



SPORTS
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REGION
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BUSINESS
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TIMES UNION

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Real estate powerhouse Francesco Galesi dies at 95

Developer grew business with decommissioned military sites

By Steve Barnes
STAFF WRITER

SCHENECTADY — Francesco Galesi, who turned decommissioned military properties in western New York and the Capital Region into a national empire that spanned multiple industries, married a Russian princess and was once among the richest people in America, died Friday at age 95 in Palm Beach, Fla.

His death was confirmed by David Buicko, who joined the Galesi Group in 1982 and has served as its president and CEO for the past decade. Galesi died

of natural causes, Buicko said, with his wife of 43 years, Marina Galesi, at his side.

Buicko said his mentor's insight six decades ago into the development potential for the military properties was representative of his business style: Again and again, from Schenectady to Texas and California, Galesi saw opportunities in undervalued properties that others didn't.

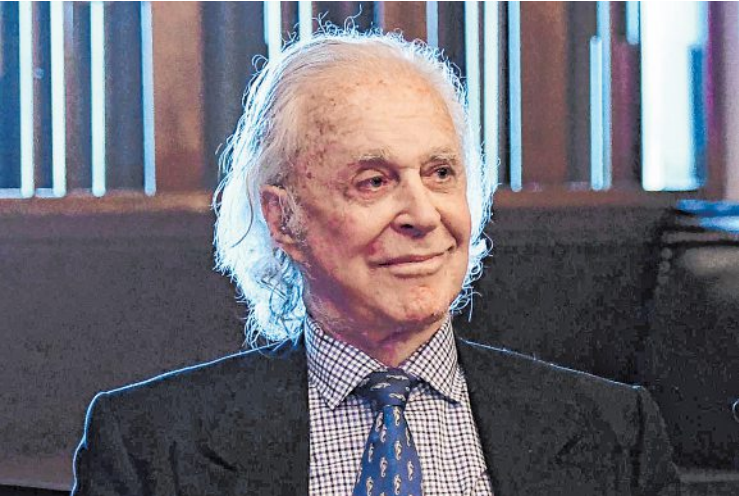
"He would always think out of the box," Buicko said, "and his instincts were usually pretty good."

Born Nov. 5, 1930, in New Jersey to Sicilian immigrants, Gale-

si was one of six children. His father became a contractor, which led to an older brother, Vincent Galesi, starting property businesses. After service in the Marines and graduation from Princeton, Galesi joined Vincent on an early enterprise, a shopping center in Binghamton, in the early 1960s before venturing to their first military property, a former Army helicopter plant in the Buffalo area.

Galesi went solo after Vincent's death from a brain tumor in 1969, the same year Galesi scored his first Capital Region success with the purchase of the

See **GALESI**, A8



Will Waldron/Times Union
Galesi Group founder Francesco Galesi at Rivers Casino in 2019, as his company was marking its 50th year in operation.



Photos by Lori Van Buren/Times Union

First-year student Ive Nunez-Thongthip of Binghamton, right, waits to take the elevator Tuesday at the State Quad tower at the University at Albany. Helping her move in were, from left, stepfather Bryan McCollum, father Rafael Nunez, sister Yexenia Nunez-Thongthip and mother Pai Thongthip.

UAlbany welcomes its largest freshman class

By Kathleen Moore
STAFF WRITER

ALBANY — The biggest freshman class in recorded history for the University at Albany has moved in.

The university reported a 20% increase in the number of first-year students, a huge number as other colleges report persistent decreases. Part of the reason for UAlbany's suc-

cess: its Anti-Melt Committee, which spent the summer checking in with prospective students to solve problems and ensure they arrived Tuesday.

There are 3,500 students in the freshman class, up 700 students from last year. Every one of them was guaranteed a dorm room, but the influx meant that 600 of them are living in what the uni-

See **FIRST-YEARS**, A5



First-year students and their families pack the elevators at State Quad.

ICE detains Albany children

Family separated at two sites; community decries impact of immigration action on kids

By Cat Carroll
STAFF WRITER

ALBANY — A family of four, including two children ages 9 and 5, was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement last week in Albany, sending the children and their mother to a Texas detention center and leaving their father detained in western New York.

The family was among a series of ICE apprehensions in the Capital Region on Monday, Aug. 10, but it was the only known instance that day in which children were also detained, according to the Capital Region Sanctuary Coalition, a group that tracks ICE activity in the area.

The apprehension of the family took place around 5:30 a.m. on Hackett Boulevard and Clara Barton Drive. Boris Nolasco, a friend of the family, said 27-year-old Kevin Ushiña was heading to work with his family when he noticed a vehicle following him. Ushiña immediately drove back to his apartment building, at which point five vehicles were behind him. As soon as he stepped out of his vehicle, Ushiña was approached and appeared to be handcuffed by an ICE agent, according to apartment building security camera footage reviewed by the Times Union.

Ushiña's wife, Veronica Saquillo, was blocked by an agent from returning inside, and she and the two children were brought to a vehicle. It is not certain whether the agents were in plainclothes or were clearly labeled as ICE or its law enforcement arm, Enforcement and Removal Operations.

"I'm most impacted by how scary the scene

See **ICE**, A4

Gendebien prepares to take spotlight in run for Congress

Democrat stresses centrist roots as he takes on GOP's Constantino in 21st District

By Alexander MacDougall
STAFF WRITER

GLENS FALLS — Blake Gendebien has a lot of ground to cover if he wants to win the 21st Congressional District.

By far New York's largest district in terms of area, it spans 15 counties ranging from parts of the Capital Region to the North Country border with Canada. Gendebien hopes to become the first Democrat in more than a decade to win the district, which has been considered solidly Republican since U.S. Rep. Elise

Stefanik gained the seat in 2014.

That won't be an easy task: Gendebien faces Sticker Mule CEO Anthony Constantino, who has poured \$12 million of his own money into his campaign, putting him in the top 10 list of House candidates in terms of money amassed. The Republican can also lay claim to having a far bigger media presence, consistently uploading posts and videos to social media and stealing headlines with his unconventional antics.

Gendebien, by contrast, has been far more subdued when it comes to public

engagement.

But as the race appears to narrow, the Democrat's tactics may be changing. During a recent stop in Glens Falls, Gendebien sat down with the Times Union for a wide-ranging interview discussing his policy goals, his family and some of his thoughts on the democratic socialist candidates running in New York.

'The smell of manure always made me miss the farm'

Gendebien was born and raised in the

See **GENDEBIEN**, A3



Alexander MacDougall/Times Union
Blake Gendebien and his wife, Carmen, in Glens Falls on Friday. Gendebien said he decided to run for Congress because of federal policies he said hurt North Country residents.