



FRIENDS of FLORENCE

June 13, 2019

SIMONETTA BRANDOLINI D'ADDA, PRESIDENT OF THE FRIENDS OF FLORENCE FOUNDATION, AWARDED THE ORDER OF MERIT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC



Left to right: Cristina Giacchi, Vice Mayor of Florence; Cristina Giacchi; Dr. Laura Lega, Prefect of Florence; Simonetta Kortum Brandolini d'Adda, President of the Friends of Florence Foundation; Dr. Andrea Pessina, Superintendent of Fine Arts for Florence, Prato and Pistoia. Photography by Umberto Visentini

Florence, Italy... On 2 June 2019, the anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Italy in 1946, Simonetta Kortum Brandolini d'Adda, President of the Friends of Florence Foundation, was awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (*Cavaliere Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana*). The ceremony was held in Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence, and the award was presented by Dr. Andrea Pessina, Soprintendente Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Città Metropolitana di Firenze e le province di Pistoia e Prato.

The Order of Merit of the Italian Republic—equivalent of a knighthood—was created in 1951 and came into effect in 1952. The law establishing the order states that it is awarded for “merit acquired by the nation in the fields of literature, the arts, economics, public service, and social, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities and for long and conspicuous service in civilian and military careers.”

The award acknowledges the Foundation’s numerous achievements under Simonetta Brandolini d’Adda’s leadership since co-founding Friends of Florence in 1998, with a mission to preserve and restore important examples of Florentine and Tuscan heritage. The Foundation works in close collaboration with the owner-institutions, government monitoring agencies, and restorers.

“I am truly proud and grateful to have received this high honor for the work we have been doing over the past twenty years together with our donors, the teams that work with us, and our partners,”

said Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda. "My commitment to cultural heritage preservation is driven by the desire to offer future generations the same opportunities we have today—seeing, studying, and enjoying the cultural treasures and artistic masterworks of Florence and Tuscany, many of which are centuries old. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all who have believed and continue to believe in our work, and especially my sister Renée Gardner who co-founded Friends of Florence with me. This honor serves as further encouragement to continue our endeavors so that more works of art in this city and region can continue to inspire and tell their stories to the world for years and, hopefully, centuries to come."

Among the other Florentine dignitaries in attendance were Dr. Laura Lega, the Prefect of Florence, and Vice Mayor Cristina Giacchi.

Friends of Florence

Friends of Florence is a non-profit foundation supported by individuals from around the world who are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the rich cultural heritage of Florence and Tuscany and conserving irreplaceable artistic and cultural treasures. Friends of Florence identifies significant projects spanning centuries in need of restoration, secures funding, and works in collaboration with local authorities to complete projects.

Since its founding in 1998, the Foundation has raised and donated \$10 million for conservation projects in the region. Friends of Florence works directly with Florence's famed conservation laboratories to ensure restoration is done at the highest level, has the approval of the City of Florence and the Italian Ministry of Art, and is completed on time and on budget.

Through its work, Friends of Florence creates opportunities for the study and appreciation of paintings, sculptures, architectural elements, places of worship, and collections at the Uffizi Gallery, the Accademia, the Baptistry, the Piazza della Signoria, the Museum of San Marco, and dozens of other museums, churches, and public sites.

A model of high-impact, low-overhead philanthropy, Friends of Florence is the primary source of funding for the city's conservators, a respected partner with museums and cultural authorities in Italy and the U.S., and a publisher/producer of publications, multimedia offerings, seminars, lectures, and cultural travel opportunities.

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