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## Aliquippa native set to sing for the "Donald"

Former Aliquippa resident Lawrence Branchetti has a pretty big gig on Feb. 27. He's going to belt out a few tunes at a \$1,000-a-plate dinner at Donald Trump's mansion in Palm Beach.

Branchetti, who has lived in Miami for the past 30 years, was hired to entertain at a fund-raiser hosted by The Donald to benefit lupus research. Branchetti will do 45 minutes of Frank Sinatra music, what he calls a tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes.

"I'm not a Sinatra impersonator," he explains. "There's a similarity of voice and style, but I don't try to act like him or impersonate him."

Branchetti performs songs that spanned Sinatra's singing career from the 1930s to the 1990s. For the Trump soiree he'll include the easily recognizable standards: "The Lady is a Tramp," "My Way" and "For Once in My Life," among others.

Branchetti's has been exposed to music since childhood. His mother, Carmela, who still lives in Aliquippa, sang and played piano. And he remembers being influenced by Sinatra's music since he was 8 years old. While a student at Aliquippa High School, he was a member of the high school chorus, sang the lead in Christmas plays and performed around town with a few be-bop bands. He graduated from Aliquippa High in 1965 and four years later moved to Miami.

He's entertained off and on over the years, but his career has gained momentum in the last several years. In March, he opened for Sam Butera at a major nightclub in Fort Lauderdale. Butera, best known as Louie Prima's tenor sax man, played a tribute to Prima; Branchetti did a Sinatra tribute. Right now Branchetti's management group is working on booking him as an opening act for an entertainer at a major Las Vegas casino. (No names 'til it's a done-deal.)

He'd love to come back and perform for the people in Beaver Valley. "Maybe a fund-raising event originating out of Aliquippa," he said. "Everyone was good to me while I was growing up."

The price was wrong