



American  
Accordionists'  
Association



*Gala Banquet*

2023 AAA Festival Orchestra

The United States Air Force Strolling Strings

AAA Lifetime Achievement Award  
Presentation to Frank Busso Sr.

**SATURDAY, JULY 15 2023**

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MARRIOTT PHILADELPHIA WEST  
W. CONSHOHOCKEN, PA



# American Accordionists' Association

*Celebrating 85 years!*

The American Accordionists' Association (AAA) is the oldest accordion association in the United States. We are dedicated to building community among accordion enthusiasts of all ages and musical abilities. We proudly promote the great musicianship of our AAA members and share accordion news worldwide in order to foster greater appreciation of the accordion.

## **AAA Celebrates our previous Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients**

- 2002: Carmen Carrozza - Cortlandt, NY
- 2003: Dick Contino - Wood-Ridge, NJ
- 2004: Charles Nunzio - Wood-Ridge, NJ
- 2005: Tony Dannon - Dearborn, MI
- 2006: Frank Marocco - Wood Ridge, NJ
- 2009: Faithe Deffner - New York, NY
- 2012: Joan Sommers - Charleston, SC
- 2016: Mario Tacca - Cortlandt, NY
- 2018: Lou Coppola - Alexandria, VA
- 2019: Joey Miskulin - College Point, NY
- 2021: Linda Soley Reed - Virtual Presentation



# *Gala Banquet Program*

## **Festival Orchestra**

Conducted by Joan Cochran Sommers

Marche Triomphale  
*R. Würthner*

Dance of Rose Maidens  
*A. Khachaturian / arr. Galla-Rini*

Perpetual Motion  
*J. Strauss / arr. Galla-Rini*

Libertango  
*A. Piazzolla / arr. Bratti*

Main Theme from Star Trek  
*J Goldsmith / arr. Cochran Sommers*

*Lesginka from "Gayne Ballet"*  
*A. Khachaturian / arr. Galla-Rini*

**Performance by the  
United States Air Force Strolling Strings**

**Lifetime Achievement Award  
Presentation to Frank Busso, Sr.**

# Joan Cochran Sommers

AAA Festival Orchestra Conductor

Joan was awarded the title of Professor Emerita upon her retirement from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory of Music, where she established and taught the accordion degree program for 40 years. She has arranged innumerable works for accordion orchestra over many years, often for the



UMKC Accordion Orchestra, which, under her direction won more first prizes than any other American group. Joan taught numerous accordionists over many decades, many who went on to distinguish themselves as artists, competition winners, and music professionals.

In both 1955 and 1956, she earned the right to represent the USA in the Coupe Mondiale, and it was those experiences that opened her eyes to the tremendous opportunities available to accordionists; perhaps it also fixed her lifelong interest in worldwide accordion activities. Joan is the founder of the CIA World Accordion Orchestra, which has presented concerts and premieres in many countries around the world.

Joan has held positions in several music organizations, including the Accordionists and Teachers Guild International (ATG) and the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA-IMC-UNESCO), where after her retirement, she was unanimously awarded the status of CIA Honorary Member. Today she enjoys guest conducting accordion orchestras around the world, making new arrangements, and leading the UMKC Community Accordion Ensemble in frequent performances. She is the seventh recipient of the AAA's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

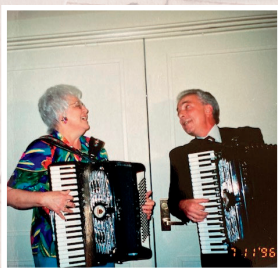


## The United States Air Force Strolling Strings

The Air Force Strings is the official string ensemble of the United States Air Force. Stationed in Washington, DC, it is one of six musical ensembles that form The US Air Force Band. The Air Force Strings consists of 16 active-duty musicians performing a wide range of musical styles, from classical symphonic selections and Broadway show tunes to classic rock, bluegrass, and patriotic. The ensemble often entertains audiences at high-level military and government events in a formation known as the Strolling Strings, which includes Senior Master Frank Busso Jr on accordion. Providing a multi-dimensional experience, the instrumentalists surround the audience and perform from memory.

The U.S. Air Force Band's mission is to HONOR those who have served, INSPIRE American citizens to heightened patriotism and service, and CONNECT with the global community on behalf of the US Air Force and the United States. The excellence demonstrated by the Air Force Strings reflects the excellence displayed by all Airmen stationed worldwide, whose selfless service and sacrifices ensure the freedoms enjoyed by Americans today.

# Your friends from AAA salute your accomplishments & thank you for your friendship!





# Lifetime Achievement Award

## *About the honoree*

### **Frank Busso, Sr.**

Frank began playing the accordion at age 7. Always a dedicated student, he quickly became an accomplished performer and found special favor with his instructors.

As a student at the Ettore School of Music, Frank first became acquainted with the AAA. He entered many local, regional and national competitions capturing many 1st place awards.



Frank started performing professionally at age 13, as both a soloist and with a group. As time went on, he played many clubs, restaurants and parties in the NY metropolitan area. He has also performed with the NJ Symphony.

Frank graduated from St. Peter's College and received his MBA from Wagner College. He used his business degrees and his musical acumen to start a music business on Staten Island. As it became more successful, Frank gradually expanded the business to 4 locations.

He became President of the Affiliated Accordionists of NY State in 1971 and joined the governing board of the AAA in 1973. Frank has faithfully served the AAA as Treasurer, Vice President, President and chair of many committees including National Festivals and the Young Artists Concert Series.

As director for the Staten Island Music School, Frank taught many award-winning students and conducted numerous classical & festival accordion orchestras. He was also the music teacher at two parochial schools for over 25 years. Frank taught accordion to both of his children, Christina and Frank Jr. and it brings Frank great joy that all five of his grandchildren, Alexander (15), Nicholas (12), Caroline (11), Francesca (9) and Julianna (9), are accordion students of Frank Jr.

Frank and Carmela, his wife of 48 years, retired and moved to Virginia in 2015 to be close to their children and grandchildren, and they winter in Florida. Of course, the accordion still plays a major role in their daily lives no matter where they hang their hats.



*Thanks for a  
Lifetime of Joy  
Through Music*

From your adoring family

**The Felittis**

Jerry, Cathie, Pat, Donna



# Bravo Frank!

No matter the tune,  
you hit all the right notes!

We are your biggest fans and  
always your eager audience.

We are so proud to share in your  
well-deserved recognition tonight.

With all our love,  
Carmela,  
Christina, Frank, Marshall,  
Alex, Nicholas, Caroline,  
Francesca and Julianna





*From all your students...*







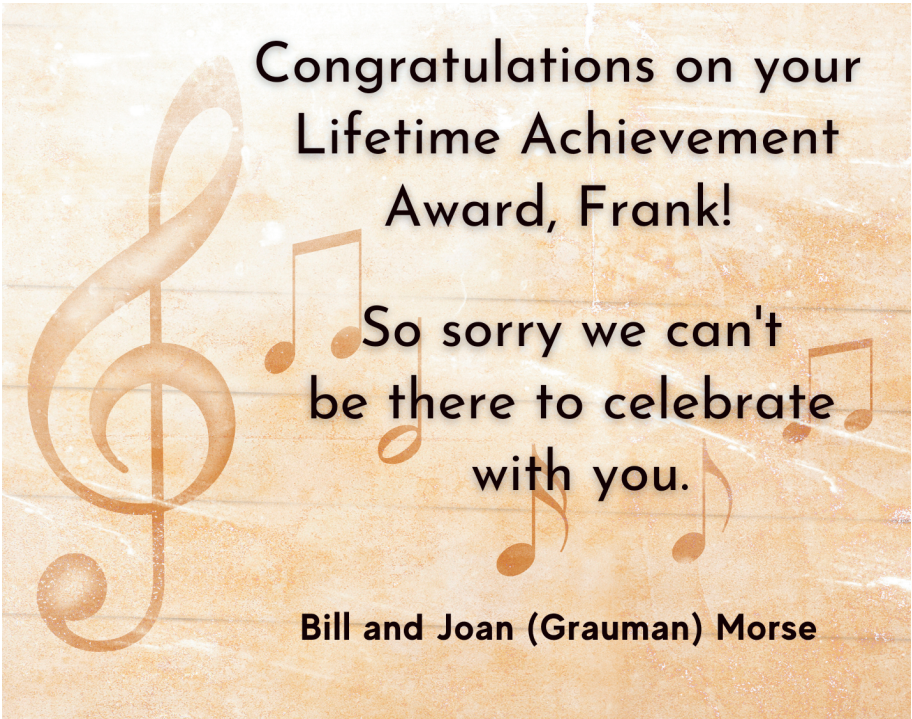
*Thank You, Mr. B!*



A circular graphic featuring a musical staff with various notes, clefs, and symbols in shades of red and black.

**Congratulations,  
Frank Busso,  
on a well-deserved  
achievement award.**

Your Friend,  
**Joe Cerrito**

A background of a musical staff with notes and symbols in shades of brown and gold.

**Congratulations on your  
Lifetime Achievement  
Award, Frank!**

**So sorry we can't  
be there to celebrate  
with you.**

**Bill and Joan (Grauman) Morse**



Congratulations

To

Frank Busso

On this well-deserved

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Your dedication as a teacher has made a major impact on the lives of your students, both personally and professionally.

You have inspired generations to find joy in music, strive for excellence and develop a lifelong passion for the accordion.

Thank you, Mr. B, for inspiring me!

With respect and gratitude,

Peter Tripi



# TO FRANK BUSSO: THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND.

***To the man that introduced music to my world like a permanent tattoo on my soul.*** I have been fortunately blessed with many strong role models to look up to, be inspired by and aided by in the navigation through life's ups and downs. One of those men being the one and only, Mr. Frank Busso!

The old adage that states: "the most important people in your life will always introduce you to new music". As musicians ourselves, We can all agree this to be common, possibly spiritual truth.

The odds of a young boy yearning for an outlet that of a disciplined artist pupil, meeting an accordion master at the age of 5 are extremely slim. With one of the most legendary mentor/student relationships of all time, Mr. Busso gifted me the knowledge of reading and writing music as well as understanding and performing the music on the accordion. Frank introduced his son, daughter and grandchildren to the beauty of music, which should be held in the highest regard.

Some of the core qualities he helped to instill in me were discipline, grace, patience and the absolute power of creativity. Till this day, I can still hear his voice, "***John...What you do in practice, you will do in performance***". That phrase stays with me as it takes on more and more meaning.

Mr. Busso worked with me for 12+ years to build my understanding of music. This has allowed me to pursue the craft of music in so many ways, both professionally and creatively. His mentorship allowed me to explore my passion of music with a bold ferocity, a Solid Stone music theory foundation, with both my mind and heart open to help new ideas and creativity flow.

I am forever grateful to my parents for their unconditional support, sacrifice and openness as they allowed me to pursue this craft and study under Frank. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you Mr. Busso for being who you are, and Glory to God for the countless memories we made bonding over music.

Your student,  
John Peter Moceo







It has been more than a few years, but it was one of the great privileges of my life to learn from Mr. Busso, my first mentor, music teacher, and one of the most important figures of my upbringing.

Not only did he cultivate my lifelong passion for music, Mr. Busso demonstrated by example what it meant to be a person of principle, of kindness, and of perseverance, lessons that have shaped me since the days of Little Red Caboose.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

*Love,*  
*Frank Tisellano and family*

*Music Magic Accordions USA extends our most sincere*

# Congratulations!

to

## Frank Busso, Sr.

*for being honored with the AAA 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award*

**Acknowledging a lifetime of dedication to the Accordion**

*Educator, Adjudicator, Performing Artist, Conductor, Industry Influencer*

**Frank, you've pretty much done it all!**

Sincerely,

*Alex & Lillianna Chudoliz*

## Become an AAA member today!

Your membership keeps you up to date on accordion events and helps to fund AAA events and projects.

Associate membership for hobbyists is just \$35/year!

Visit [ameraccord.com](http://ameraccord.com).



# *Our Man of the Century, Mr. Busso*

No words can truly describe his positive influence on us growing up. Mr. Busso has given his greatest gift which is his love of music.

He is caring and compassionate and has taught us perseverance and dedication...traits that carry forward in life. Mr. Busso has certainly earned respect and loyalty to this very day.

In our lives, he is held in the highest regard and is family. We admire and love him.

***Thank you for all that  
you have done.***

Congratulations on this  
Lifetime Achievement.  
It is well deserved.

*With Love and Gratitude,  
The Parziale Family*





# *Ready for a duet with my favorite teacher!*

I'm so lucky to have you as a teacher  
- and my dad!

I no longer need reminders to do  
my practicing, but we're always  
ready to play a tune with you!

*Love,  
Frank, Nicholas, Francesca & Julianna*





My teacher



Trio member



Next generation



5 more accordionists!



Always making headlines



Always  
my teacher,  
always  
my dad!

For giving us the  
gift of music every day,  
we thank you and  
we love you!

Love,  
Christina, Marshall,  
Alex & Caroline



**Some people  
call you  
"maestro"**

**We love to  
call you  
"Grandpa"**

With love from  
Caroline, Julianna, Alex,  
Nicholas, and Francesca