Aykazian
Julian		Bachynsky
Ralph	M.	Bahna
George	S.	Barrett
Edward	J.	Bergman
Hamid		Biglari
Carolyn	A.	Blashek
Paul	F.	Boulos, PhD
Ted	F.	Bowlds
Patrick		Burns
Samia	E.	Burton
Otto	B.	Candies
John	J.	Casey
Ali		Cayir
Sant	Singh	Chatwal
Walter	R.	Chitwood, Jr.
Joseph	Ilhwan	Cho
Edward	T.	Cloonan
Duane	E.	Collins
David	F.	D'Alessandro
Shiv	C.	Dass
Kiran	R.	Desai
Robert	D.	Donno
Rayna		Dubose
Emilio		Estefan, Jr.
Charles		Fazzino
Sean	T.	Flanagan
John	S.	Gonsalves
James	B.	Hayes
Gregory	P.	Hitchen
W. Andrew		Hodge, MD
Forough	B.	Hosseini
Susan	Pien	Hsu, PhD
Taffy	A.	Jowdy
James	M.	Kalustian
Alvin		Kass

Fred		Kavli
Lisa		Kazor
Kevin	A.	Kistler
Carol	N.	Lambos, Esq
James	B.	Laster
Sandra		Lee
Oh	Young	Lee
Leon	Y.	Lee
Francine	A.	LeFrak
Nooshin		Malakzad
Gregory	J.	Mansour
George	D.	Martin
Grace		Meng
Thomas	L.	Mills, Esq
Joseph	H.	Moglia
Reza		Momeni
Uma	V.	Mysorekar
Tavit	O.	Najarian, Sc.D
John	F.	Nickoll
Michael	K.	O'Malley
Timothy		O'Neill
George		Pagoumian
Young	J.	Paik
Mary	Mitzi	Perdue
Moises		Perez-Martinez
Natale	A.	Picco, Jr.
John		Podesta
William	A.	Pope
Linda	Ann	Pope
David	M.	Puckett
Phil	T.	Pulaski
Bijan		Rafiekian
Dan	J.	Rooney
Gaetano	G.	Scavone
Salman T.		Sesi, Esq
Jatin	P.	Shah
Liu	Tee	Shu
Brian	J.	Smith
Stephen	V.	Smith, USA
Steven	N.	Stein
Carol	K.	Strauss
Chester	A.	Szarejko
Oscar	S.	Tatosian
Joseph	J.	Thomas, DDS
William	H.	Tilley
Lenny		Tilman
Lana		Todorovich
Chiling		Tong
Pauline	A.	Turley
Anthony	M.	Valletta
Kathleen		Waldron
Kevin	M.	Wall
Lama Pema		Wangdak
Jeffrey	N.	Watanabe, Esq.
Gary	E.	Weksler
Sally	Tsui	Wong-Avery

