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## Rebirth and Tribute

Spring is the time of rebirth and Easter is the resurrection, which is the theme of this issue.



### FROM THE EDITOR

Our cover story on Baltimore Deputy Mayor Kaliope Parthemos focuses on the rebirth of a great American city through the good works of the best and brightest of their generation, Parthemos and her friend, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who is the mayor of the city and who together have brought new energy and vision to a grand old lady fallen on hard times. "I think things are going really well in Baltimore," says Parthemos, the first in her family to go to college, who also went on to get a law degree and become the highest serving woman of Greek descent in Maryland. "We have new development that is underway. We have business that is expanding and growing. I think we're doing good things in Baltimore."

Part of her mission, she says, is to help get a Hellenic museum underway in Baltimore to archive the life and times and oral histories of the Greek immigrants who came to the city and other cities in America, and to record the history of Greek immigration to America.

My father was one of those pioneers who came to America in the '50s, leaving behind a war-ravaged Greece recovering from both a world war and civil war, a civil war in which he fought in the mountains in what should have been the best years of his life. And yet he had the stamina and courage to return and go back to school, apply for a scholarship to the United States, get it to one of the venerable institutions of learning in America, Columbia University, and come here and get both his masters and Ph.D. and go on to serve and transform Greek Canadian and Greek American parochial school education for the next thirty years.

His history is only one, an epic one, in the history of the immigrants who came to America this century, perhaps our greatest generation in modern times, who not only helped save Greece by coming here and never forgetting their obligation to Greece (both politically and monetarily), but also providing the bridge of memories that is our own enduring legacy.

I was born in Greece and lived there briefly; I have some memories. But many of them since I came here, deeper into our history, came from the people who made this history, my mother and father, and since my father was also a spellbinding storyteller, he made this history come alive. As Parthemos herself said, we are losing this generation, with all their memories, and we should make an effort, a concerted effort, as the generations that benefited from the sacrifices of our parents and our papoules and yiayias, to pay them homage and pay tribute to their sacrifice by recording and preserving their memories before they're gone forever. They were the witness to this history, they lived it, and no one can speak of it better. The Hellenic Museum in Chicago was a great first step in this effort, there are smaller archives, but this should be a major effort by all the cities in America, by the generations that benefited, by all of us, before our legacy crumbles with the passing of the heroic men and women who made everything possible for us.

My heart is broken with the passing of my father, but his life and memory, and others of his brave and incomparable generation, should never be forgotten.

*Dimitri Constantine Michalakakis*

Dimitri Constantine Michalakakis

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## A TRIBUTE TO LUCY MAROULLETI: THE FOLK STORIES AND FOLK POEMS OF CYPRUS



From left, Polys Kyriacou, poet/lyricist, Georgios Eliopoulos, Consul Gen. Greece NY, Elias Tsekerides, Pres. Fed. Of Hell. Societies of Greater NY, Elena Maroulleti, Pres. CYPRECO, Consul Gen. Cyprus Koula Sofianou, Assemblymember Aravella Simotas, VP of Cyprus Fed. Of America, Chris Nicolaou, Fay, singer, Glafkos Kontemeniotis, musician, Evangelos Kyriakopoulos Consul, Greece

CYPRECO of America, Inc., launched its 2012 cultural activities with the successful presentation of the program, “The Folk Stories and Folk Poems of Cyprus” as Compiled and Published by the Late Lucy Maroulleti, author, poet, translator, storyteller.

In a big turnout at the Stathakion Cultural Center in Astoria, New York, members and leaders of the Cypriot and Greek American community, Greek, Cypriot and American officials and other dignitaries attended the event which also coincided with the late Lucy Maroulleti’s birthday.

The multi-talented Lucy Maroulleti distinguished herself within the Greek and Cypriot American community and abroad for her important contributions to the promotion of the culture, folklore and literary arts of Cyprus and Greece in America through her work with CYPRECO of America of which she was a co-founder, as well as through her poetry, novels, plays, her acting, her storytelling and her award winning literary translations from Greek (Modern and ancient) into English and from English into Greek. Some of Lucy’s activities were further highlighted in a mini-documentary.

The program featured Cypriot folk stories and folk poems from Lucy’s books, “Once Upon a Time, Folk Stories My Grandmother Told Me” and “Cypriot Folk Poems, 900-1900AD”, which Lucy collected over the years and translated herself from the Cypriot Greek into English. They were presented in the original by Polys Kyriacou, a poet and lyricist and in English by Elena Maroulleti, President of CYPRECO and Executive Producer of the event.

Referring to the folk stories and folk poems in these two featured books, Elena Maroulleti stressed that, “they are considered exceptional and important because Lucy was the first to ever translate them from Cypriot dialect into English while most of them do not exist in any other publication. In her English translation, Lucy adhered strictly to the original text without any adaptations or improvements. Both books comprise today an invaluable point of reference for anyone who wants to know about the folk stories and poems of rural Cyprus”.

The presentation included the folk stories, “The Sleeping Princess”, “The Ghoul” and “The Snake and the Merchant”. Referring to them Elena Maroulleti stressed that, “these are stories which survived orally through a

span of one thousand or more years and which have travelled through the mouths of mostly illiterate and older people in rural Cyprus. However apart from the entertaining part they each convey very strong messages about mankind and the challenges we face and how we should always chose good vs evil, kindness vs greed, love vs hate among other.” As far as the folk poems, the program included the legendary poem of Arodafnousa, found only in Cyprus and the poem, “Chrystalou and Charon”. As in the folk stories, these poems also survived orally over the centuries by word of mouth and they too convey special messages about life and mankind in general.



Polys Kyriacou and Elena Maroulleti, President of CYPRECO.

The newly appointed Consul General of Greece to New York Georgios Eliopoulos, the Consul General of Cyprus to New York Koula Sofianou, the President of the Federation of Hellenic Societies Elias Tsekerides and the Vice President of the Cyprus Federation Chris Nikolaou offered greeting messages. All speakers praised CYPRECO for its ongoing dedication in bringing to the community unique programs which celebrate the rich history, culture and folklore of Cyprus. They also spoke with outmost admiration about the late Lucy Maroulleti and her work which was presented.

The program concluded with a musical performance with selected songs by great Greek composers such as Manos Hadjidakis. In a very unique performance, Greek American singer Fay accompanied on the keyboards by the well-known musician and composer Glafkos Kontemeniotis truly moved the audience with her passionate interpretation of the songs, most of which were Lucy’s favorites.

The multi-talented and multi-awarded Lucy Maroulleti was born in Egypt by Cypriot parents and moved to Cyprus in the early 1940’s during the Second World War and she lived there until the Turkish invasion of 1974, which forced her to leave her ancestral lands in the north and become a refugee along with some other 200,000 Greek Cypriots. She moved with her family in London for a year and in 1975 she immigrated to America and settled in Astoria, New York, where she lived until her death in 2005. Lucy held a Certificate of “Proficiency in Greek and in English” from the Cambridge University in London, England and she has translated many famous Greek contemporary poets, as well as ancient playwrights while her work has been published in several newspapers and magazines here in the U.S., in Cyprus and in England. Lucy Maroulleti passed away on October 11, 2005 and she will be sorely missed by many. Always with a burning curiosity of life itself and the desire to share her unique and insightful visions with all those around her, Lucy opened her heart and focused her thoughts and spirit on the profound. As with many before her throughout the centuries, Lucy Maroulleti endured severe hardships in life but never once did she cease to smile upon and recite upon the beauty and profundity of life. Lucy left this world with a warm and knowing smile on her face.

CYPRECO’s new folk arts program which was offered with free admission as a public service to the community, was under the auspices of the Cyprus Federation of America and it was made possible in part through the generous support of Arch Capital Services, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cyprus Federation of America and Astoria Federal Savings Bank, Ditmars Branch in Astoria, NY.

CYPRECO is now gearing up for its next folk arts program entitled, “The Traditional Cypriot Bread”. The program offered with free admission, will take place on Friday, June 8, 2012 at 8pm at the Stathakion Cultural Center in Astoria, NY. It will feature the screening of a very rare hour-long original documentary that will transport the audience directly to rural Cyprus to discover the history behind the making of the traditional Cypriot bread. According to early historians, the Cypriot bread, was not only exceptional quality but in the 18th century it was also the best found in the entire Levant. The long road leading from wheat to bread is also the path followed by this film, which “reaps” the last opportunities for immortalizing scenes featuring individuals from the Cypriot countryside who for years were involved in traditional cereal-crop cultivation.

For more information about this program the phone number is (718) 545-1151 and the email [cypreco@earthlink.net](mailto:cypreco@earthlink.net). For regular updates regarding CYPRECO’s events their website is [www.cyprecoofamerica.com](http://www.cyprecoofamerica.com).



Fay and Glafkos Kontemeniotis

## New Toddler Program at Archangel Michael Preschool

by George Tsiatis

A new program geared specifically to the needs of toddlers was announced recently at the Archangel Michael Preschool Open House. The Toddler program for two-year olds will be offered in addition to Mommy & Me, Nursery, and PreK programs.

The Preschool has been running for over a decade, moving to its new campus on Fairway Drive just last year. The school was also licensed this past year by New York State for all of its programs. The curriculum is specifically geared to prepare children for Kindergarten in Nassau County’s public schools, and prides itself on its high quality, licensed teaching staff. This new program fills out a program that has grown from community demand for their high-quality instruction and the bilingual (Greek and English) offerings.



“We’re so excited because the Toddler program allows us to offer families a complete early childhood development experience” said Preschool Director Linda Alimaras. “Getting licensed by the state let us expand our PreK to a 4-hour program, and the addition of the Toddlers gives our parents an earlier option to introduce their children to an age-appropriate classroom setting that’s more independent than Mommy & Me.”

The Open House welcomed both parents and children so they could experience a day in the life of the Archangel Michael Preschool. The event showcased each program—including an introduction to the curriculum of the new Toddlers program—as well as the facilities of the school.



Built specifically as a stimulating and safe center for early childhood development, the Archangel Michael Preschool is an ideal setting for learning. Its licensed, experienced teachers guide preschoolers through a child-centered curriculum that develops important skills, stimulates curiosity, and encourages confident learning. Its program integrates hand-on activities, play time for building social skills, and lessons that introduce Greek language, culture, and religion. For more information, their website is [www.archangelmichaelchurch.org](http://www.archangelmichaelchurch.org).



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The new girl at the elite Roland Park Middle School in Baltimore had been there for almost two weeks, sometimes taking three buses to get to school from her home in "Greektown," feeling lost in classes where none of the kids were Greek anymore and going through the soul-searching only an 11-year old can experience (Why am I here? What am I doing?), when one day at lunch one of the girls got up and actually spoke to her: "You want to come sit with us?"

The new girl in school was Kaliope Parthemos, the girl with the political skills was Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and they not only became lifelong friends ("She says she only did it for my lunch," says Parthemos), but colleagues when Rawlings-Blake became mayor in 2010, Parthemos became her assistant deputy mayor, and she now serves as deputy mayor for economic and neighborhood development, overseeing 17 agencies that affect everything from housing and transportation to tourism and the arts, in a city that has always been an economic hub, but like most major cities of late, has gone through hard times.

"I think Baltimore is in the same situation as the other old manufacturing cities," says Parthemos, 41, from her office, the highest woman of Greek descent working in public service in Maryland, and working late at her office as usual. "But I think we're better positioned. We still have a great port and lots of jobs around our port; we still have a great manufacturing base with access to rail; we have the professionals in terms of finance, and we have one of the great medical institutions in Johns Hopkins, with a very big and growing biotech and biomedicine industry. And our proximity to DC really makes Baltimore such an asset."

She concedes that the city population has declined slightly (less so than other cities and a miracle considering the urban flight that has affected others) and, in fact, Baltimore might be experiencing a resurgence, not just in industry, but in population.

"What is typically pegged, and what most cities call the creative class—our 18 to 34-year-olds—have been our growing population," she says. "Baltimore is very much a college town—we have Johns Hopkins, we have the University of Maryland at Baltimore, all the professional schools—we do have young people

moving here. (Besides school, they) have good financial and professional opportunities with the expansion and growth of Under Armour (sports apparel and gear) competing with the Nikes' and Adidas', we have (financial firms like) Legg Mason and Morgan Stanley, we have our energy companies. But we also want the empty nesters, because they want the urban environment, they want the arts and culture, and are the best population to get because they are not using city services: they don't have kids in school and they're usually in condominium complexes that don't require that many city services. So it's really the creative class and the empty nesters and the immigrants."

In her inaugural, the mayor announced a "Grow Baltimore" strategy of boosting the city's population by at least 10,000 residents through a "Vacants to Value" housing and neighborhood revitalization and other initiatives, and as the city's economic and development czar Parthemos is in the thick of making that happen.

The new

# BALTIMORE'S DEPUTY MAYOR KALIOPE PARTHEMOS: A NEW ADMINISTRATION TRANSFORMING A VENERABLE CITY

by Dimitri C. Michalakis

administration made a splash when it brought Grand Prix racing to Baltimore with its inaugural Baltimore Grand Prix Indy Car and American Le Mans Series race this past September around a temporary circuit in the Inner Harbor.

And it's transforming the landscape big-time with its \$238-million Uplands Visionaries real estate development sprouting on 731 acres in southwest Baltimore that will eventually add 1,100 single family homes, townhouses and rentals to the city tax base and restore a prime area of Baltimore. It will be perfect for the young professionals and empty nesters with its walking trails, parks, shops, community rooms, exercise



The sisters: from left, Tasia Powers, Kaliope Parthemos, Rita "Areti" Quintero and Antonia Parthemos

facilities, unlimited bandwidth using fiber optics, and access to downtown Baltimore and major corridors like I-95 and I-695 and an east-west transit line called Red Line Metro.

Another is a partnership of the mayor with University of Maryland President Dr. Jay A. Perman on a Westside Task Force to promote development downtown in west Baltimore, which has all the professional schools and a theater row, but also plenty of urban blight and city-owned vacant properties. "We're coming up with a plan to spur development and turn the city-owned property into occupied property, as well as to make renovations to Lexington Market and improve our public markets," says Parthemos. Part of that is a Get Fresh Lexington initiative to increase availability of healthy food at Lexington and make it a model for the city's six public markets.

A longstanding player in efforts to revitalize the city has been John Paterakis of H&S Bakery, who has resurrected the old seaport into the dazzling Inner Harbor, and is currently developing a Harbor Point site that will add over 1 million square feet of new office space, 73,000 square feet of retail space, 270 condominium units, 346 rental apartments, a 260-room hotel and parking for 3,000 vehicles.

"What he's done over there has transformed the city,"



With Senator Paul Sarbanes

she says. "It's an amazing story."

Also on the Greek front, Parthemos said she was meeting with people from her old neighborhood in Greektown, as well as AHEPA, to plan a Hellenic Museum for the city "because the generation from the war is dying, and we haven't done a very good job of preserving our history." She feels guilty she didn't listen enough to her yiayia "when she would talk and tell stories and I really regret that. As a community, we haven't done a very good job of telling our story amongst each other, let alone the broader community—of what the Greeks had to endure in Greece, why they came here, who we are here."

She herself started as a girl from Greektown "where you literally kept your door open and if you were outside past a certain time the lady down the street would yell at you and threaten to call your mother." She attended St. Nicholas Church with her parents Constantine and Angelika ("my mother is one of seven children, so I have twenty first cousins") and with her sisters Tasia, Rita and

Kaliope Parthemos with Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake



Antonia. Tasia now manages a medical building company; Rita is a real estate broker; and Antonia manages a restaurant in Harbor East.

Kaliope, the second oldest, put herself through college, worked with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services in the foster care division, went back to get her law degree and got a piece of advice from Judge C. Themelis when she clerked for him.

"You belong in the courtroom and you belong as an advocate," he told her. "Don't be one of those who talks about how things should be done, but has never actually worked it and lived it. You know the people. You understand the people. Go fight for the people."

She worked as a public defender for five years (and managed her friend Rawlings-Blake's successful campaign run for City Council in '95) and was about to open her own law practice in 2007 when her friend became president of the City Council and asked Parthemos to help organize her staff. "She told me I can come on board, set up the office, at least get through the election, stay for a year, and by that point the office would be really up and running," says Parthemos, and then, presumably, she would return to private practice. "Of course," she says, "I never saw my office again."

The mayor does dance Greek, and Parthemos says she has been to "every festival, every Greek Independence Day parade; she's very well known in the Greek community. Actually the highest percentage of votes in the election for mayor in September 2011 was in the Greektown neighborhood. She got 78 percent of the vote and that was the highest in any neighborhood."

The mayor, and the job, helped Parthemos get through a diagnosis of breast cancer in 2010 and the subsequent rigors of treatment, including four surgeries, before she was declared cancer-free this past February. "The story got in the papers and next morning (the mayor) had ten resumes



Kaliope with parents Konstantinos & Angelica Parthemos at the gala where she received the Maryland Daily Record Award "Leading Women 40 and Under" in October 2010

on her desk and she's like, 'Can you please tell people you're not dying?'"

The two friends now have busy schedules (Parthemos works most evenings and weekends) and rarely have down time together: and when they talk it's about business. But she says "it's nice to work with somebody that you trust, and she knows I would never make any decision to put her or the city in harm's way. She's a very, very good person who does public service not because she has the ego of a politician, but because it's in her heart of hearts."

The friendship that started in school, and the partnership fostered in public service, are both going strong and Baltimore seems to be the winner.



# Happy Easter



*John, Margo, John Jr.  
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Theofanis Gavrillos, George Sakellaris and Kostas Alexakis



Theodore Veru and Charles H. Cotros



George D. Bebrakis, Chairman Emeritus, right, at Welcome Reception with New Chairman, Charles H. Cotros, and George Sakellaris, center



Nicholas Maximos and Peter Parthenis



Michael N. Bapis, George Bousis, George Logoitbetis and Drake Bebrakis



William Mouskondis, John E. Kusturiss seated: Elyce Mouskondis



Peter Saltas, John Saltas, Vasili Rozakis and Peter Mouskondis



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Michael and Mary Jabaris and Constantine G. Caras



Demetrios Rhompotis, Constantine G. and Dr. Maria M Caras and Anastasios Papapastolou



Ted and Ann Zampetis and Georgia and Niki Foros Valaskantjis



Spiros Exaras, Marguerite and Michael Parlamis



Dina Tbeodosakis, Argyris Vassiliou and Fran Karivalis



Dimitri Bousis, Maria Kozonis, Irini Komodikis and Georgia Kozonis



Seated: Soula Katsetos, Dr. Kleomanes Katsetos, Valerie Caras, Pamela Pappas, Angelique Roussalis. Standing: Irini Komodikis, Angelica Spanos, Alexandra Caras, Dr. John Roussalis, Valerie Michell, Constantina Skeadas and Nicholas Skeadas



Lynne Peters, Pamela Lazares and Eleni Bousis



Anna Sophia Loumis, Marianthe Logoitbetis and Victoria Bousis



Andrew A. Athens, Dr. William A. Athens, Angie Athens and Louise Athens



Michael N. Bapis, Nicole Petallides



Demetrios and Georgia Halakos and Tom Hatzis



Dr. Spyros Catechis, Stacie Maniatis, Cymbia Kostas and Timothy Maniatis



Alice Keurian, Helen Alexander and Aphrodite Skeadas



Seated: Georgea Pappas, Doretta Mistras, Maria Kozonis, Stephanie Stamas and Vickie Kozonis. Standing: Nick Lazares, Irene Pappas and Georgia Kozonis



Olga Bornozis, Dr. Stilianos Efstratiadis and Maria Marmarinos



Dr. James Alex, Thanasi Liakos and Sarah and Elias Demakes

# CATHY SAKELLARIS



Cathy Sakellaris with Mario Frangoulis

Cathy Sakellaris, who chaired the Leadership's 21st Annual Conference, was showered with accolades for her astonishing work, especially because she was the mastermind behind having

Mario Frangoulis perform, a major highlight this year. Speaking with NEO she was rightfully excited and she commenced by thanking all the people who helped put together the program and the actual events.

**You must feel happy, but also relieved, now that everything is over.**

To be honest, the Leadership 100 staff in New York is so well prepared, they've done it so often, that they really make it easy to us! I was in very good hands and I enjoyed doing it. I got to know members much better and I came to realize that it's a group of people that I share common values with, common goals, and common dreams for our community. I'm very happy with the way the conference turned out. From beginning to end, from learning about the stolen Parthenon marbles, to listening to Andrew Liveris and Nicole Petallides, to the Veteran's Tribute, to Mario Frangoulis' concert, I was overwhelmed!



(L to R) Leadership 100 Chairman Constantine G. Caras and Archbishop Demetrios present Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence to Mario Frangoulis, along with Leadership 100 Executive Director Paulette Poulos and Chair of the 21st Annual Leadership 100 Conference, Cathy Papoulias-Sakellaris.

**Would you do it again?**

Would I do it again? Well, Charles Cotros happens to be one of my favorite people in the whole world, and his wife Connie, and I will have hard time not helping him in whatever capacity he likes me to help. He is a really special person and I think we are very lucky to have him as Chairman the next two years. It's going to be great.

**It was your idea to have Mario Frangoulis...**

Yes, and he put together an amazing, international program with emphasis on Greek composers. When I introduced Mario, I only talked about his life, how he was brought up and the way he started singing, because he basically lost his voice for a period of months. He has an amazing story. I also believe Mario was a huge draw in getting more people at the conference; in fact we did better than last year, which was a feat in itself. But the response to the conference in general was overwhelming, because it was so positive, so genuine.

**Mario also marked an upgrade, at least when it comes to music, for the conference.**

We should constantly challenge ourselves to offer new speakers, new events, new music. I think we should mix it up a bit and offer a variety of things and from a greater geographic area. And we should introduce more new people to Leadership, like the young guy with the "Mnimi" project. There are a lot of people out there whose work must be presented at the Leadership.

**Last but not least, many people here are concerned with the situation in Greece.**

I think that the people here love Greece, but often times they are not sure how to help, so they are looking for someone to reach out to. Of course, they have their own ideas and they have tried their own things, in their own way, like starting companies there, and meeting with the leadership of Greece. I think everybody is heavy-hearted about what's going on there and I think they will do more things to help. And I think they are committed.

# LEADERSHIP 100 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SETTING NEW RECORDS

The 21st Annual Leadership 100 Conference, which took place at The Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach in Manalapan, Florida, this past February, was a resounding success with some 400 members and their guests attending an electrifying concert performance by internationally-acclaimed Greek tenor, Mario Frangoulis, an inspiring address by renowned world business leader, Andrew N. Liveris, President, Chairman and CEO of The Dow Chemical Company, an informative Business and Media Forum conducted by Nicole Petallides, Anchor at FOX Business Network, and a challenging Interfaith Marriage Forum conducted by the Rev. Charles Joanides of the Office of Interfaith Marriage of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The conference opened with a presentation on the Parthenon Sculptures conducted by Michael J. Reppas II, President, and Peter C. Yalanis, Vice President, of the American Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures. Yalanis, the photographer of "All Sides of the Parthenon, A Touring Exhibition", showed a selection of photographs.

Along with the traditional and popular Bible Study and Lecture by Archbishop Demetrios, a ceremony of "Service to Country" was conducted the next day "honoring the fallen", which acknowledged the sacrifice of two very special heroes, U.S. Marine Cpl. Peter J. Giannopoulos of Inverness, Illinois, and U.S. Marine Cpl. Nicholas G. Xiarhos of Yarmouth, Massachusetts. On November 11, 2004, Peter, 22, was killed in Iraq, and on July 23, 2009, Nicholas, 21, was killed in Afghanistan, his second tour of duty after Iraq. Nicholas's father, Lieutenant Steven Xiarhos, Deputy Chief of the Yarmouth, Massachusetts Police,

spoke to conferees and presented a plaque to Leadership 100. He was presented with an Icon of Remembrance and a Trisagion for the Fallen was conducted by Archbishop Demetrios.

Also, a short film produced by Christos Epperson of The Mnimi Foundation documenting the heroic service of our Greek allies during World War II and the Korean War was presented.

The Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Achievement Award was given to Pamela Pappas, who had climbed to the top of Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, on May 13, 2011, and had previously climbed Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus in Eastern Europe, Vinson in Antarctica, Denali in Alaska, and Aconcagua in South America.

Concluding the festivities at a Grand Banquet, Chairman Constantine G. Caras, passed the torch of leadership to Charles H. Cotros, the new Chairman.

A Memorial Service for Leadership 100 members was conducted by Archbishop Demetrios at St. Catherine Church in West Palm Beach, Florida, the last day of the conference.

The Executive Committee, meeting at the 21st Annual Leadership Conference, approved grants totaling \$416,250, all of which were recommended by the Grant Committee under the Chairmanship of John Sitilides. With the addition of the new grants, grant distributions since the inception of Leadership 100 total \$32,255,686.

Charles H. Cotros of Memphis, Tennessee, was inaugurated as the new Chairman of Leadership 100. He served as Vice Chairman for the past two years under Constantine G. Caras, of Greenville, Delaware, whose term was completed but who remains a member of the Executive Committee.

George S. Tsandikos of New York, New York, took office as Vice Chairman of Leadership 100, having served as Treasurer. He has been Managing Director of Rockefeller & Company in New York, New York since 2003 having previously served as Vice President, Private Bank of J.P. Morgan Private Bank, also in New York, from 1989 to 2003 and as an Associate with Burns and Levinson, Counselors at Law, Boston, Massachusetts from 1987 to 1989.

Argyris (RJ) Vassiliou of Stamford, Connecticut took office as Treasurer of Leadership 100. He is currently the President of Acme Pallet Company, Inc. in New York City and Di-Cor Industries, Inc. in Bristol,

Kassandra L. Romas of Short Hills, New Jersey, was re-elected and resumed office as Secretary of Leadership 100. She serves on the Board of Trustees of the National Philoptochos Society and is a member Holy Trinity Church in Westfield, New Jersey, where





Kassandra Romas and Lynda Ann Costas



Wanda Pedas, Thelma and Stephen G. Yeonas and James Pedas



Margarita Pournara (Katbimerini, Athens) with Mario Frangoulis



Patrice Kouvas, Michael L. Stefanos, John A. Payiavlav and His Grace Bishop Anthimos



Helen Carlos, Archdeacon Panteleimon Papadopoulos, Mekourios and Liberty Angeliades



Constantine G. Caras and daughter Alexandra Caras



Basil Mossaidis, Mario Frangoulis, Demetra Anagnostopoulos and Theodore Pedas



George Triantaris, Argyris Vassiliou and Angelo Coutris



Seated: Georgia Buchanan, Dedie Coch and Janet Constance. Standing: Lynda Ann Costas and Orsa Velivasakis



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Mario Frangoulis, Diana Rodriguez and Anastasios Papapastolou



Dr. Kleomenes Katsetos and Stephanía Patsalis



Demetra Anagnostopoulos and John Dimitrakakis



Helen A. Carlos and Dr. Maria M. Caras



George Pantelidis, Kostas Alexakis, Olga Bornozis and Stephanie Pantelidis



Cathy Sakellaris and Mae Calamos



Dean Metropoulos, Euterpe Harovas and Patrice Kouvas



Paulette Poulos, Catbie Andriotis and Diane Savino



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Yanni Saltas, Michael Bousis, Jr., George Bousis and Dimitri Bousis



John and Helen Psaras



Euterpe Harovas, Merkourios Angeliades, Mario Frangoulis, Ourania Soumas and Liberty Angeliades



Jenny Vourvopoulos with Mario Frangoulis



Dr. Maria M. Caras and Mario Frangoulis



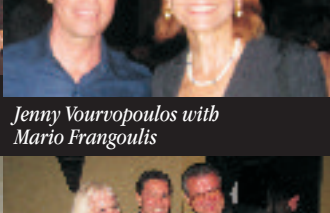
Kathy Gavrillos, Mario Frangoulis and Cathy Sakellaris



Katerina Prifti and Georgia Peskou with Mario Frangoulis



Mario Frangoulis and Vasiliki Mistras



Kathy and Theofanis Gavrillos and Mario Frangoulis



Mario Frangoulis performed before more than 400 members of Leadership 100 and their guests at The Harriet Himmel Theater

she has served as President of the Parish Council. She has chaired the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity of New York's Annual Cathedral Ball and been active in building restoration projects at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of New York.

The General Assembly recognized the service of George P. Stamas of Baltimore, Maryland, senior partner in the prestigious Washington D.C. law firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, for his service on the Board of Trustees since 2002. He was presented with a Commendation for Distinguished Service. George and his wife, Georgia, have been members of Leadership 100 since 2000.

Eliana Papadakis, a long-time and devoted member, and a community and philanthropic leader in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was elected to his seat. She and husband, Dr. Constantine Papadakis of Blessed Memory, who was President of Drexel University, joined Leadership 100 in 2000.

The late Michael R. Henry was also recognized for his service on the Board of Trustees and for his many contributions in the area of marketing and membership development. His wife, Sofia, an active member of Leadership 100, accepted the Commendation for Distinguished Service.

# CHARLES COTROS' VISION FOR LEADERSHIP 100

by Demetrios Rhompotis

Appealing to youth--"that's where we are going to draw our future leaders from"--will be the main focus of Charles H. Cotros as Chairman of Leadership 100. "We need to listen to them and the ideas they are bringing in," he said in an interview with NEO magazine right after he assumed) his duties at the organization's 21st Annual Conference held this past February in Palm Beach, Florida. He also talked about building on the work of his predecessors and offered his thoughts on the state of our Church here in the United States.

Charles H. Cotros, of Memphis, Tennessee, has served as Director of Allied Waste Industries Inc. of Phoenix, Arizona since July 2004 and as Interim Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board from October 2004 through 2007. He began his career in 1960 with Tri-State General Food Supply ("Tri-State"), which merged with SYSCO in 1974, where he served in various positions prior to being elected Chief Operating Officer in 1995, President in 1999, and Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors in 2000. He served on the Board of Sysco from 1986 until his retirement in 2003. A graduate of Christian Brothers College in Memphis and Tulane University in New Orleans, he is married to the former Constance (Connie) Pappas. The couple has two daughters, one son, and eleven grandchildren. Active in Greek Orthodox parishes in Houston, Texas and Memphis, Tennessee, Cotros is an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Leadership 100 was created in 1984 under the guidance of then Archbishop Iakovos as an endowment fund of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, through which Greek Orthodox leaders were asked to commit \$10,000 a year, for a total of \$100,000 each, to maintain the life-sustaining ministries of the Church. More than 800 people have joined since its inception and membership includes a broad spectrum of Greek Orthodox leaders: men and women of all ages and from every field.

As we are about to wrap the 21st annual conference, what do you think were some of the highlights?

Let me start by saying that we have had a lot of great conferences. To me this one is the most admirable. We departed from some of the things we used to do. We took Friday night and offered this concert (with Mario Frangoulis), which to me was spectacular. We also had the Memorial of the Greek American soldiers: Mr. Liveris did a great job in his presentation; Nicole Petallides with her speech was outstanding. We tried to do something different and people enjoyed it.

What are some of the things that you want to accomplish during your tenure?

Well, it's basically a continuation of what we've always done. We had great chairmen in the past, we have a great office led by Paulette Poulos, George Schira, as our Communications Director, and the rest of the staff and I think we'll be able to get our message out. Our mission is very simple: we exist to support the ministries of the Archdiocese and we've decided that our main charity is the seminary. In 2007, 2008, 2009 our endowment suffered as well as our membership. Things now are maybe getting back to normal, so I think we can grow our membership again. I'd like to see us reach 1000 members over the next 2-3 years, an additional 125 members that is. And I think we should be able to do it.

Something that you would like to seal your tenure with as chairman?

I'd like to see us appealing more to the youth. We have about 125 Young Partners and my hope is that we can expand that. I'd like to see two, three hundred. That's where we are going to draw our future leaders from. Now, let me tell you that is something we have done fairly well, but I think we must do better.

Many people say that without losing focus from the main mission, there are areas where the Leadership can play the role



Constance and Charles Cotros

that its name implies. Some people have talked about helping Greek education here, others, like Mr. Athens, are urging that more be done for Greece, which faces one of the worst crisis of her modern state existence.

Greece has much greater problems than the Leadership can support. As I said before, the last 2-3 years were difficult for us. We have a policy and we can't go lower than our endowment amount, and what that means is that we'll never spend the principal of our membership.

But it's not just money--you could offer ideas, words of hope, perhaps organize a forum on what could be done in Greece, as Mr. Liveris proposed.

I agree, we'll be happy to, those are things that we can do. Unfortunately, we can't get them the financial support which they need. Their problems are in the billions. We are no way near there, but we can certainly do things. There is another group in the Leadership that claims we can do more to promote Hellenism. We can do both. I have a hard time distinguishing between Orthodoxy and Hellenism. Another challenge is how to meet the needs of the diversity of our membership. Especially as we are trying to expand our Young Partners, we need to listen to them and the ideas they are bringing in. And I'm planning on doing that.

Some people have expressed concern about the transparency of the Archdiocese's finances. Also the fact that it is directly under the Ecumenical Patriarchate (an organization with precarious legal status in Turkey, functioning under the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs) leaves it very little room for meaning ful decision-making here.

I think that our Church in America has different needs from other Churches around the world. I think we need to be able to find the solutions for the problems we have here. I respect the Archdiocese, I respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate, it has been very meaningful to our Church, but I think they need to recognize that this Church here has some different issues. We need to be able help solve our problems.

Is there a message that you would like to extend to L100 members and the community at large?



Constantine G. Caras, Andrew N. Liveris, Paulette Poulos, Charles H. Cotros, Cathy and George Sakellaris

I think Leadership 100 is a great organization that exists to service our Church. I hope we can appeal to more of our people to join the organization; I think that they will see the scope of our work. We have given scholarships to 289 seminarians! That's a lot of people. Of those, 110 have already been ordained priests. We have had a tremendous impact. We have given more than \$15 million in scholarships.

Would you be willing to explore ways of modernizing the Church and changing or abolishing some aspects of it that no longer work?

We don't get to the liturgical aspect of the Church. But what I have always advocated is that the language of our Church should be the language of the country. We try to incorporate as much Greek as we can, but nobody who goes to our churches doesn't understand English. Besides, we have many converts and they need to understand the Liturgy. And I have spoken about this issue to the Archbishop.

What about the status of our parishes, where the laity can't really play a meaning ful role. Actually, the process of being approved as a candidate for a parish council position is outright humiliating to citizens of a free country like the US.

I think at the Clergy-Laity Conferences that we have every other year there is a dialogue going on about those problems. I'm a little disappointed that I don't see a lot of follow up from those conferences. And I think that the laity has an awful lot to offer.

# PAULETTE POULOS



Paulette Poulos

Paulette Poulos, Leadership 100 Executive Director, had every reason to be happy at the end of another successful Annual

Conference. Speaking with NEO she shared her excitement and her belief that this organization has a lot more to offer in the future.

What do you think of the conference this year?

The best ever! Look at the people, look at the smiles! The whole conference from beginning to end had a fabulous, positive spirit. Andrew Liveris was one of the most astonishing speakers we ever had. He is full of Hellenism, full of spirituality, full of professionalism. I knew it the minute I made contact with him and his wife and he accepted right away when I asked him. I never expected a man of his status to be so down-to-earth. His wife told me I have traveled with my husband all over the world, but it's the first time we are in a group of people with so much love, positive spirit and Hellenic pride.

Also, the program with Nicole Petallides, a young Greek American, the Bible Study with the Archbishop which was full to capacity--to me this is what Leadership is about: it's not about money, the money is secondary, the primary thing of Leadership is to bring everybody together who have a commitment to Hellenism and Orthodoxy. That's the way to prove that we are vibrant, alive and that the organization will advance in perpetuity.

And of course, Mario Frangoulis' concert! It was outstanding. I had never heard him in concert. He managed to capture the audience not only with his beautiful voice, but with his whole manner: he's a very spiritual individual, so humble; I was so impressed with him. Also the young girl, Pamela Pappas, who talked about climbing Mt. Everest. It makes you proud to be Greek American and to watch the achievements of the young people. I think it's fabulous.

The situation in Greece was a big topic of discussion among members.

We all share the pain of our brothers and sisters in our fatherland, Greece. The Leadership 100 members will respond as individuals and also as an organization, I'm sure our new Chairman Charles Cotros and our Executive Board will make the right decisions. Just to make the pain a little bit less. The Archbishop has established a fund and we will coordinate with him to make sure the aid goes right to where it should go.



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Universal find ways to help the people of Greece, who are undergoing  
A tremendously difficult period of economic hardship, IOCC has  
Remained consistent with its mission and the teachings of Christ.

As we wish NEO magazine and its readers and the entire  
Greek American Community KALO PASCHA, we also extend our  
Whole-hearted congratulations to IOCC for its 20th Anniversary,  
Especially to Dean Triantafilou, whose heroic efforts on behalf of Orthodox  
Christian philanthropy have helped IOCC become a jewel of the global  
Orthodox Church. As founding chairman of IOCC, John G. Rangos Sr.  
Also salutes all his successors, and all successive IOCC Boards, who  
Have contributed to IOCC's astounding humanitarian success, now  
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# George Petrocheilos hosts Johns Hop kins Hellenes Evening & Fundraiser

In the midst of Johns Hopkins rush week, fraternities and sororities aren't the only organizations on campus going Greek. The Hellenic Students Association hosted its first ever Johns Hopkins Hellenic Association Evening Fundraiser at the house of Michael S. Kosmas. The guests ranged anywhere from politicians and industry leaders to local restaurant owners and college students, and the turnout did not disappoint. Some distinguished honorary guests included Former Westinghouse Electronics Sr. Vice President and Former Secretary of Business & Economic Development Aris Melissaratos, Senator Paul Sarbanes, Congresswoman Helen Bentley, Congressman John P. Sarbanes, Deputy Mayor of Baltimore City Kaliope Parthemos, Former Baltimore County Executive Ted Venetoulis, Double T Diners Chain owners John and Tommy Korologos, Katherine Newman, the Dean of Johns Hopkins University, State Senator Bill Ferguson, the Exec. Director of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) Nick Larigakis, and Troy T. Geanopulos, Former Sr. Vice President of Constellation Energy.

Who is it that can put together a guest list of such gargantuan magnitude? Surely it must have been some well-connected professional. Actually, it was none other than HSA President George Petrocheilos who is, in fact, likely more connected than most professionals.

"Who doesn't know George?" Katherine Newman, Dean of Arts & Sciences at Johns Hopkins asks.

"This kid knows everyone," says Aris Melissaratos, Senior Adviser to the Johns Hopkins President and Former Secretary of Business and Economic Development in Maryland. 'He is just amazing! The greatest networker I've ever met', he continues. Mr. Melissaratos appreciates George's ability to attract a wide range of people. "It's nice to see political folks come out, but I also like to see the young kids thriving here. You can see their presence and leadership skills. There's a good cross section of people here."

And indeed, there were so many people present that it was difficult to move around and access the seemingly endless array of Greek food spread out in the kitchen. The host of the night, Mr. Michael Kosmas, never lightened up on supplying the food. Every third person had a cocktail in his or her hand. It was a perfect mix of serious and social.

"What a collection of people," comments Dean Newman. She says that before becoming familiar with HSA she "wasn't aware there was such a large Greek community." The Dean also noted: "After having lunch with Petrocheilos, I knew that this young man will be very important one day – and I do not say that for a lot of people!"

"America is a cultural mosaic," says Aris Melissaratos. "The more each culture stays true to itself, the richer the mosaic becomes." HSA was certainly doing its part tonight.

When the fundraiser organizers and some of the distinguished guests made their speeches, it was to tremendous and hearty applause. Even mentioning the names of most of the guests got a positive response from the audience. This above all else was evidence of the event's success and its aim to encourage education and bring people together.

Unfortunately, that's becoming more and more difficult as time goes on. As Mr. Melissaratos points out, "universities used to fund these groups, but budget issues have forced them to cut back. It used to be the University would offer financial support, maybe \$5000, but now people like George have to go out and get that money. It's all about networking," he says as a procession of glad handers file up for a chance to shake the Senior Adviser's hand.

Congresswoman Helen Bentley says that "budgets are getting cut everywhere." She thinks that if groups like HSA are to survive, they'll need to get volunteers and continuing focusing on networks. "But anything like this helps."

Indeed it does, and there's no one better suited for a job of networking than George Petrocheilos. "It's amazing that George, one student, put this together," notes an impressed Dean Newman. Equally impressed is Senator Paul Sarbanes.

"What a terrific turnout," he says, looking around the room. "I'm strongly supportive of these clubs and I'm impressed all these young people responded."

Dep. Mayor Kaliope Parthemos said: 'when I met with George in my office, I saw a dynamic young man, throwing ideas and asking questions non-stop. I just loved it! George is not only promoting Johns Hopkins, but the entire Baltimore City, and that is why we thank him!'

George's ability to mobilize support from all segments of society is awe-inspiring. When asked about his success and his unique talents of networking, he responds modestly:

"It didn't happen in one day," he says, speaking rapidly. "It took a couple of years. You meet a couple people at a time. It's not just one big step, it's several little steps. I worked for Constellation Energy as an intern and that was a big help. It's all about meeting people, dinners, lunches. And then you have to



From left, Aris Melissaratos, George Petrocheilos, Sen. Paul Sarbanes



Congressman John Sarbanes with George Petrocheilos



John Korologos (CEO of the Double T Diners)



Katherine Newman (Dean of Johns Hopkins University)



Nora Presti, Antibie Zairis, Dr. Constantine Lyketos, George Petrocheilos, Troy Geanopulos



Jason Filippou (Executive Director of Greektown CDC) and Baltimore's Deputy Mayor Kaliope Parthemos

follow up. They have to know you well. It's not about knowing them, it's about making them like you and believe in you. There's a whole process; you need to show them that you're well rounded and that you have real potential because they have no time to waste."

Very wise words from a very young man. George has the business of networking down to a science and his success shows. He speaks very highly of his peers and his guests because he knows that it is to them that he owes much of the success of this event.

"Everything was perfect, it was an amazing crowd. The people here are the best of the best in terms of business, politics, and academia. There are senators, congress people, community leaders, philanthropists. I'm just really proud."

And he has a right to be. With events as successful as this one, it's clear that both George and the HSA have a very bright future ahead.



Nick Larigakis (AHI's Executive Director) with Georgia Vavas



John Korologos with Congresswoman Helen Delich Bentley

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# National Innovation Conference & Forty Under 40 Awards in NYC

by Gregory C. Pappas\*



Two years ago we launched the National Innovation Conference (NIC) as one of our signature projects. It is our belief that innovation should rank as one of the core components of our heritage as Greeks and that it should be an ideal that we embrace. This year we've assembled a world-class list of speakers who will gather in NYC the weekend of April 27-29th and will encourage participants to "examine the unexamined life," as Socrates encouraged over two millennia ago. Innovation exists in all shapes and forms—in business, in technology, in philanthropy and in our own community.

We are proud to continue the tradition started in Chicago in 2010 when global leaders, thinkers and innovators came together to share their "ideas worth sharing" at the first National Innovation Conference. Every day, I am fascinated to learn about the contributions more and more Greeks are making in contemporary societies throughout the United States, Canada and beyond.

The contributions of these people and their impact on mainstream society is the very core of NIC and our desire to bring their messages together in one place, in one forum—our NIC conference.

Like the radical ideas that emanated from the agoras on ancient Greek city states when like-minded people came together to share and deliberate, we believe that the forum of NIC can also spark new ideas, new collaborations, new projects.

While we don't strive to be the facilitators of a specific agenda or goal, we do strive to create a conducive and stimulating environment for people who want to engage each other to gather, to be inspired, to share and to be provoked to action.

So, on the surface, NIC is an ideas conference and an opportunity for people who thrive on intellectual stimulation to gather, to network and to meet other like-minded people.

This year, however, in light of the current situation in Greece and the constant barrage of media coverage showing a society unraveling before our very eyes, as well as a humanitarian, cultural and societal crisis unfolding, we believe that "Greece" will be on a lot of people's minds at the conference.

Many speakers will address certain issues that pertain to what we, as individuals, and as a community, can do to address the crisis and to support people, institutions and organizations trying to weather the current storm in Greece.

As a diaspora community that has largely assimilated into the comfort of U.S. and Canadian society, many of us are immune to the images of starving children on the streets of Athens, or homeless people waiting for hand-outs at a soup kitchen in a neighborhood that didn't have—or even need—a soup kitchen only a year ago.

I am a firm believer that without Greece, Greek America cannot exist. No matter how far removed we are generationally from Greece, a hyphenated ethnic community such as ours, cannot exist without a strong and stable mother country.

As a result, we will designate a part of this conference to the discussion of what we can do to get more involved in helping Greece and Greeks through this crisis and how we can strengthen our own institutions, goals and vision as a community in the process.

Also, 20 men and 20 women from 14 US states and one Canadian province, this year's Greek America's Forty Under 40, will gather in Big Apple on April 28th and they will be recognized at a reception held in their honor and hosted in part by the Livanos Family and Oceana Restaurant.

We received over 400 nominations from throughout the United States and Canada. In the end, we narrowed the list down to forty outstanding young people who represent and espouse the ideals of the awards—excellence in all they do and care for the world around them. Congrats to this year's winners!

For more information on the National Innovation Conference in New York City, the weekend of April 27-28-29, and Greek America's Forty Under 40 reception, please visit the Greek America Foundation's website, [www.greekamerica.org](http://www.greekamerica.org)

*Gregory C. Pappas is Founder and Chairman of the Greek America Foundation*

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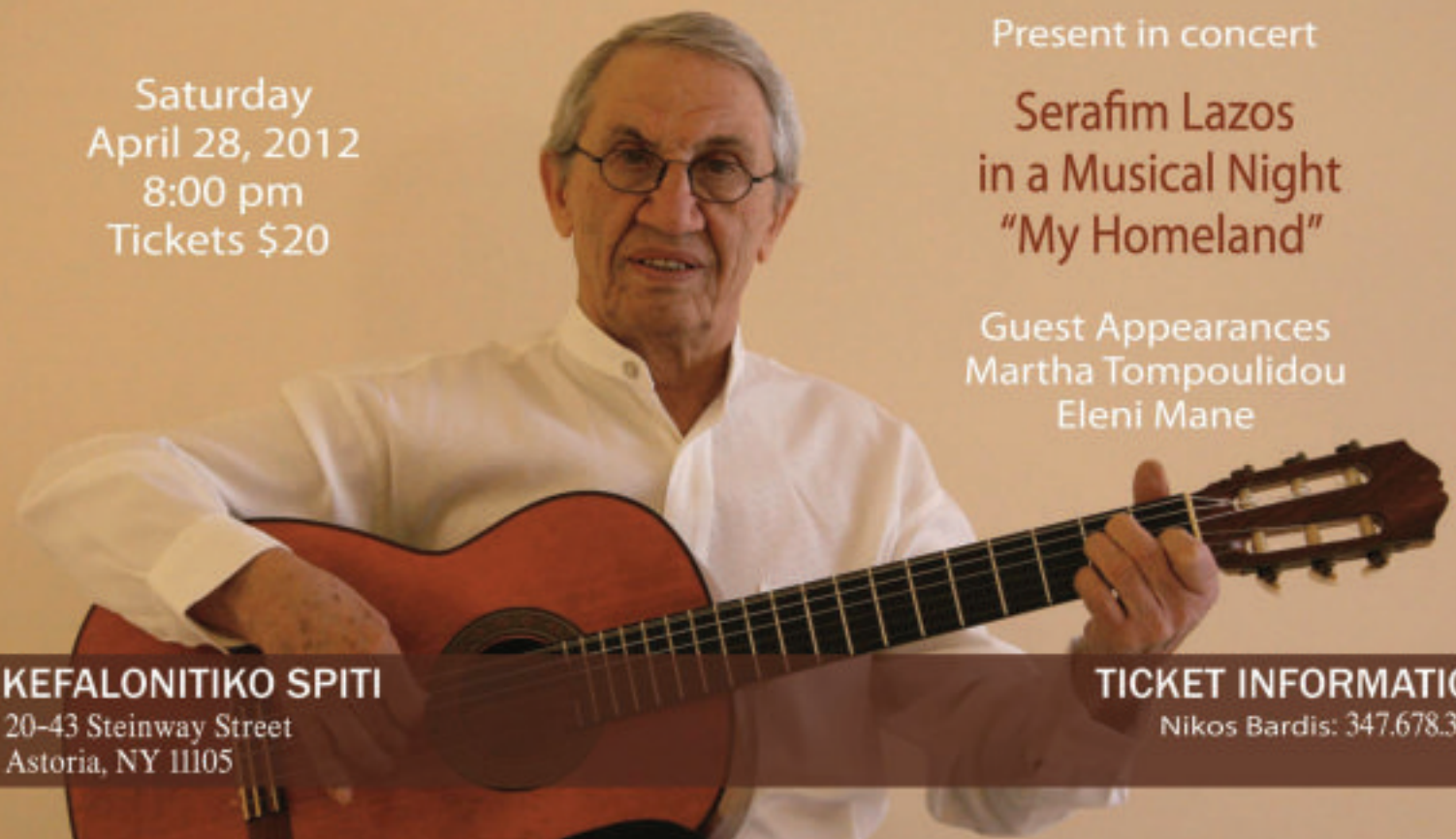
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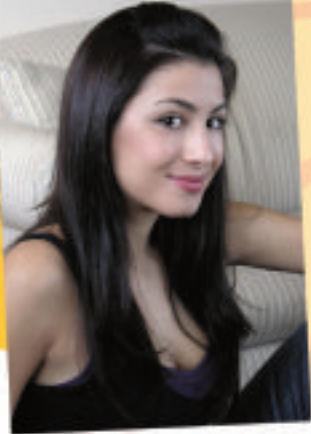
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By Maria A. Pardalis

# bread & honey

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## Souvlaki GR

Tucked away in New York City's hip Lower East Side is a little taste of Greece, Souvlaki GR. This cozy Greek restaurant began as a food truck that impressively won the Vendy's 2010 rookie award in its first year and instantly became a NYC street food favorite. With its iconic white walls and Aegean blue colored shutters, Souvlaki GR conjures up memories from Mykonos and a sense of tranquility instantly washes over you.

The concept is simple and appealing. Souvlaki GR makes you feel at home by offering you a relaxing environment coupled with comforting Greek fair such as charcoal-grilled souvlaki, oregano dusted hand-cut fries, plump biftekia and crisp salads. Being so enthralled with my surroundings and delicious food, I didn't notice that I was sitting next to a fully functioning periptero, complete with sokofreta and all! Owner Kostas Plagos saw my excitement over the sokofreta and alerted me that honey drenched loukmathes were being added to their menu soon.

As I was basking under the cascading bougainvillea enjoying my Mediterranean food coma over a frothy frappe, I realized I couldn't leave without getting a recipe! Plagos was nice enough to share Souvlaki GR's garlicky melizanosalata recipe.



## Melitzanosalata

### Ingredients

- 10 large eggplants, grilled
- 1 bunch of scallions, chopped
- 1 bunch of parsley, finely chopped
- 2 pounds plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped

Salt & pepper to taste

### Preparation

- 1 Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place eggplants into oven and bake for 45 minutes or until soft and wrinkled.
- 2 Carefully peel the skin off the eggplants and discard. Chop the eggplants while still warm and put them in a food processor with the scallions, parsley, sugar, olive oil and garlic.
- 3 Slowly stir in yogurt and process until smooth and creamy, while seasoning to taste with salt & pepper. Cover and refrigerate until ready to eat.



Serve with warm pita  
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# Dr. C. D. Michalakis

by Dimitri C. Michalakis

*My father passed away March 2,  
the day after his birthday, at the age of  
91 and an era has passed for our  
family. An era is also passing for the  
families in the Greek American  
community whose parents and  
grandparents immigrated from Greece  
and established themselves in  
America and who we are rapidly  
losing: the papoudes and yiayjades in  
their 80s and 90s who are frail now,  
but who lived truly epic lives, and  
survived the war and famine of their  
times to venture to America with  
practically nothing in their pockets,  
raise loving families against all odds,  
and transform the American  
landscape. We shall never see their  
like again, we are forever in their debt,  
they are truly our greatest generation.*

My father Constantine was born in 1921 (typically the date is disputed because record keeping was left to the mercies of the local villagers who acted as the municipal clerks). He was born on the island of Chios, the island of seafarers, in the northern village of Kourounia, famous in ancient times for producing the fabled ariousios wine that was the nectar of the gods and a favorite of kings and emperors (including Alexander the Great on his campaigns). But a plague struck the grapes in modern times that my father (who knew most everything) said was probably brought over by the immigrants from Asia Minor, and the vines were no longer the glory of Greece (though villagers still harvested the grapes to bottle their table wine).

My father's father, Dimitrios, lived in the lower village of Kourounia (there was an upper and lower) and was considered a village sage. He kept books and read them and he treasured the written word in the tradition of the family—a relative of his corresponded with Venizelos. My grandmother Calliopi came from the village of Haladra, a good hike or mule ride over the mountain range of Amani, from a family of men famous for their exceptional height and leventia (manliness) and piety—several became priests. My father was one of many children my grandparents had, all but two who died young—he was the second and surviving Constantine. Children had to fend for themselves in those days because the struggle for survival was constant. There is a story, not unusual, of a village woman going into labor while working in the fields, stopping work to have the baby and cut the umbilical cord herself, then going back to work.

My father had a younger brother, Stelio, and unlike the men in my grandmother's family, both were very slight (my uncle never reached five feet tall). One time when my father was little he tried to tug at the family donkey and the donkey tugged him back and a woman nearby called him a Yiaponeso—Japanese—and he ran crying to my grandmother. Both boys were smart, they had the family love of learning, and the family was soon rocked with scandal when my grandfather decided to sell his best fields (he was cash-poor but field-rich) to finance my father's education beyond the village elementary school. What's he going to be—a daskalos (a teacher)? the local wise guys cracked to my grandfather. (Boys were expected to work the fields until they were old enough to take over the klironomia—inheritance—and teachers were respected for their learning but certainly not for their means—they usually had to rely on the charity of villagers for their food and lodging in a bed that didn't have too many fleas.)

My grandfather sold his best fields anyway and the lires provided for my father's room and board in the medieval village of Volissos (with its Byzantine castle on the hill) but for little else. My grandmother gave



him a butcher's pencil to write with and every morning on his way to school he would smell the hot rolls in the window of the bakery and then dream about the red fountain pen in the window of the stationery store. One morning he passed the bakery and smelled the rolls, and he paused at the stationery store to admire the fountain pen—but it was gone. When he got to school, he saw it in the pocket protector of the son whose father owned the kaikia and already had a clutch of fountain pens in his pocket and was among the worst students in class.

My father was among the best students in class, and after a year in Volissos he transferred to the central high school of the island in Chora by the harbor and saw a whole new world. The local band marched in braided uniforms on holidays, koulouria and roasted pumpkin seeds in cones of newspaper were hawked in the platia (square) just outside the municipal park with its swaying palm trees and tropical plants and statue of Kanaris, and the shops were crammed with everything from burnished-gold bracelets to copper coffee urns to straw boat hats and Italian perfumes in jeweled bottles. The ship from Athens docked practically every day and bellowed in the harbor and everybody ran to collect their arriving relatives, and overseas mail, and perhaps the fancy bedrame they had ordered from Athens. My father was a devoted student, but he couldn't resist visiting the Melissa sweet shop that was the local hangout and served ice cream with a sugar wafer and a tiny square spoon.

He graduated with honors, as he graduated every school he attended, and now the world was open to him as a morfomenos (educated man). His father's fields again furnished the lires for him to attend Teacher's College in Thessaloniki, the crown jewel of the north, a city he loved throughout his life, with its white tower by the sea, and wide boulevards where young men like my father promenaded in their pinstriped blazers with arrow-point lapels and neckties big as ascots and hair luxuriously combed in skales (waves). The world was full of promise then.

Unfortunately, his first commission as a teacher, at the ripe age of 19, was to the backwoods of Drama, in the mountains near Bulgaria, in a village which harbored communist guerillas and where anyone sent by the Athens government was suspect. My father not only had to revive the dormant school, but to board with the local constables (chorofilakes) for his own safety.

And, unfortunately, it was 1940, and only days after my father's arrival in the village of Polikarpos, the Italians invaded Greece, and made a mess of it, and then the Germans came to clean up the mess, and seizing the opportunity, the Bulgarians. The Bulgarians seized all of Drama, annexed it to Bulgaria, called it Leukothalassia (White Sea), and incarcerated all the "intellectuals" who kept alive the spirit of Greek national identity and faith, like my father, and the members of the clergy, who were put in detention camps to await their fate.







By some desperate miracle of cunning, my father used what German he had learned at Teacher's College to fool his captors and steal away to Thessaloniki. There he boarded a Chian kaiki loaded to the waterline (and which foundered nearly every day on the ten-day voyage) which miraculously brought him home to the relative safety of Chios—relative, because Chios was also occupied by the Germans, who terrorized and starved the populace, as in most of occupied Greece.

He returned to Kourounia in the mountains, and for four years he was a teacher in his mother's village of Haladra, trying to teach the glory that was Greece to kids who went to work before dawn, could barely stay awake in class or find interest in grammata (studies), then went back to work till dark in the ceaseless toil of all farmers: in Chios, the changing seasons of collecting almonds and drying them in the sun, gathering olives and bottling the yellow-green oil, harvesting grapes and stomping them and fermenting the wine in wooden casks, molding the



wheels of cheese and loaves of bread, with the kids shepherding the menagerie of animals in the stable of every working household: the donkeys and mules that provided transportation, the sheep and goats and cows that provided milk and meat on holidays, the chickens that provided everyday eggs and meat.

The route that my father took every day to get to Haladra from Kourounia did not pass the general store and house of Neamonites, but my father passed it anyway, because Neamonites had an older daughter named Popi, "Popitsa," who was fiercely proud and had a shock of dark hair. They were married when she was 16 and he was 21 during the infamous famine of Katohi that engulfed Greece during the German occupation. Everyone came to their wedding, not because they were invited, but because it had food, vats of savory rice and chick peas and goat meat and bakaliaro (salted cod), and organopektes (musicians) playing into the night to help everyone forget their misery. And when the food ran out the guests left in long lines over

the mountains, leaving no gifts behind but only bones and dirty dishes.

When the Germans themselves left in '45, the communists moved in and the following year my father received his draft notice to report to the front in of all places, the region of Drama, and to a remote outpost 12 hours by mule near the Bulgarian border called Nevrokopi. My sister Helen was still a baby when he left and for the next four years he saw her only once again when he came home on leave to recuperate from typhus. He fought in the mountains up and down Drama, withstanding nightmarish artillery barrages and raids by an enemy who blended into the populace or fled across the border into Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. He was an officer at 24 leading raw farm boys into battle and writing condolence letters back home to their families. He was decorated and honored with a parade in Alexandroupoli when his unit got ambushed in a train tunnel and he led the surviving members of his unit on a desperate stand until reinforcements came.

He fought side to side with his master sergeant, Dimitri Touloumidis, who had a baby at home but had never seen her. My father got him leave, only to see him fall on a mission the night before, and he received a letter from his widow that she had no food for the baby and couldn't collect her husband's pension because the clerk at the pension office was flirting with her. When my father got leave, he visited Kilkis and

went with the widow to the pension office. She pointed out the clerk to him and my father walked over and put down his service revolver on the desk. "Either you sign the papers now," he told the clerk matter-of-factly, "or I will blow your brains out. I've gotten used to killing people." The clerk called him a barbarian, but signed the papers quickly—veterans with battle fatigue were dangerous people.

He came home in 1950, traumatized from the war, to a Greece ravaged by the civil war and a Kafkaesque paranoia of every Greek's loyalty—one of the dozen or so officers from his military class to have survived the conflict. Now, of course, he had to survive the peace and support his wife and two kids. I was born in 1953 and we lived in the Peristeri section of Piraeus (next to the lumber mill) when my father enrolled at the University of Athens and tried to earn extra money by



walking miles to tutor. The neighborhood had endless taverns (with huge wine casks built into the walls), and like every neighborhood in Greece in those days, a neighborhood stone oven where you bought your bread steaming hot and crunched most of it before you got home.

My father applied for one of the five scholarships being offered by the government to study abroad and got accepted to Columbia University in New York. In 1954 (leaving me behind with my grandparents because in part the government wanted a guarantee he would return to serve), he boarded the Queen Elizabeth, then the largest ship in the world, and he left war-ravaged Europe behind and came to the fat prosperity of Eisenhower-era America. My mother and sister came shortly afterwards on the Queen Frederica (I went to live



with my paternal grandparents in Chios) and the family moved to an apartment in Sunset Park in Brooklyn just above the fruit store of John Kontos. My sister wore bells on her skirt and watched Roy Rogers on television, my mother worked at a sweatshop making dolls near the Navy Yard, and my father studied at Columbia for his master's and PhD and typed his thesis on a borrowed typewriter where the keys stuck, on a borrowed table with gimpy legs, and with an English dictionary and Divry Greek English dictionary beside him. Of course, he graduated with honors: his transcript is a miracle of perfect grades under imperfect circumstances. And then a Greek shipowner knocked on the door of the apartment and introduced himself as Papachristides. He said he was a friend of Karamanlis and the bureaucrats in Greece could wait because he wanted my father to become the principal of the Greek parochial school of Socrates in Montreal. My father went to visit Montreal and saw snow, and bitter cold, and a school run out of the rectory of the local Protestant church. The kids played in the yard and had to dodge the wet clothes hanging on



the line. There was widespread poverty and students came to school with bread dipped in oil as their lunch. "I said to myself," my father remembers, "what did I get myself into?"

But he stayed for two years, which is when I joined the family and saw snow—white mountains of it—for the first time. Then he was recruited to be the principal of Plato School in Chicago, the crown jewel of the archdiocese school system, built by the hard-headed Greeks who had made their fortune selling peanuts and shining shoes downtown, and then moved uptown to build a church (the Assumption) out of beautiful cut stone and take over the leafy

neighborhood near Columbus Park and make it a suburban Greektown. I remember leaving the school with my father and walking down streets full of Greek stores, from Mouheliou's grocery store with the cheese and olives in brine and lamb hanging on hooks, to the barber shop of the Spartiati who ate garlic and whistled (my nemesis because I never asked for but he always gave me a buzz cut), to the Greek gas stations that anchored the block (one of them a Sinclair with the inflatable dinosaur flapping in the wind), to the Greek funeral home where everyone was dispatched and the steakhouse where everyone gathered to assuage their grief with American beef. My father welcomed P a t r i a r c h Athenagoras to the s c h o o l ( h e remembers being h u g g e d a n d smelling his incense-scented beard) and every March he joined the kids dressed as evzones and amalias on the school bus that took them to the Greek parade down the w i n d b l o w n

stretches of State Street. It was a wonderful world until, inevitably, the Greeks fled uptown as the neighborhood changed and one day my father had to confront Jesse Jackson leading a rally outside the school and demanding from my father why the school was only for Greeks. "Because the Greeks built it with their sweat," my father told him, in a confrontation captured on the local news.

We moved back to New York, my father served as principal in Brooklyn of the A. Fantis School of SS Constantine and Helen and later became the founding principal of the Kaloidis Parochial School of the Holy Cross parish. His portrait still hangs in the lobby of that school and his grandchildren, Nicholas, Eva, Costa, Kalliopi, were his students.

He retired in 1987 after a lifetime of service to Greek education both in Greece and in North America and he left a lifetime of memories with the legion of his students, including Eleni Bakopanos, a Justice Secretary and Attorney General of Canada, who wrote him a letter nearly fifty years after graduating from the old rectory that was the Greek school in Montreal: "Your encouragement when I was your student helped me immeasurably in the development of my career."

I am the first woman of Greek descent elected to the Canadian House of Commons. Thank you for the inspiration you provided in helping me 'grow up right' and in becoming a good citizen of our wonderful new country, Canada.

"My father's life shaped the lives of so many others. As his son I can still marvel at where he started his journey and how far he came, at the man he became (who was also the most wonderful storyteller), and



at the legacy he left behind, in common with all his generation, a legacy of what one person can achieve against all odds, without abandoning the faith and values of the world that had sustained him, and through him, sustains us all.







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**Agapi Stassinopoulos**

is our guest speaker

Proceeds from our Luncheon will go to  
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# FDF 2012: Filled with Dance, Music and Fellowship



His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos with the Division III dancers at FDF.



The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Board held their Winter Board Meeting during FDF, under the leadership of President Jeannie Ranglas.



FDF Chairman of the Board Fr. Gary Kyriacou presented a framed photograph to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios as a memento of his visit to the 2012 FDF.

The weekend of February 16 – 19, 2012 brought together nearly 4,000 dancers, singers, family, friends and spectators in Anaheim, California for the 36th Annual Folk Dance and Choral Festival sponsored by the Metropolis of San Francisco. Thirty-two parishes from the Metropolis were represented, forming 93 groups which participated in the festivities for the weekend. FDF is under the leadership of Metropolitan Gerasimos, Executive Chairman; and Rev. Fr. Gary Kyriacou, Chairman of the Board; with active participation from the Board of Trustees along with the support of the Management Team under the leadership of the 2012 Managing Director, Nicholas Metrakos.

The traditional Opening Ceremonies began with a parade of all the groups carrying the flags and banners for their parishes, followed by an Agiasmos service led by Metropolitan Gerasimos. At the conclusion of Opening Ceremonies, the FDF participants and their families were surprised with a Skype greeting from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Archbishop Demetrios of America arrived at FDF on Friday and enjoyed two full days of competition,



Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral from Honolulu, HI was well-represented by the Nisiotes and Nisiotopoula dancers.



Placing Third in the Advanced Senior Category were the Paradosi dancers from Holy Trinity in San Francisco.



St. John the Baptist Church from Las Vegas was represented by several groups at FDF, including Stavroforoi who received the Founders Special Achievement Award in the Advanced Intermediate Category.



Ta Aidbonia from Saint Demetrios in Seattle won the Choral Sweepstakes for FDF.

watching attentively as the dancers from varying age groups performed to the very best of their ability. A variety of workshops were offered which the dancers attended throughout the weekend which provided FDF participants the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the Orthodox faith, discussing contemporary topics, learning about living an Orthodox Christian life amidst a secular society, and emphasizing this year's FDF theme, "Believe".

The second annual Greeks Got Talent competition was held on Friday evening and featured eight presentations which included guitar, violin and clarinet solos, vocal music ranging from musical theatre to opera, and hip hop dance. Among the judges panel were two distinguished guests from Greece: Yiorgos Lianos, Musician, TV Host, and Fame Story Contestant; and Vangelis Giannopoulos, Music Producer and Talent Manager. The winner for the evening was 18-year old Angelica Whaley from the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Sacramento, CA, who performed the Puccini aria "O Mio Babbino Caro".

In addition to all the FDF festivities, the Metropolis Philoptochos Board and Metropolis Church Music

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORTHODOX OBSERVER



Performing a compelling suite of dances from Pontos were the Thorivos dancers from Annunciation in Modesto, CA who placed Fourth in the Advanced Senior Category.



Children make icons during a workshop at FDF.



The Ekrixi Dancers from the Annunciation Cathedral in San Francisco placed Third in the Senior Division.



Ellinopoula from Saint Nicholas in Northridge, CA placed Second in the Primary Category.

Federation each held their Winter Board Meetings at which Archbishop Demetrios and Metropolitan Gerasimos briefly participated. On Saturday evening, a gala dinner was sponsored in honor of the Archbishop by the Archons of the Metropolis of San Francisco with nearly 150 people in attendance. A special presentation on the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Religious Freedom initiatives of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle was offered by Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander.

At the Awards Ceremony, Archbishop Demetrios commented on how overwhelmed he was with the weekend, especially the enthusiasm, commitment and energy of the dancers, singers and their families. This was his Eminence's third visit to FDF and each time he leaves with a renewed excitement for this ministry, and remarked that on several occasions he has used FDF as an example of a thriving youth ministry that needs our continued support and cultivation for the preservation of our faith and culture.

A full list of winners, along with photos and videos from FDF 2012 can be found online at: [www.yourfdf.org](http://www.yourfdf.org).

FAITH

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Best Wishes for a Blessed  
and Joyous Pascha

From  
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The core mission of FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism is to promote Hellenism and an understanding of the Greek Orthodox faith through a series of high quality educational programs and cultural initiatives for young people through an endowment for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

This Spring, the Founders of FAITH are pleased to announce the continuation and expansion of their annual scholarship programs through the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

1. **FAITH Scholarships for Academic Excellence** – A series of merit-based and need-based scholarships awarded to graduating high school seniors for their university studies
2. **FAITH Ionian Village Travel Scholarships** – A series of need-based scholarships awarded to young people who wish to participate in the Ionian Village Summer Camp
3. **FAITH St. John Chrysostom Festival Scholarship Awards** – A series of scholarships awarded to the top ranked festival participants
4. **FAITH sponsored US-Greece Fulbright Scholarships** – Scholarship opportunities for graduate students and/or professional scholars/lecturers to travel to Greece for research

For more information about these programs and the application process, please visit the FAITH website: [www.faithendowment.org](http://www.faithendowment.org)  
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# MARYLAND GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE



Retired Senator Paul Sarbanes and Congressman John Sarbanes in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



Eleni Vettas, Voula Liadakis, Anastasia Hatziefimiou, Georgia Vavas, Irene Pappas, Pitsa Balomas.



by Georgia Vavas

On March 25, 2012, many spectators from across the Mid-Atlantic region flocked to Baltimore's officially designated Greektown to enjoy the Maryland Greek Independence Day Parade honoring our ancestors' sacrifices to preserve the ideals of Freedom and Democracy. This day marked the 191st Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, when our forefathers declared independence from almost 400 years of Ottoman Turkish occupation.

More than 50 marching groups participated in the Parade including Greek and American government officials, media personalities, the Hellenic Warriors, children and adults in colorful ethnic Greek costumes, Greek Orthodox clergy, the U.S. Naval Academy Marching Band and Baltimore's own "Evzones" – Greek Honor Guard.

Among the dignitaries who attended this year's Parade were Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, retired U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Senator Bill Ferguson, U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Deputy Mayor Kaloie Parthemos, and officials from the Greek and Cypriot Embassies.

Congratulations to the Parade Committee Chairman George Stakias, Co-Chairman Dino Frangos, Parade Marshal Emmanuel Matsos, and the dedicated Maryland Greek Independence Day Parade Committee for their hard work and leadership in making this year's event a huge success. For more information, go to [www.GreekParade.com](http://www.GreekParade.com).



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*Theodore G. Spyropoulos*





## HELLENIC TIMES SCHOLARSHIP FUND'S 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY STAR-STUDED GALA



*Businessman and Philanthropist Dennis Mehiel*



*FOX News Channel's Chief Congressional  
Correspondent Mike Emanuel*



*Greek singing sensation Giannis Ploutarxos*

The Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund will honor Businessman and Philanthropist Dennis Mehiel, Chairman and CEO of U.S. Corrugated, Inc., and FOX News Channel's Chief Congressional Correspondent Mike Emanuel at its 21st Anniversary Gala at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel on Saturday, May 12, 2012. A superstar concert will also be headlined by Greek singing sensation Giannis Ploutarxos as well as Grammy nominated songstress Maxine Nightingale ("Get It Right Back To Where We Started From"). Scholarships will also be presented to some of the best and brightest Greek American students in the country.

The HTSF will once again sponsor an exciting program as it takes its mission to the next level by inviting past

honorees back for several workshops to inspire students with their various career dreams. Topics will include how to succeed in Business, Law, Real Estate, Media/Journalism and the Arts. Admission to the workshop is free with the purchase of a Gala ticket.

Workshop panelists will include: John Catsimatidis (Chairman & CEO of the Red Apple Group), Dennis Mehiel (2012 HTSF Honoree and Chairman & CEO of US Corrugated, Inc.), Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis (2001 HTSF Honoree), John Aniston (Days of Our Lives Actor and 1997 HTSF Honoree) Frank Dicapoulos (2008 HTSF Honoree and star of Guiding Light), Mike Emanuel (2012 Honoree and Chief Congressional Correspondent for Fox News), Alexis

Christoforou (2006 HTSF Honoree and CBS News Anchor & National Correspondent) and Fashion Designer Joanna Mastroianni and attorney Peter Kakoyiannis. Special Guests at the Gala will also include FOX News Anchor Ernie Anastos, FOX-5 Meteorologist Nick Gregory and Actor Gilles Marini.

Dinner Chairman and HTSF President is New York Attorney Nick Katsoris, General Counsel of the Red Apple Group.

For further information, to receive an invitation or to purchase tickets, the Website is [www.HTSF.org](http://www.HTSF.org) and the phone number 212-986-6881.



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by Orestes Varvitsiotes\*

Although not without challengers, doubters and detractors, nevertheless, there is a considerable body of opinion, including that of some of the most influential thinkers, that our Western civilization is deeply indebted to the Greeks, to the many wonderful things they developed and which have come down to us: democracy, drama, medicine, mathematics and many of the sciences, the arts, aesthetics, and our athletics; our language is so full of Greek words that if we were to delete them from our vocabulary we would be able to communicate adequately on the most essentials, but not without difficulty on medical, philosophical, political, or scientific subjects. Rarely mentioned, but no less of an achievement, was the development of the Greek alphabet, from whose Western branch, the Aetolian dialect, via the Etruscans, came the Latin, which is the basis of all Western alphabets, with the exception of the Celtic that came directly from the Greek, as did the Cyrillic (Russian). Having borrowed sixteen consonant symbols from the Phoenicians, they added seven vowels and four consonants(1), and thus created a flexible tool for writing anything one wished, not simply a record-keeping device as it appears Linear B to have been, and which disappeared after the destruction of the Mycenaean settlements by the Dorian invasion; nor, for that matter, the Semitic alphabets that lacked vowels and which the reader must himself figure out and insert. The Greeks used the alphabet also as numerals (the zero is a later Arab invention) and for musical notation, upon which today's method of vocal music notation is based almost unaltered(2). And although poetry had already developed to an advanced stage and was transmitted orally, it is unlikely that Greek culture (and East European and Western culture, in general) would have developed at the pace and reached the heights it did, without the use of the alphabet.

The Greeks' contribution to all these areas has been extraordinary, and their influence on our society and culture both pervasive and beneficial. It was Shelley, the English poet, who proclaimed: "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root to Greece." [Hellas] Another Englishmen, John Stuart Mill,

considered the battle of Salamis as more crucial to English history than the Battle of Hastings! It is little wonder, then, that classical studies, which included ancient Greek and Latin, were the basis of education in Europe following the Renaissance, and in the United States throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth. \

Today, however, they suffer of atrophy. To mourn this development and its consequences two influential classicists wrote an entire book(3). Americans value individual freedom above anything else and what makes the Greeks so important is that they were the ones who developed the prototype: a political system which allowed them to live in freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. It was indeed an unprecedented development. Warner Jaeger may very well have expressed most accurately the relationship between the Greek model and our modern society by this observation: "What we call culture today is an etiolate thing, the final metamorphosis of the original Greek ideal. In Greek terms is not so much paideia, as a vast disorganized external apparatus for living, ....In fact it seems that the culture of the present cannot impart any value to the original Greek form of culture, but rather [itself finds] illumination by that ideal, in order to establish its true meaning and direction." (Paideia, New York)

Having downgraded, however, the study of the classics during the last six decades, Jaeger's assertion may not be so apparent or widely known to the general public today, as one would have hoped or wished. It is not unreasonable, then, to suppose that it would be to our peril and regret if we were to continue to neglect the teaching of the classics, and thus deprive our youth of the knowledge of where our traditions and culture have come from and what we represent; indeed, who we really are. In fact, at a time when globalization is breaking down national borders, ethnic differences and cultural distinctions, it is almost imperative that the time tested ethical and philosophical tenets of the Greeks occupy the centerpiece of this brave new world in the making, as they have already proved to be the best vehicle in the development of our own intellectual achievements and

humanistic traditions. It is interesting to note that because of its secularism and universality, its sense of balance and its liberating spirit, Greek culture was always attractive and accessible to other cultures that happened to come into contact with and which inadvertently or by design were affected by it. In other words, it seems that Greek culture had a wide appeal to and was appropriated by many and disparate cultures: Judaism and Christianity were both highly influenced by it; Rome was overwhelmed; the Byzantines claimed it their own and preserved it, and so did the Arabs, who avidly studied the works of Aristotle and disseminated his teachings to Europe during the Middle Ages. This is a unique record, and a very fruitful one in its consequences: because ultimately it led to the revival of Greek thought on a grand scale during the Renaissance, followed by the Age of Reason and all the subsequent phases of Western thought. One may wonder then why is it that we have abandoned it now, at this crucial stage in the world's development when it's needed the most. For even if economics is an essential element for man's well-being and progress, the old adage "not by bread alone" still holds its validity, and even more so if paraphrased to "not by profits alone", as one gets the impression that this is the only preoccupation of our society and its exportation to the rest of the world.

Coming from a different direction, there is also criticism leveled upon the Greeks, despite of all their achievements and contributions to Western culture, primarily by the so-called multiculturalists. As it happens, this is not entirely unusual, as each generation attempts to reexamine the past and to assess its meaning by using as yardstick its own perceptions, interests, sensibilities and values. Therefore, on the basis of today's emphasis on individual freedom, human rights, universal suffrage, and equality of the genders, there are some who castigate the Greeks because their democracy was restricted to the male citizens of the polis alone, and for their ownership of slaves. The argument made in this respect is that Greek men were able to enjoy the benefits of their democratic society because women managed their households and the slaves did all the work. This arrangement allowed them to exercise their civil rights and meet their civic responsibilities, including doing the fighting in the wars, and afforded them the leisure time to pursue their philosophical inquiries. But this argument is very shallow indeed, as it disregards the fact that it was not their abundance of time, but the political system which gave them the freedom to involve themselves in these type of activities; neither does it take into consideration the socioeconomic conditions of the period and the context in which the Greek poleis had developed; nor the influences that this development must have had on the formation of their culture(4). Their criticism would have been valid only if in some other society in the ancient world the condition of women and slaves were different, i.e., if the women were given rights they lacked in Greece, and if there were no slaves. However, this is not the case by far. In fact, the Greeks' attitude towards the slaves was actually more enlightened than even that of nineteenth century American South! (Thornton, The Greek Way, San Francisco)

Such examination or comparison would have put the Greeks' culture under a more apposite perspective and would have made the Greeks' achievements even more extraordinary, even under today's more expanded values. In fact, it is the sheer irony of it that the values employed by these critics to judge the Greeks are nothing but the very extension of the values the Greeks themselves developed! Broadly speaking, there is no denying that the slaves' lot was miserable and their treatment often brutal; but there is also reliable testimony that it was not all too unusual for slaves to be treated benignly: to be given a tutor's or other non-menial responsibilities; or even to gain freedom on merit or circumstance. It is of interest to note that the first policemen in Athens were slaves from Scythia, a place which in later times became the hotbed of the slave trade. Theokritos mentions that the slaves used as shepherds in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy and Sicily owned property, including livestock, and they were able to make pretty gifts, a custom whose origin goes back to the aristocratic ethos of the Heroic age and which reflected a man's station in the community and, therefore, of great social significance and

importance. The Arcadians gave lavish parties to which they invited both masters and slaves and served them wine from the same mixing bowl.(5) (Burckhardt) Also interesting is how Euripides presents the role and the lot of a slave in his Ion: KREUSA (Addressing the slave): Come on, old friend! When my father was alive he trusted you to look after me; so you must come up to the temple, to share in my happiness, if the oracle has promised us children. When joy comes, it is good to have a friend to share it; and if sorrow comes—which God forbid—the deepest comfort is to see it reflected in the eyes of a friend. Yes, I am your mistress [female owner]; but I am only returning the kindness you used to show my father." In Ion the slave is not only treated with affection as member of the family, but further down the plot he is depicted as acting as his mistress's confidant and personal advisor. One may assume that such representation must have been accepted by the audience as being in line with the everyday life in an Athenian household. The treatment of the helots by the Spartans is another matter, of course: the Spartan youth ran unprovoked raids of terror as a way to intimidate them, always fearful that they might revolt. This was state instigated behavior. But again, the Spartans' social structure was not just based on slave labor: the slaves belonged to the state and were only "assigned" or "leased" to its landholding citizens in order to cultivate their fields, the landowners receiving two-thirds of the produce. In other words, food production was entirely in the hands of the slaves, a condition which allowed the male citizens of Sparta to meet their citizenship obligations(6) and enabled them to devote all their time and energy to the only profession they were allowed to have: soldiering. Similarly, the polis of Athens used (but not owned) slaves in their Laurion mines(7) and as oarsmen in their triremes, both sources of Athenian power—until, that is, Perikles plundered the Treasury of the Allies at Delos and moved it to Athens.

In the end, however, it was Christianity, which provided the ideological framework for the abolition of slavery, although it was the Greeks again who had provided the philosophical basis upon which the development of such thinking was based. (Plato, Epicurus, et al.) For the Greeks to be a slave was not a matter of racism or some natural deficiency, but the result of misfortune—most likely brought about by defeat in war or, in earlier times, because of debts. As for women's rights, it would take many-many centuries before women would become enfranchised and slowly accepted and treated as equal, and not until recently did they begin to receive equal pay as men for their work. And if in real life the Athenian women lived in seclusion and did not participate in public affairs, Plato advanced what must have been a revolutionary idea, indeed: in his philosopher-king utopia women would receive the same education as men, participate equally in the affairs of the state, and even be chosen to be king! (Republic, xv 445-57) Besides, no other society at the time (and many not even today) had given the girls the same education as boys and to women as much freedom and power, if not the vote, as did the Spartans, from whom Plato borrowed many ideas. Therefore, to take today's extended values as a yardstick and apply it uncritically and indiscriminately to the Greeks is not only inappropriate but also utterly ridiculous.

There is another criticism of the Greeks: that they were the originators of Western attitudes and beliefs, which ultimately found their expression in chauvinism, colonialism, imperialism and a host of other evils the West is held responsible for. One would accept such criticism as valid if the West would have been better off had it not adopted the Greek model. However, if anything, the reverse is true: it is whenever the West abandoned the Greek model that caused the greatest atrocities, to their own citizens included: absolute monarchy, dictatorship, theocracy and totalitarianism; none of these systems proved to be a better model than that of the Greeks' despite all the sins attributed to it. Therefore, the criticism must be directed not so much against the Greek model itself as to the transgressions which have stained its history, be it ancient or modern, the most damaging of which is a proclivity to wage war. Ironically, the Greeks

themselves were fully aware of this folly, and they were the first ones to deal with it: war and its catastrophic consequences is the underlying theme in many of their tragedies, and comedies too!(8) Even in Homer's Iliad, which describes an aristocratic society during the Heroic age whose very existence rested on war, it is called "a lamentable war". Of course, waging war is not the exclusive prerogative of democratic regimes. Nevertheless, democracies too have their dark side, in most cases caused by the economic interests as perceived, defined and pursued by the ruling elites, rather than by the nature of the political system or the cultural beliefs of the polity. However, even if coming from an arch-apologist of British imperialism as Winston Churchill was, it is still well to remember that: "Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried from time to time; but there is the broad feeling in our country that the people should rule, continuously rule, and that public opinion, expressed by all constitutional means, should shape, guide and control the actions of Ministers who are their servants and not their masters."(9) Of course, we are indebted to the Greeks and their legacies for this kind of a political system and its cultural traditions, which is why the battle of Salamis was considered more important than the battle of Hastings even to the English! Therefore, it is not overstating the case to state that the study of the classics, even in translation, would actually strengthen our conviction that the course the West has taken is the right one; that the cause of freedom and justice, and all those values that Western societies aspire to and our politicians at least in name exalt, is the better choice. It may also help in practical terms too: in the discovery of how ancient some of our problems are and its corollary, how contemporary are the Greeks! For instance, by reading Solon, the poet/lawgiver and one of antiquity's seven sages, one would find a very accurate assessment of the scandals, which have afflicted corporate America and have shaken our financial markets and economy in recent years, if we substitute certain of his terms with their modern equivalent: "Men are tempted to enrich themselves by unjust acts; they snatch and steal from one another without sparing sacred or public property and without protecting themselves against the dread foundations of Justice (Dike), who takes silent note of what is happening and what was before, and comes in time to exact vengeance without fail. Then in the end the whole city is visited with an incurable sickness [economic depression] and soon falls into servitude [unemployment], which awakes war and internecine strife [protests or strikes or revolutions], so that many perish in the flower of youth." (Solon 3.11-20) In other words, Justice (retribution) for man's transgressions will surely come, but not in the form of human disease and pestilence sent by the gods, as it was presented in myths and the Homeric epics, but in the form of social ills: unemployment, strikes, and revolutions. If we take this a step further, it means that social conditions are not inflicted on humans by divine intervention or will, but are the result of either the achievements or failings of human beings. And here we have the beginning of social science.

In our present crisis of morals, it would be well for our government officials as well as the CEO's and managers of our corporations to be familiar with Dion Chrysostom's of Prusa treatise, On Kingship II, in which he develops the theme of what would be proper reading for the education of a future ruler, so that he may become worthy of his position and task; not surprisingly, his answer was: reading Homer!(10) In a way, the treatise is an eloquent exaltation of the poetry of Homer not only for its immense beauty, but also for its immense wisdom and, indirectly, its didactical value, Plato's criticism of Homer notwithstanding. Dion (L. Dio) imagines a conversation between Alexander the Great and his father, King Philip II of Macedon, at Dion, Pieria, where they offered sacrifice in the temple of Zeus, following their victory in the battle of Cheroneia (336 BCE), an event that marked the end of Greek resistance to Macedon's hegemony. The battle was won to a great measure due to the boldness and

decisiveness of Alexander; the first sign of his military genius exhibited at the early age of eighteen! In answer to his father's question why he only read Homer, Alexander, after he explains the various areas in which Homer's poetry would improve the skills and character of a future ruler and thus assist him in attaining all the virtues necessary to be effective, he expounds on a simile Homer uses when Agamemnon addressed the Greek chieftains at Aulis, where they gathered before they embarked on their ships for Troy: "One may mention many other admonitions and lessons from [the reading of] Homer that is appropriate to brave men and kings; perhaps, many more than those already mentioned. However, he [Homer] makes it clear with his thoughts, because he thinks that the king must be braver than all others and [especially] in the case of Agamemnon, when he first addressed the army under his command and called out the chieftains and the number of ships. There he did not allow any of the heroes to come close to him in stature, but as the bull is superior in strength and size than the rest of the herd, so he says the king must differ from all others; as he put it: 'Like the bull that stands out in the herd of cows and he is distinguished from among the crowd, such Zeus made Atreus' son that day: to be The most eminent among so many heroes. It appears to me that he said these things not simply to praise him for his strength, because for that he could compare him to a lion; but in this way he pointed to the calmness of character and his care for those he ruled. Because the bull is not only one of the bravest animals, nor does he uses his strength for himself alone, otherwise he could have used the lion and the boar and the eagle, who chase after other animals and become stronger by devouring them; for that, I think, one may say that they are an example of tyranny rather than kingship. Whereas, it appears to me clearly, the bull gives a good picture of a [good] ruler and governance: because he makes use of readily and easily available food, by peacefully grazing, and it is not necessary to use force or to become greedy for food; but as with the fortunate kings there is abundance and plenty of wealth for the necessities. He rules and governs his breed, one might say, with goodwill and responsibility, leading them to the pastures and he doesn't abandon them when a beast appears, but he defends the entire herd and helps the weak, and he saves the multitude from the brutal and wild beasts by protecting them. Such must be the ruler and the king, and it is for that they deserve to be honored by the people."

Interestingly enough, at the end when Philip expresses his satisfaction for Alexander's explanation and thinking, he credits Aristotle, who was Alexander's teacher, by saying: "We honor him because this man is worthy of many and large gifts for the way he is teaching you on kingship and governing whether by interpreting Homer or other means." Many years later, Charles de Gaul, who knew his history, remarked in his Army of the Future (1934): "At the root of Alexander's victories one will always find Aristotle." (Quoted by Herbert J. Muller in his Introduction to Homer's Iliad, Bantam 1967)

For all these reasons, then, one could surmise that it is not just desirable but beneficial to return to the teaching of the classics as an essential requirement for the intellectual, philosophical and ethical health (and wealth) of our society and culture. For according to Aristotle, "To be a competent student of what is right and just and of politics in general, one must first have received a proper upbringing in moral conduct." (Nikomachaeon, 1.4.27-28) Further on he states that a fundamental prerequisite to intellectual excellence is teaching it early and practicing it constantly, so that it may become hexis, (second nature). (Nikomachaeon, 1.13.16-17)

**Orestes Varvitsiotes is the author of "Ancient Greek Athletics: Myths, History and Culture" and a contributor to several Greek American publications on ancient history and current events.**

*The footnotes appear on the online version, [www.neomagazine.com](http://www.neomagazine.com)*



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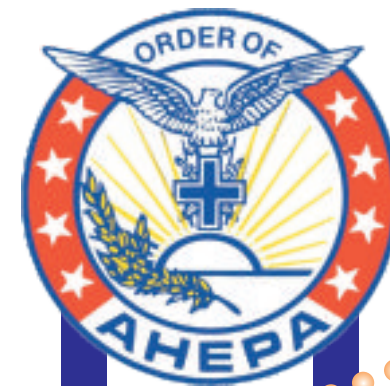
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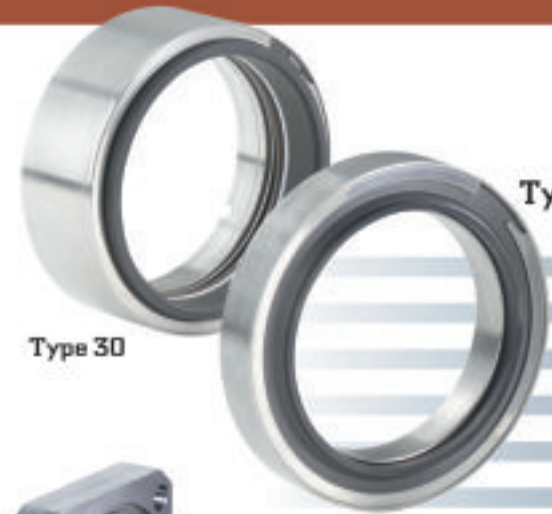
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The organizers of the Tsiknopempti event: Athanasia Filios, longstanding Greek language teacher at the Cathedral School on left, and parents Stella Lymberis center and Roula Lambrakis on right



Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Parent's Association President Lilly Gerontis Pritzard (right), Vice-President Roula Lambrakis and Stella Lymberis (left)



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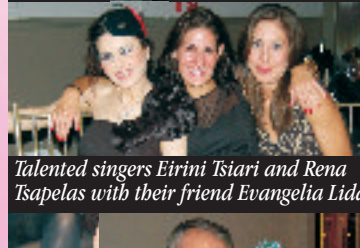
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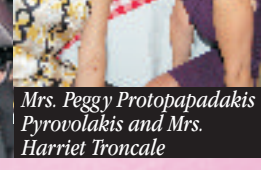
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Nick Katsoris, author of the acclaimed and award-winning children's book series featuring Loukoumi the fluffy lamb, has gathered the favorite childhood recipes of more than 50 celebrities in his delightfully illustrated new cookbook for children and their families, LOUKOUMI'S CELEBRITY COOKBOOK. A minimum of \$2 from the sale of each book will be

donated to Chefs for Humanity and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

In LOUKOUMI'S CELEBRITY COOKBOOK, Loukoumi and her friends Dean the dog, Marika the monkey and Fistiki the cat are playing happily when they become hungry. At Loukoumi's home they discover Fistiki's Aunt Cat Cora, a character based on celebrity chef, restaurateur, and cookbook author Cat Cora, the first and only female Iron Chef, and President and Founder of Chefs for Humanity, which works to reduce hunger around the world. Aunt Cat offers to help them make her childhood favorite dish — Grandma's Special Cream Cheese Cake. The story continues as Aunt Cat guides the friends in gathering and measuring ingredients and preparing them for the oven, all the while sharing child-friendly safety tips.

Beginning with Cat Cora's recipe for Alma's Italian Cream Cake, LOUKOUMI'S CELEBRITY COOKBOOK is divided into Weekend Breakfasts, Lunchtime Favorites, After-School Snacks, Family Meals, and Delicious Desserts. With tasty treats for the whole family, the book includes Rachael Ray's French Toast Cups with Fresh Fruit, Oprah Winfrey's Corn Fritters, Ellen DeGeneres' Vegan Sliders, Beyoncé's Easy Guacamole with Corn Chip Scoops, Betty White's Chicken Wings, Miranda Cosgrove's Spaghetti Tacos, Matt Lauer's Beanie Weenie Stew, Mario Lopez's Chicken Enchiladas, Marlo Thomas' Corn Pudding, and Eli Manning's Lace Cookies — plus recipes from Jennifer Aniston, Katie Couric, Bridgit Mendler, Alexis Christoforou, Jay Leno, Constantine Maroulis, Nicole Kidman, Taylor Swift, Reese Witherspoon, Justin Timberlake, Amy Poehler, Neil Patrick Harris, Paula Dean, George Stephanopoulos, Faith Hill, Sherri Shepherd, Al Roker, and many others.

Nick Katsoris is the author of the iParenting Media Award-winning books Loukoumi, Loukoumi's Good Deeds, Growing up with Loukoumi, and Loukoumi's Gift. A practicing attorney and General Counsel of the Red Apple Group, Katsoris sponsors the annual Growing Up with Loukoumi Dream Day contest granting kids the opportunity to spend the day in their dream careers. He also rallies thousands of kids each October to do a good deed on National Make a Difference Day by sponsoring Make a Difference with Loukoumi Day. He resides in Eastchester, New York, with his wife and two children.

For more info, the book's website is [www.Loukoumi.com](http://www.Loukoumi.com).



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## SAVE THE DATE

REMINDER: This year's Walkathon will take place on Saturday, May 19, 2012 (405 East, 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021). Registration: 9:00 AM, Walk promptly starts at 11:00 AM, Registration Fee: \$15 per participant. For more information please call: 212 639-0188 or 212-717-6608



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## *An EMMY for Despina Teodorescu-Maris!*

CUNY TV Producer and host Despina A. Teodorescu-Maris won an Emmy Award on Sunday, April 1, 2012, at the New York Emmy® Awards Gala held in NYC. Teodorescu-Maris is a Greek-American who was awarded for Best Community/Public Service (PSA) Campaign, "That's Me. That's CUNY." The spot features Liliete Lopez, a Nicaraguan immigrant, whose disability drives her desire to be a leader. The campaign promotes the benefits of going to college and pursuing a good education.

CUNY TV, the City University of New York television station cablecast in New York City's five boroughs, won another two New York Emmy® Awards at the 55th

Annual ceremony: Nueva York, the series about Latino culture in New York and a previous winner of six Emmys®, won Best Magazine Program for its "Best of Season 6" episode featuring a variety of this year's stories, and Best Program / Special in the

Environment category for "Auralis," about a Puerto Rican fashion designer experiencing her New York Fashion Week debut who makes eco-friendly clothing.

"CUNY TV is proud to be part of a city with myriad diverse communities," said Robert Isaacson, the station's Executive Director. "We are committed to presenting the inspirational stories to be found in them. Thanks and congratulations to the CUNY TV teams that made these three awards a reality."

Since 1999, when the station began entering the local Emmy® competition, CUNY TV has won a total of nine Emmy® Awards and has earned 36 nominations.

CUNY TV is carried in New York City's five boroughs on Channel 75 on Time Warner and Cablevision, Channel 77 on RCN, and on Channel 30 on Verizon FiOS. For more information their website is [www.cuny.tv](http://www.cuny.tv)

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# ARIS MELISSARATOS CORRIDOR INC.'S PERSON OF THE YEAR



Aris Melissaratos and Georgia Vavas

About 300 of Maryland's business leaders and lawmakers gathered for Corridor Inc.'s Sixth Annual Person of the Year Awards, held recently at the brand new Hotel at Arundel Preserve. What began in December with 21 accomplished and worthy nominees was narrowed down by reader votes to one person: Aris Melissaratos, Senior Advisor to the President for Enterprise Development at Johns Hopkins University.

When Aris Melissaratos first arrived in Maryland, he was 13 years old and spoke not a word of English. His parents had brought him to the United States as they

escaped communism from Romania and economic hardship. Now, Melissaratos is known throughout Maryland and the region for his entrepreneurship, work ethic, community involvement, and leadership.

In 2007, Melissaratos joined Johns Hopkins University as Senior Advisor to the President for Enterprise Development, bringing his career full-circle since receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Hopkins in 1966. After graduation, Melissaratos began his 32-year career at Westinghouse Electronics Corporation, where he held numerous positions in Baltimore and at the company's corporate headquarters in Pittsburgh.



Dimitra Emmanouilidou, John Korologos (Corridor Inc.'s Publisher), Ted Venetoulis, George Petrocheilos, Markela Ibo

"Johns Hopkins University is the number one research institute in the world, conducting \$1.7 billion worth of research annually. It is one of five Carnegie Research Institutions in the state," Melissaratos affirms, "There's a lot of academic strength here [in Maryland]."

"This corridor is so rich in the world's technological thought process."

In 2011, Hopkins helped launch 19 new companies, the most they have ever established in a year. "It culminated a four-year period where we spun out 51 companies. They may be located globally, but a lot of them are local," Melissaratos said.

Another project to which Melissaratos has dedicated himself over the past year is BHI, Bio-Health Innovations. This regional initiative is a public-private partnership intent on accelerating the development and growth of life science companies.

Aliza Rosen wrote a full article on the event, which was published on February 17, 2012, in Corridor Inc. from where info for this story was taken.



Aris Melissaratos addressing the award's gala

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PERI X SCOPE

## An Olympian's Lesson to the ...Mortals

Before I go on with the Pascha wishes, I need to take a minute to express my frustration that Olympia Snowe, one of the few remaining voices of reason in the US Senate, decided this past February not to seek reelection. It seems old news already, but had we not have lost our democratic sensitivity as citizens, the repercussions of her brave act should have been troubling us for much longer. In announcing her decision, Senator Snowe made it clear that while she was ahead in polls for reelection, the political climate with its extreme polarization made her seeking another term obsolete, because she couldn't do much given the state of our political culture in Washington, strongly reminiscent of Greece in the late '80's early 90s, when politicians of the two main parties wouldn't even talk to each other in public. Instead, they would give in to the alluring charms of populism, paving the way for today's economic and political collapse. When I was growing up in Greece, I would look to the US political system with admiration, because elected representatives could cross lines in voting for certain bills or even supporting candidates of the opposition without losing their status within their own parties. Later, when I came here, I was thrilled to find out that in reunions and other events it was natural for political opponents to come together, socialize, drink and strike deals which required the almost magical now art of consensus.

We all remember the vitriolic attacks against Olympia Snowe about three years ago when she voted for the so-called Obama care law. And they weren't political hits of the type someone would expect in an advanced democracy: strictly on the issue and countering her points in order to prove her wrong. They were malicious slurs, under the belt kicks, with the aim to expose her as a ...traitor...someone who somehow betrayed the sacrosanct tenets of the party, which in its current populist understanding reminds us more and more of the now defunct communist parties of the former USSR and Eastern Europe! Even the Chinese have gotten rid off the party's rigid ideology, adopting more pragmatic positions and ways. Here we are reverting to a past that didn't even exist in this political culture! Instead of inventing the future, we are reinventing the past in order to justify the moronic choices of our present!

In May, 2010, Margarita Pourmara did a cover story interview of Olympia Snowe for NEO magazine ([http://www.neomagazine.com/2010\\_05\\_may/index.html](http://www.neomagazine.com/2010_05_may/index.html)). Asked if she was concerned about the American political life being overly polarized, here's what she had to say in a prophetic, as it has been proved, manner:

"To me, it's not about titles or roles; it's doing what's right ...whether that's working with Republicans or Democrats. It's considering each bill or proposal and determining whether this was the right way to address a particular problem. Americans have little trust in the ability of Congress to address their concerns or the problems of our nation. No wonder our approval ratings as an institution have reached all-time lows! The answer begins with resoluteness. It involves cooperation. It understands bipartisanship. And it ends with leadership. Our government, our nation, our political system, and our people have persevered in the face of enormous challenges, because people of good will have gotten involved and worked together. The fact is, no party has a lock on good ideas – and especially when it comes to the major issues, for any proposed solutions to have true credibility with the American people, they cannot simply represent the desires of those on the political extremes. So I fully expect to continue working on behalf of my constituents in Maine and in the best interests of the American people. But for those people who know me, my role in the 111th Congress has been no different than the role I've been playing throughout my career."

This is the kind of leader the US Senate and all of us will miss after Olympia Snowe's term concludes this year. And what's worse is that her brave decision to call our attention to the current partisan gridlock in Washington by ending her Senate career has fallen on deaf ears! After the initial commotion, nothing else happened and about a month and a half after her dramatic overture it's already old and forgotten news. History, however, has the ability to surprise us and remind us of her lessons when we least expect it ...

Happy Easter to all, with love, joy and time for reflection and reevaluation of what's really important in life that only a genuine break from the every day madness can offer, albeit for a day or two!

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS  
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*Yours trully and Kyprianos Bazanikas (right) offering US Senator Olympia Snowe NEO's May 2010 cover, which featured her interview, at the Washington DC, Hellenic Issues Annual Conference. (My founding father look was an attempt to pay tribute to the US Senate building, where the conference session took place. Taking into consideration the fact that the state of the nation's political culture has further deteriorated since, next time I'll visit the US Congress I think a ...turban would be more appropriate or perhaps ...a Karzai outfit!)*



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# Meet blues rock musician Jon Christopher Allen!

by Jill Parsbley

Among an array of eclectic Greek-American performers circling ongoing open mics, festivals and local hip venues in and around Astoria this spring, hopefully you will catch blues rock/R&B musician, Jon Christopher Allen (www.jonchristophermusic.com). Who could miss a strikingly handsome, single, soft-spoken, soulful singin', mean-strummin', singer-songwriter? To top it off, this humble talent stands tall on stage at 6 foot 5 inches! We first met while we were performing at a fundraiser for the Japanese Red Cross at Waltz-Astoria. He was playing his guitar, tapping his tambourine and singing hits from his third record on iTunes, the newly released album "Jon Christopher". He complimented my poetry reciting and I was tongue-tied by his "Save Another" lyrics, "Give what you want to someone else, save another and you save yourself". As artists in a land of free speech but with so many locked jaws, we couldn't help but be grateful to be blessed with a safe place to gather, plug in an amp with a microphone, and share our creativity for a purpose. His lyrics from "You are Alive" emphasized that. "Be amazed by what you're seeing, a little baby sleeping whose care is in your keeping, they'll soon be repeating everything they see, so be something to believe in. When you get so mad you're seething, don't forget to breathe in. There'll always be a reason to be hateful, you only need one to be grateful. . . you are alive." "You are Alive" was also featured recently on Hellenic Public Radio, Cosmos FM WNYE 91.5 to raise awareness for the NY Organ Donor Network.

I was born and raised in this cozy hood of Astoria, and amongst the many gifted musicians I've been privileged to meet, I am honored to have sat down for an intimate interview with someone whose album I cannot stop playing. Jon Christopher is filled with riveting raw passion when he sings, and honest, blood pumping lyrics. He plays electric and acoustic like its second nature to him. His new album is one you get up and dance to, and sit down and cry to (I actually did both, I swear). With so many local artists around here lately, many music fans, including myself, are inspired to find these big fish in our small pond before they drown, so we go fishing for them all season long. So far he's toured in Austin & Buffalo and opened up for the legendary Chuck Negron of the band Three Dog Night. I, along with his growing fan club in NYC, always look forward to seeing him perform. "What I can tell you about Jon," says Pedro Gonzalez, Art Director of Waltz-Astoria, "is that Jon is a loyal supporter of Waltz, he's got talent, one of the most polished singers we've had here and he puts out his emotions every time he performs; he is passionate and loves his music. We are grateful to have Jon perform here." Jon Christopher Allen and his band's next show is at Waltz-Astoria (Ditmars Blvd/24th St) Friday April 27th at 9:00 PM – 9:45 PM.

**Jon, when or what event lead you to create music?**

Growing up, I spent a lot of time at my grandparents in Long Island, NY and they had a guitar. The first time I started to play it I wrote a love song in ten minutes, "...her shining light has set me free..." I was 13 or 14. I thought it was so much fun to write.

**Is your family Greek?**

Yes, but I don't speak Greek. As a kid my parents sent me to Greek school, but I would sleep in class. I totally regret it now! LOL. My grandparents are from Anavriti, Greece, near Sparti. My mom is from Carle Place, LI and my dad Jamaica, Queens. My parents owned a café in New Hyde Park (Fredericks) while I was growing up and I worked there sometimes with my two sisters. My mom's now a certified art teacher for PS 19 in Corona. My parents are very supportive of me and come out to see all of my shows.

**Which musicians inspired you and who would be on your playlist now?**

Cat Stevens, Queen, Harry Chapin, Billy Joel, the Black Crowes, Counting Crows, Seal, Pearl Jam, U2, Sarah McLachlan, and Joan Armatrading. On my playlist now, I like The Black Keys, Lynx, D'Angelo, Portishead, Kings Of Leon, Arcade Fire and MGMT.

**Where are you from and where are you now?**

I live in Astoria and I've also worked in Astoria for the last 9 years at Lyons Mortgage as a loan officer. I'm from Glen Cove, LI where I was born and raised. Back in the day, I was a really bad student in Glen

Cove High School, but I loved playing tennis. So, I left when I was 17 years old to go to the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Bradenton, Florida. After that, I was recruited to play tennis at Central Connecticut State University and received all A's for 2 years and soon I was recruited to the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia where I also studied music. After another year of tennis, my back and shoulders were hurting and then it was no longer fun, so I didn't want to play anymore. Kind of like music... you need to keep the fun in it. From there, I went to the Omega Institute's work-study program for 5 months, then to Austin, Texas, where I lived for 4 years and recorded my music. There's a great vibe there. When I came back from Austin, I started working at Lyons. Coming from the Austin music scene, working for a bank crunching numbers was a bizarre experience for me. It's a stressful industry, but I'm happy helping people make their dreams of buying a home come true. It's been an overall good experience. Most of the money I make now, I invest into my music.

**Tell me about this album; is it your first one?**

No, this is my third album. I invested at least a year into writing it. My first two records were "Heavy" and "Only Human" which had musical contributions from Manola Badrena (Rolling Stones, John Scofield), Mark Ambrosino (Stevie Wonder, Whitney Houston) and Dave Eggar (Pearl Jam, Josh Groban). This one, titled "Jon Christopher," was mostly done in Austin, Texas. It was produced by Billy White, a well known musician from Austin (formerly of the Billy White Trio). JJ Johnson was on drums (he's one of the better rock & roll drummers and was once part of the John Mayer Trio). The record was mixed in Austin by Dave Boyle, another talented musician. Dave bought an abandoned church on the East Side of Austin that was just sitting there

for years and he renovated it into a beautiful recording space called Church House Studios. Sasha Ortiz, Tameca Jones, & Pam Miller were great on backup vocals. The recording time for the whole record was stretched out over about 7 months.

**Do you have a band now, or are you a solo singer/songwriter?**

A little bit of both. I never really had a "band". After my second album, my co-producer Chris Liberti introduced me to a bassist and a drummer in Astoria, Jason Dimatteo and John Bollinger. We performed a lot at places like the Knitting Factory and The Bitter End in Manhattan. We played out 2 or 3 times a month for 2 years. Every gig cost me a couple of hundred bucks out-of-pocket to pay my musicians. Some shows packed 100 people and some were 10, but we had really great moments and I got better at performing. Lately, I love to play with some new great musicians: Pete O'Neill on bass, Johnny Task Burgos on percussion, Dave Zerio on Keyboards, and Oneika Jewelle on vocals. Some NYC gigs have been at The Living Room, Hill Country, LIC Bar & Spike Hill.

**If you could open up for any artist who would it be?**

Eric Clapton

**What kind of advice do you live by?**

Keep moving forward and don't stare back. Like I say in my song "Keep Singing Your Song," "Let them sleeping dogs lie, and let God play his games in the sky, Ain't no use wondering why, just keep on moving on, Keep Singing your song, keep singing your song."

**What song would you sing in the shower?**

It depends on the time of day and phase of my life... LOL, lately I like Adele's song, "Rolling in the Deep".

**What is your vision 10 years from now?**

I would like to be making a living with music, be able to do it my way, create the songs I like, have a core following, enough to support my career, you know...having a family, a house, security... some kind of nest, that would be the ultimate.



*The Band: From left, Dave Zerio- Keyboards, Pete O'Neill- Bass, Oneika Jewelle-vocals, Johnny Task Burgos- Percussion, Jill Parsbley- Manager /Booking Agent, Jon Christopher Allen- Lead Vocalist & Guitarist, Songwriter*



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