



Lt. Cmdr. Kelly Armstrong presents an album made up of photographs taken throughout Connie Henderson's 44 years with Region Legal Service Office during her retirement ceremony at the Capodichino Chapel, April 29. (Photo by LNC Stephen Thaggard)

Retirement Ceremony Held for 'Mainstay' who Began her RLSO Career in 1970

By Lt. Parker Carlisle, Region Legal Service Office

The Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) and the greater Navy community in Naples bid farewell to Concetta Henderson, April 29, at her retirement ceremony at the Capodichino Chapel following more than four decades of service.

As an Italian local national, Henderson played a pivotal role assisting in obtaining Sojourner's permits and visas, dealing with immigration issues, facilitating local marriage permits and acting as a liaison between the local government, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. government.

Henderson first started working at Naval Support Activity Naples in 1970. Throughout her career, Henderson worked exclusively in the Legal office, assisting military members, families, civilians and those working in support of the mission and operations in Italy.

Henderson worked for more than 15 commanding officers. She was the primary expert on Italian citizenship, foreign adoptions, marriages, immigration and was intimately involved in resolving complex international law issues under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), related Italian-U.S. bilateral agreements and Italian law. Her professionalism provided a steadfast foundation of knowledge and experience within RLSO. Her efforts were recognized in numerous letters of commendation and appreciation shared from customers and area commands, as well as Civilian of the Quarter and Civilian of the Year designation over thirty times.

In 1999, the Department of the Navy awarded Henderson the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for her contributions in working closely with the U.S. Embassy in Rome and the Italian government on a SOFA issue dealing with the hiring of dual Italian-U.S. nationals. The issue and outcome affected more than 350 employees in the Naples area.

"What can you say about Connie; she was professional, dedicated, a people person and an excellent liaison," said Silvana Palmese. "She was dedicated to helping people at all hours of the day."

A bedrock during Area Orientation, Henderson ensured new arrivals – military members, civilians, contractors and their families – received the Sojourner's permit brief, and assisted with the documentation required for continued lawful presence in Italy. She was often the first local national that new arrivals encountered and was well-known for her ability to provide assistance with immigration issues and her willingness to respond as needed.

"Connie's legacy is the literally thousands of lives of service members, families and civilians that she has touched at Naples throughout the years," said Capt. Scott Laurer, RLSO commanding officer.

She has been described as a "mainstay" and "stalwart" of the Navy legal community in Naples. Henderson has become, as a former executive officer wrote, "part of the fabric of the Region Legal Service Office, the Judge Advocate General's Corps and the Navy."

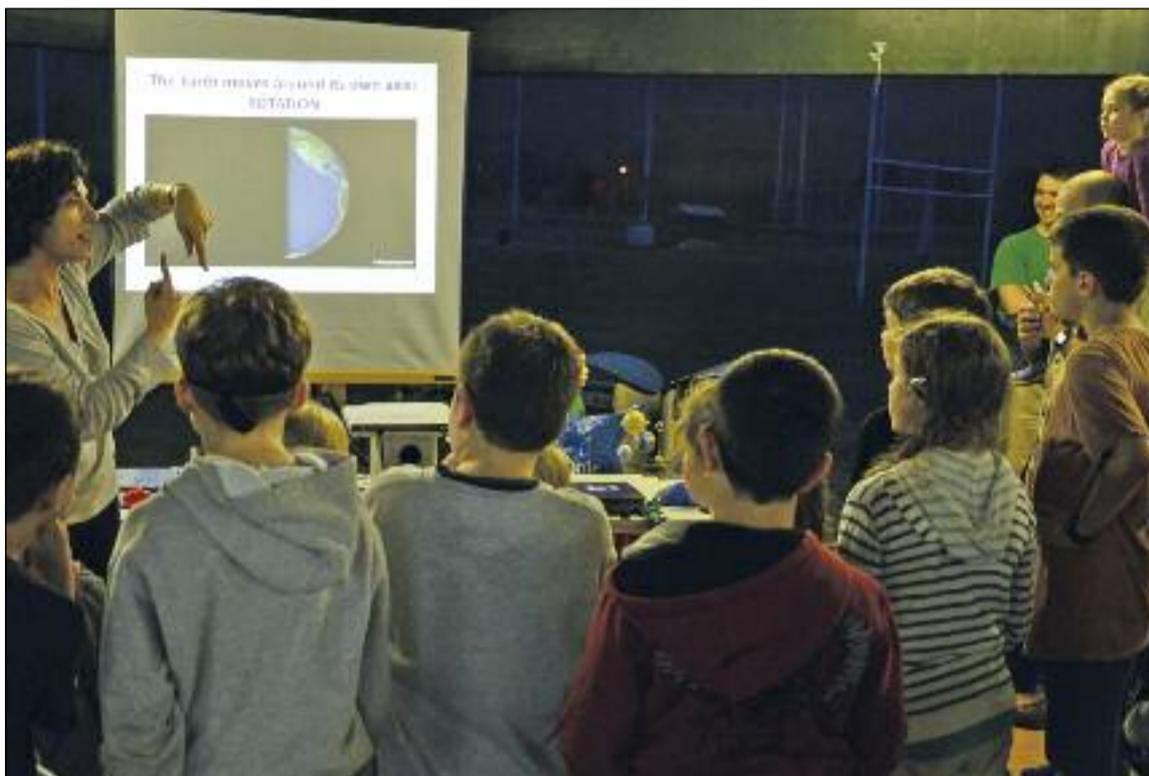
Henderson's career was honored by the Naples community during the ceremony and she was presented with her second Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the second highest award to a civilian employee of the federal government.

"I'll miss my job; to relate to the people and solve problems was the best part," said Henderson. "It doesn't even feel like 44 years."

In keeping with tradition, her coworkers wished her "fair winds and following seas" and *Questo è un "arrivederci," non un addio.*

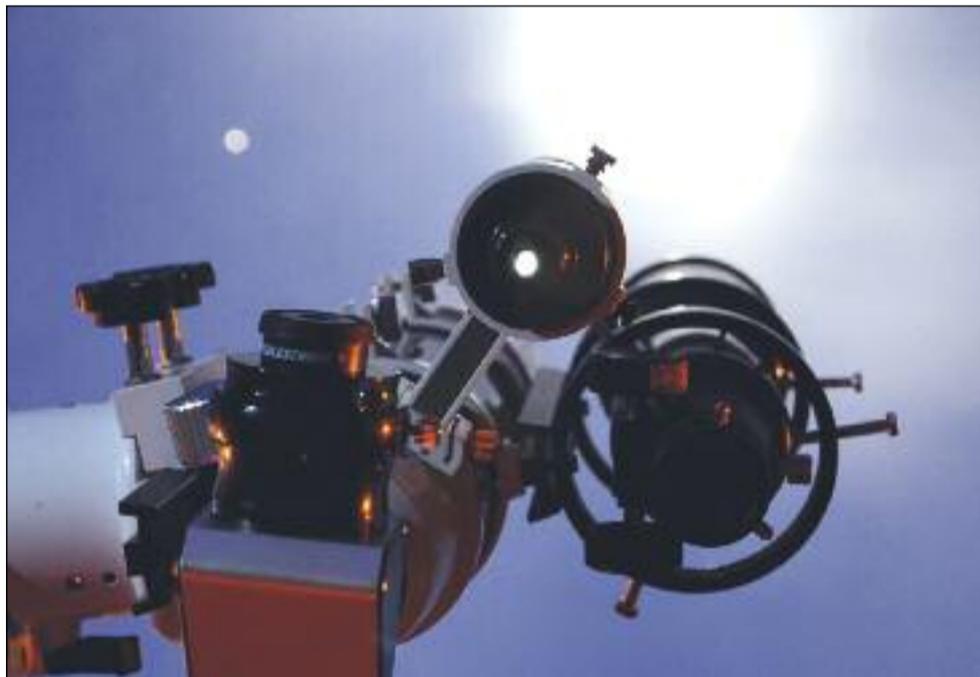
Carney Park Astronomy Night

Community members had the opportunity to see the moon, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn through four telescopes provided by the AstroCampania association, a local non-profit team of astronomy enthusiasts, during Carney Park Astronomy Night, May 10. Besides Carney Park, astronomy enthusiasts were out worldwide for the opportunity to see Saturn and its rings, as the night marked the closest the planet will be to Earth in 2014.



Mercurio Amata, guest speaker from the children's department of the Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte in Naples, gives an overview of how the Earth revolves around the sun during Carney Park Astronomy Night, May 10. (Photos by MCC Travis Simmons)

A look through one of the telescopes provided by the AstroCampania association, a local non-profit team of astronomy enthusiasts, during Carney Park Astronomy Night, May 10. The night marked the closest Saturn will be to Earth in 2014.



Guests take turns looking through telescopes during Carney Park Astronomy Night, May 10. The night marked the closest Saturn will be to Earth in 2014