

The original documents are located in Box 2, folder “1976/09/07 - Presentation of Italian Bicentennial Gift, White House” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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MRS. FORD'S REMARKS
BICENTENNIAL PRESENTATION CEREMONY

MRS. LEONE
September 7, 1976

THANK YOU, MRS. LEONE,
FOR GIVING AMERICA
THIS VERY SPECIAL TREASURE.

THE LODI MINEATURE
IS SUCH A THOUGHTFUL

BICENTENNIAL GIFT,

AND IT WILL BE

A UNIQUE REMINDER

OF THE FRIENDSHIP AND WARMTH

BETWEEN THE AMERICAN

AND ITALIAN PEOPLES.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

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Kays

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 2, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO: MARIA DOWNS
FROM: SUSAN PORTER

This is to confirm our telephone conversation indicating that Mrs. Ford will receive Mrs. Leone, wife of the President of Italy, on Tuesday, September 7th, at 4:00 p.m. At that time, Mrs. Leone will present to Mrs. Ford one of Italy's gifts to this nation for the Bicentennial, a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, the Lodi miniature, one of the few paintings for which Thomas Jefferson posed. Accompanying her will be Ambassador and Mrs. Roberto Gaja and a Minister of Tourism. A list will be supplied to you by Denis Clift, who is the contact (ext. 5607). Attached is a biography of Mrs. Leone for Mrs. Ford. I expect because this is a Bicentennial presentation and the painting is a major one, there should definitely be press coverage. The file is attached.

Thank you.

- c: BF Staff
- Denis Clift
- Jeanne Davis
- Milt Mitler
- Myron Kuropas
- William Nicholson
- Jerry Jones
- Terry O'Donnell
- Rex Scouten
- Staircase



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 1, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: SUSAN PORTER

FROM: JEANNE W. DAVIS *JW*

SUBJECT: *JW* Visit of Mrs. Leone

Donna Vittoria Leone, wife of the President of Italy, will visit the United States from September 4 to September 8 to attend the Sept. 7 Kennedy Center premiere performance of the La Scala Opera Company. Before the performance, Italian Ambassador Gaja will give a small dinner for Mrs. Leone.

The Italian Embassy has invited Mrs. Ford to the dinner at 6 p.m., September 7 and to the premiere performance later that evening. If Mrs. Ford's schedule will not permit her to attend the dinner and opera, we recommend that she invite Mrs. Leone to call on her at the White House earlier on September 7. We are informed that Mrs. Leone wishes to present the "Lodi Miniature" -- one of the few paintings for which Thomas Jefferson posed -- to Mrs. Ford as a Bicentennial present. Biographic data on Mrs. Leone is attached at Tab I. Please inform us of Mrs. Ford's wishes as soon as possible,

Vittoria Michitto LEONE
(Phonetic: layOHnay)

ITALY

Wife of the President

Addressed as:
Mrs. Leone



The great grand-daughter of a Spanish woman, granddaughter of an Englishman and daughter of an Italian physician, Vittoria Leone, née Michitto, is now the wife of the President of Italy, Giovanni Leone.

Initially her father objected to the July 1946 marriage because of the couple's difference in age: She was 18 and had applied for admission to a university; he was 38 and a lawyer in the Defense Ministry. Despite the age difference, the Leones have had a happy marriage.

As the wife of President Leone, Vittoria Leone is Italy's First Lady, but as far as her countrymen are concerned she is Italy's ambassador of fashion. A woman of taste rather than style, she is among Italy's best dressed women. Valentino of Rome is her favorite couturier, although occasionally she buys clothes from the collections of Princess Irene Galitzine, Pino Lancetti and Renato Balestra.

Donna Vittoria, as she is known to the Italian women, does not enjoy the limelight that goes with the Presidency. She regrets the loss of her privacy. Her main interest in life has been and remains her husband and her three sons: Giancarlo, 18, a photographer; Paolo, 20, a law student; and Mauro, 28, a professor of law at the University of Rome. A polio victim in his youth, Mauro underwent spinal surgery in Los Angeles in 1961, and the Leones visited him there several times. Mrs. Leone is very grateful to the Americans for Mauro's cure. For relaxation she enjoys literature, painting and classical music. Mrs. Leone and her children speak English well.

13 May 1975