

Political Update

By Nina Albano Vidmer

Despite the advice of some of his political advisors, Rep. Franco A. Coladipietro (R-Bloomington) insisted on keeping his name, rather than change it to Frank when he ran for Illinois State Representative in the 45th district. He beat the incumbent on a platform based on integrity, hard work, and achieving the American dream. He obtained 53 percent of the vote in the primary, and won handily in the general election.

The son of Italian immigrants, Rep. Coladipietro was raised in Joliet and worked alongside his tradesman father during his youth. His drive and ambition would ultimately lead him to earn his juris doctorate degree and become active in the Republican Party

Coladipietro has been assigned to serve on the following committees: Professional Regulation, (chaired by Rep. Angelo "Skip" Saviano); Judiciary Civil Law; Public Utilities; Aging; International Trade; and the newly-formed Least Cost Power Procurement.

Coladipietro would like to see legislation on a capital spending bill. "We haven't had a capital bill in 3 or 4 years," says Coladipietro. He would also like to see education reform throughout the State of Illinois. "And not just education funding, from the standpoint of the schools needing more money – it's not going to solve the problem. We have to have more dialogue on why certain schools and children are failing. We need more money to fund special education – school mandates are not being funded at levels they were told they'd be funded," says Coladipietro.

Coladipietro is working on some pet projects, including anti gang legislation, with fellow Italian-American and freshman State Rep. Dennis Reboletti. The bill is designed to stiffen the penalties on recruitment of kids on the internet and adjacent to school grounds. He is also sponsoring a property tax relief bill and another on ethics.

Coladipietro joined the law firm of Amari & Locallo in 1995 and is the managing partner of the firm's Bloomington office. He graduated from The John Marshall Law School in 1993 where he served as an editor of *The John Marshall Law Review*. He is admitted to both the Illinois Bar (1993) and the New York Bar (1996). Franco received a B.S. in Finance from Northern Illinois University in 1990.

His political experience includes: scholarship chairman, Senator Carole Pankau; commissioner, Bloomington Fire Protection District No.1; Bloomington Township Republican Organization, associate committeeman; Bush/Cheney 2004, Bloomington Township coordinator; DuPage Republican Party, Bloomington Township coordinator, 2005; and chairman, Literature Distribution, Bloomington Township Republicans

Franco was selected as a member of the 2003 class of "40 Illinois Lawyers under 40", which is published by the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and also received the prestigious Illinois State Bar Association's "Board of Governors Award", ISBA Young Lawyer of the Year Award and Community Service Award.

Franco serves as a board director for the John Marshall Law School Alumni Association, Italian-American Political Coalition, Glen Oaks Hospital Foundation, DuCAP and the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce. The Bloomington Chamber recognized Franco's service to their business community by naming him "Rookie of the Year" and was awarded the John Marshall Law School Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award in 2004.

Franco is a frequent lecturer on the real estate tax assessment process and as instructor for the Oakton Community College Continuing Education Center and Lormar Educational Services. Franco is married and resides in Bloomington, Illinois with his wife, Amy, and his children, Alyssa Marie and Joseph.

This column is written by Nina Albano Vidmer, executive director of the Italian American Political Coalition. To submit information, please fax to 708-401-0360 by the first of each month for consideration in the following month's issue.