2026 DINNER and AWARDS for ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Maura Marino
Award Presenter

Good evening. My name is Maura Marino, and along with my sisters, Maggie and Alicia, it's been our privilege to co-chair tonight's dinner. Thank you to the team and board at FASPE for your incredible work, and to each of you for being here.

Over the years, my sisters and I have had a front-row seat as FASPE became one of the things that matters most to our dad.

He was a Founding Board Member, and in the early days, he and David Goldman sat down with a lot of questions. Would this idea have legs? What would the program actually look like? Is someone else already doing this? And the more they asked, the more convinced they became. Professionals lead in nearly every part of society, and they need a strong ethical foundation. And the history of the Holocaust is the most powerful way to teach it, because it isn't theoretical. We know what happens when doctors, lawyers, journalists, faith leaders, and business leaders go along instead of standing up.

My dad's own sense of what ethical leadership means started at home. When my grandfather came to the U.S. from Italy, he worked construction by day, and at night he made cornerites, a tool used to strengthen the corners of rooms. Each morning, he sold them to the job sites he walked past. That side business grew into the family business, and after the Navy, my dad joined his father and brothers there. With the family name on the door, he knew it was on him to represent the values of my grandparents and our family.

So whether it was at home or at work, my dad has always been the person people turn to. When my cousin tried to start a business selling alcoholic chewing gum, he was one of her first calls. When his community needed someone to bring neighbors together to restore the beach after a hurricane, they knew who to ask. And he is a godfather to more children than I can count. My sisters and I joke that every week we learn about another godchild.

So it raises the question: why do so many people turn to him?

I don't think it's because he was born with some kind of moral clarity others lack.

I think it's because he knows that good people are capable of doing very bad things. FASPE's Fellows study how ordinary professionals, people who thought of themselves as good, became complicit. My dad is humble enough to know that this includes him too, and avoiding that fate requires active work: looking at problems from every angle. Not assuming your answer is the right answer. Asking questions without judgment. Re-examining your own beliefs. Being willing to admit you're wrong.

So what I've come to realize is that people don't come to my dad because he has the best answers. They come to him because he has the best questions.

That is exactly what FASPE tries to teach. The program doesn't hand Fellows answers. It teaches them to ask better questions.

For more than fifteen years, my dad has given FASPE his support, his guidance, and his hands-on board service. FASPE honors him tonight for what he has contributed, and for who he is to this organization and its Fellows: a champion of its mission, a trusted advisor, and a model of the leader FASPE hopes to inspire.

Dad, thank you for showing us what it looks like to examine our own choices, and to keep asking the hard questions. Thank you for teaching us that being good isn't something you are. It's something you practice, and something you inspire in others through your own actions.

And I'm proud tonight to share one more thing: with this honor, and beginning this summer with the 2027 class of Fellows, FASPE's business program will be known as the Fred Marino Business Fellowship.

Every Fellow who comes through it will carry a little of what you've given this organization, and what you've given us.

Please join me in welcoming my father, Fred Marino