



# Meet Casa Italia's 2022 MAN OF THE YEAR!



Casa Italia will honor transportation construction dynamo Joseph Dote as Man of the Year at its 2022 gala on June 24 at Belvedere Banquets in Elk Grove Village.

Dote currently serves as senior vice president for R. M. Chin & Associates Inc. and general manager of facilities and construction for the O'Hare Airport Transit System as part of a joint venture that has operated and maintained the system since 1994.

Since 1988, he has been responsible for the conceptualization, planning, design oversight and construction of more than \$12 billion in capital improvement projects at O'Hare and Midway International airports. At each, he has been tasked with coordinating the activities of engineers, architects and tradesmen; airlines and airport management; aviation authorities on the city, state and federal levels; and a dizzying array of public stakeholders, from police and fire departments to gas, electric and water companies.

"Every project has been a new challenge, and I learn more every time I work on one," Dote says. "It's been a long ride, and it's been exciting every day. That's what keeps me coming back."

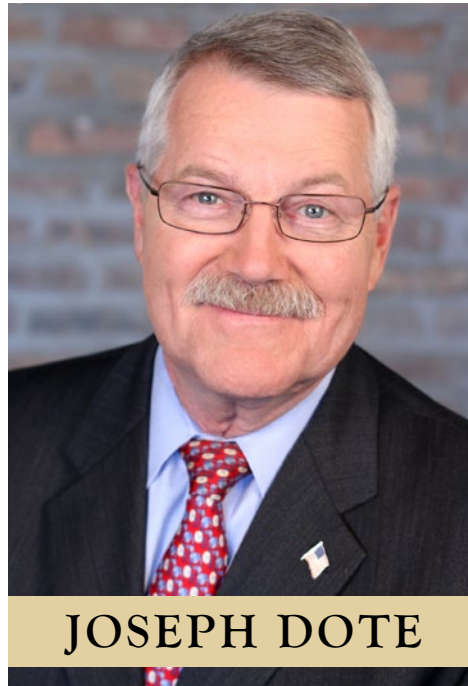
His mission? To get the job done right and bring it home on time, on budget, and with a minimal impact on the traveler and the surrounding community. "My motto is, 'Don't let them know we've been there,'" he reveals. "Complete the work with the least possible disruption to the public and build it with quality so it lasts a long time."

He's been so successful, few outside of his industry know he exists. But even fewer individuals have had as profound an impact on the way travelers at Midway and O'Hare transition from the ground to the air and back again.

Dote's grandparents emigrated to America from Italy in the late 1880s, one of them from Calabria and the other three from the area around Naples. "So basically I'm Neapolitan' with a little Calabrese thrown in, which accounts for my hard-headedness," he laughs. "I get the job done, no matter what the odds."

He has many fond memories of growing up in Chicago's legendary Taylor Street Little Italy, where his parents, Joseph and Mary, ran a tavern and pizzeria. An only child, he never thought of himself as one because the neighborhood was an enormous extended family. "Everybody knew each other, everybody watched out for each other and everything revolved around food," he recalls.

With only a grade school education, Dote's father was intent



JOSEPH DOTE

on sending his son to St. Ignatius, a prestigious nearby high school run by the Jesuits. Dote was able to realize that dream, even though his dad passed away when Dote was only 12. "My parents scrimped and saved to make it happen, and I'm forever in their debt," he says.

Dote was bitten by the architecture bug while at St. Ignatius, where he studied the awe-inspiring structures of ancient Rome while marveling at masterpieces in his own backyard, like Our Lady of Pompeii Church. "I wondered, 'How did they build that?'" he recalls.

A bachelor of science in architecture and building technology from the University of Illinois at Chicago and early employment at the Chicago Department of Public Works paved the way to projects of increasing complexity at Midway and O'Hare airports. Dote steadily worked his way up from draftsman and resident engineer to general superintendent and

project manager and finally to construction manager and deputy director.

In the course of his storied career, Dote took the lead in:

- installing the railway system connecting the four terminals at O'Hare (1988-93);
- completely transforming the terminals, concourse and parking lots at Midway (2000-03);
- creating the strategic pre-plan to expand and improve the airfield at O'Hare (2003-05);
- constructing the new rental car facility at Midway and connecting it to the rest of the airport (2011-12);
- connecting O'Hare to Rosemont via Balmoral Avenue and extending the Airport Transit System railway to the new consolidated rental car facility (2013-present).

In 2011, the Chicago Interfaith Airport Chapel bestowed its Wings of Vision Award upon Dote for his vast contributions to the smooth running of O'Hare and Midway airports. He also received the Paul Harris Fellowship from the Rotary Club in 2018 for his tireless fundraising efforts on the organization's behalf.

A father of four and grandfather of six, Dote is proud of the legacy he will be leaving them as well as the metropolitan area. "When my kids were little, we would drive around the city, and I would say, 'Hey, your dad built that,' and now my kids are doing that with their kids," he says. "I'm amazed sometimes when I go back and look at the projects we completed over the years. It's satisfying to know we overcame all the obstacles and improved the experience for anyone flying into and out of the city."



JOSEPH DOTE is the Senior Vice President, R. M. Chin & Associates, Inc.  
and General Manager, Facilities and Construction, O'Hare Airport Transit System

