



Greece's Bold Vision for Global Unity: Deputy Minister Kotsiras Unveils Diaspora Strategic Plan



Giorgos Kotsiras, Greece's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Historic Initiative to Strengthen Ties with Greeks Worldwide

In a groundbreaking announcement, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Giorgos Kotsiras shared Greece's first comprehensive Strategic Plan for Greeks Abroad 2024–2027. Presented in Athens alongside Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the plan sets forth a bold framework to unite Greeks worldwide through over 100 initiatives focused on education, culture, innovation, and economic collaboration.

Key priorities include enhancing consular services, preserving Hellenism through modernized Greek language programs, fostering Diaspora youth engagement, and creating global business synergies. With Greece experiencing renewed growth, Kotsiras urged the global Greek community to reconnect, celebrate their heritage, and play a pivotal role in shaping Hellenism's future on the global stage.

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Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Event Inspires Future Greek-American Leaders



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AHEPA Foundation's Christmas Benefit Inspires and Unites the Community



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Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Giorgos Kotsiras Unveils Greece's Strategic Plan for Global Hellenism

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In an exclusive interview with the Hellenic News of America, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Giorgos Kotsiras unveiled the Ministry's ambitious Strategic Plan for Greeks Abroad 2024–2027. This groundbreaking initiative, presented in Athens with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in attendance, represents the first comprehensive and modernized strategy aimed at strengthening ties between Greece and the global Greek Diaspora.

A Landmark Strategy for Global Unity

The new strategic plan embodies a bold vision: a holistic and innovative approach to foster closer bonds with Greeks worldwide. Focusing on six key objectives, the plan outlines over 100 actionable steps to:

Upgrade consular services.

Support and develop Diaspora networks.

Enhance Greece's international image through collaboration with the Diaspora.

Promote the Greek language, history, traditions, and culture.

Strengthen ties with the Greek Orthodox Church.

Advance bilateral and mul-

tilateral cooperation in Diaspora affairs.

"This initiative is designed to address the needs of Greeks abroad, solidify their connection to our heritage, and amplify their influence on the global stage," stated Deputy Minister Kotsiras.

Cultural, Educational, and Economic Collaboration

To foster stronger cultural, educational, and economic ties, the Strategic Plan emphasizes partnerships between Greek and international universities, enhancing programs for student exchanges, internships, and collaborative research. Additionally, the Ministry supports Diaspora cultural projects such as film festivals, exhibitions, and conferences, while providing resources for communities to preserve Hellenism.

On the economic front, mapping Diaspora business activities and promoting partnerships between Greek and Diaspora entrepreneurs are critical elements. The Ministry also aims to integrate Greece's innovation ecosystem with global professionals to facil-



Giorgos Gerapetritis, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Giorgos Kotsiras, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

itate skill-sharing and entrepreneurship.

"These measures will inspire renewed connections and meaningful collaboration between Greece and its global community," the Deputy Minister emphasized.

Engaging Younger Generations: A Modern Approach

Recognizing the importance of younger Greeks in sustaining Hellenism, the plan integrates digital tools to ensure reciprocal communication.

Programs like "Career Days," launching in Düsseldorf, Germany, aim to inform young Greeks about career opportunities in Greece and incentives for repatriation.

Hospitality programs, including summer camps and educational trips, offer immersive experiences for Diaspora youth, strengthening their ties to their roots. Additionally, the "staelinika.com" platform will incorporate artificial intelligence to make Greek language learning more accessible and engaging.

Ensuring Long-Term

Sustainability

To ensure the plan's longevity, the Ministry has established a dynamic framework with measurable targets and consistent evaluations. "This structure allows us to adapt to future challenges while addressing the evolving needs of the Diaspora," noted Kotsiras, adding that continuous engagement with the community will ensure its relevance and success.

The Call to Collaborate

Deputy Minister Kotsiras highlighted the vital role of the Greek Diaspora in advancing Greece's development and preserving Hellenism globally. From science and academia to entrepreneurship and innovation, Greeks worldwide represent an invaluable asset.

"My visit to the U.S. reflects our commitment to explore synergies with the Greek-American community, particularly in scientific collaboration and innovation," he said.

With Greece experiencing renewed growth and optimism, the Deputy Minister invited the Greek Diaspora to reconnect, celebrate heritage, and help shape the future of Hellenism.



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Giorgos Kotsiras, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Konstantinos Koutras

Shaping the Future: Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation Luncheon Inspires the Next Generation of Greek-American Leaders

OMOGENEIA

By Aphrodite Kotrotsios

Chicago, IL – December 21, 2024 – The Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation hosted its annual mentorship luncheon at the prestigious University Club of Chicago, bringing together scholarship alumni, Pan-Hellenic Young Leaders, and a distinguished group of mentors. This inspiring event celebrated the Foundation's commitment to empowering the next generation of Greek-American leaders while fostering a strong and supportive community rooted in Hellenic values.

The Foundation, renowned for its excellence in education and professional development, welcomed an enthusiastic crowd of students, young professionals, and esteemed members of the Hellenic community. Beyond awarding scholarships, the Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation creates opportunities for networking, mentorship, and community engagement, inspiring pride in Greek heritage and culture across the United States.

At the luncheon, mentors were seated with students and young professionals eager to learn from their experiences and seek valuable guidance. This format encouraged mentors to share their career journeys, including how they chose their paths, the obstacles they faced, and the lessons they learned along the way. Mentors also engaged in meaningful conversations, inviting participants to introduce themselves, discuss their academic backgrounds, and share their career aspirations. While career paths varied, mentors provided personalized advice and insights based on their professional experiences, offering guidance to help participants navigate their own unique journeys and achieve their goals. This interaction fostered a dynamic exchange of ideas, inspiration, and support within the community.

Inspiring Activities and Panel Discussions

The event featured a dynamic program, including remarks from key Foundation leaders and an engaging panel discussion with accomplished professionals. Panelists included George Chia-



Panelists included George Chiampas, D.O., Honorable Judge Anthony Kiriakopoulos, Aphrodite Kotrotsios, M.S., Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, Ph.D., and Jimmy Samartzis

mpas, D.O., Honorable Judge Anthony Kiriakopoulos, Aphrodite Kotrotsios, M.S., Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, Ph.D., and Jimmy Samartzis, who shared their expertise and insights to inspire attendees.

Honoring Exceptional Mentors

A highlight of the luncheon was the recognition of 12 distinguished mentors representing diverse industries. These mentors generously shared their experiences and wisdom with the next generation of leaders. Their contributions underscored the importance of mentorship in fostering success and community engagement.

The 2024 mentors included:

Angeline Beltsos, M.D. – Chief Executive Physician and Medical Director at KindBody; Director of Reproductive Endocrinology at Wayne State University

George Chiampas, D.O. – Chief Medical Officer at U.S. Soccer; Team Physician for the Chicago Bears and Blackhawks

Nicholas Geroulis, Esq. – Attorney at Martin and Karczes, Ltd.

Father Nicholas Greanias – Pastor at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and retired U.S. Diplomat



Vasiliki Panos, Fotini Anastopoulos, and Georgia Tsakos

Shaping the Future: Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation Luncheon Inspires the Next Generation of Greek-American Leaders

Honorable Judge Anthony Kiriakopoulos – Circuit Court Judge, Cook County, Illinois

Aphrodite Kotrotsios, M.S. – CEO of Hellenic News of America; Executive Director of Hermes Expo International

George Lattas, Esq. – Attorney and Chairman of the DePaul University College of Law Dean's Advisory Council

Gregory Poulos – CEO of Modern Halo; former President of KindBody

Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, Ph.D. – Professor at Boston College; Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council

Jimmy Samartzis – CEO of LanzaJet, Inc.

Yanni Sianis – Chief of Staff at Calamos Investments

The Foundation extended heartfelt thanks to these mentors for exemplifying leadership and dedication, inspiring Greek-American youth to achieve their full potential.

Advancing a Legacy of Giving and Community Impact

With the unwavering support of the Hellenic Foundation Grant Award and the leadership of Chairman Robert Buhler, the Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation continues to empower the next generation. “Our mission extends far beyond scholarships,” said the Chairman. “We are dedicated to creating opportunities for Greek-American youth, fostering a thriving community grounded in Hellenic values, and paving pathways for success.”

About the Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation

The Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to advancing education, leadership, and community engagement within the Greek-American community. Through scholarships, mentorship programs, and professional development initiatives, the Foundation empowers individuals to achieve excellence while celebrating and preserving their Hellenic heritage.

For more information about the Foundation, its programs, or ways to get involved, please visit www.panhellenicsf.org.



Robert Buhler, Chairman of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation, with students at the Mentorship Luncheon



A few of the wonderful mentors of the 2025 Winter Mentorship Luncheon

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Exploring Art, Identity, and Heritage: Agni Zotis on Bridging Ancient Greece and Modern Creativity

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Horizons of space, time, and memory

Visual Artist Agni Zotis speaks to the Hellenic News of America about her explorations in art and her relationship to her Hellenic origins.

By Fotios Kaliampakos-Special to the Hellenic News of America

HNA: How did you decide to pursue a career—or better, a life—in painting and art?

Art chose me. It's always been an inseparable part of my life, woven into the fabric of my existence. It's not just a career, but a way of being. As a dyslexic child, I found expressing myself through images came more naturally than words. This visual language became my means of communication, allowing me to freely convey my thoughts and feelings. At 18, in my first live model painting class at Hunter College, I had an epiphany: painting gave me the power to explore and express the complexities of reality in a way that transcended the ordinary. This realization ignited my passion and solidified my purpose and identity as a painter.

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Art has remained the constant thread in my life. It's what I've always done. I love creating my own world, playing life by my own rules. Art allows me to experience, reflect on, and express reality while developing my unique voice. I primarily paint, though I also incorporate video, sound, and light installations. Over the past 20 years, I've had gallery spaces in the East Village, LES, and Chelsea, which became both my studio and a gathering and exhibiting place for artists. These spaces organically nurtured an avant-garde art movement in NYC.

My philosophy centers on "Know Thyself," with art being the truest expression of self-discovery. Through my "Creative Mindfulness" method, I developed, I help others see life as the ultimate masterpiece we create through our presence. My creation of the MAY Kids Transform Foundation—born from my son's inspiration and my own activism, as I believe its empowering to develop self-awareness, is one of my biggest endeavors, merging creativity with mindfulness. The MAY Curriculum, written 15 years ago, is being shared internationally with youth and educators to promote a more positively sustainable and mindful future. For me, great art is a pure language of existence that communicates with both the self and the world.

HNA: Where did you study, and

how is your art affected by your Greek and American heritage?

I grew up in Astoria and spent my teenage years in the East Village, immersed in the punk and new wave scenes, that influenced me to live outside the stereotype of the Greek community. I studied Fine Arts and Psychology at Hunter College and anatomy drawing at the Art Students League. My interest in mysticism led me to apprentice with a Serbian monk studying Byzantine iconography in Astoria and later with a Buddhist monk, learning Mandala painting in Pokhara, Nepal. I still use ancient techniques today—making my own paints and working with pigments, metals, precious stones—blending these ancient traditions with modern views. I traveled extensively living and experiencing different cultures, religions and rituals that give me knowledge on many cultures.

The question of Greek and American influences is complex and intertwined and can't be separated from my being or my work. I carry the deepest traditions of the old world within my DNA and psychology—passed down from my parents and grandparents and favorite philosophy—while living as a free woman and global citizen in the constantly evolving landscape of NYC.

My parents are from Northern Greece, Kastoria. Their lives, like many others, were deeply marked by the wars, so much so they migrated when very young from Greece. My families stories consisted of heroism, bravery, pride, hardships and survival of the Balkan Wars, WWI, WWII, and the brutal Greek Civil War—and the scars of those conflicts still resonate in my family history. My mom is from Epiros, her family left their ancestral land, when she was a baby to never return. My father's roots in Dispilio are deep within the picturesque town on the lake, that houses a Neolithic Civilization and now museum, including The Dispilio Tablet, one of the oldest written forms on record, dates back 7,700 years. Being an immigrant and belonging to nowhere and everywhere is part of my narrative. The odyssey is deeply imbedded within from birth.

Greece, is more than a place, she is a grand idea, that has always influenced me through her light, myths, philosophy, and mysticism. As a child, stories of heroes and their journeys shaped my understanding of human nature. I connect with the psychological archetypes these stories present within all of us. The ancients were highly intelligent to human nature. Socrates, inspires me especially his commitment to the truth—even in the face of death. Plato's republic has stayed with me throughout my life. The emerge of the cave into the light has influenced my life greatly that



Agni Zotis with her son, Francis Zotis Serrano



The City



Fire Heart

I painted a series called Be Nice. Other series of work, such as Punk Monk and The Headless Pig, reflect my personal experiences and my desire to examine human patterns. One vivid childhood memory of

my grandfather sacrificing a pig for Christmas gave me the image of the pig running aimlessly, headless—a metaphor for how humanity often struggles to escape its own patterns. Another series is called "Step into

Exploring Art, Identity, and Heritage: Agni Zotis on Bridging Ancient Greece and Modern Creativity

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the Light” inspired by Heraclitus, “You Can’t Step into The Same River Twice, for other waters are continually flowing”.

In past years I reexamined the Odyssey and worked on a series called “Silver Lining” all about the journey to return home, which is the self.

My work constantly explores the tension between the microcosm and macrocosm, examining our existence and the journey of self-discovery, KNOW THYSELF

HNA: How do you view the distinction between modern and classical art? Is it still meaningful in the art process or education? Where would you place yourself?

Art, for me, is a direct reflection of life. I have no interest in distinctions or boundaries, as I believe art has the ultimate power to transcend these and offer a broader perspective on existence. Art is pure language—it tells the truth, along with the good, the bad and the ugly. It is the only form of expression where one can be truly authentic.

I believe in mastery and the importance of developing one’s craft. An artist must understand their medium and its language, which takes time and dedication. Without passion and emotion, art becomes hollow and meaningless. I strive to create work that transmits hope, beauty, and deeper meaning.

Regarding art education, I don’t think formal schooling is crucial, but making work is. My process is rooted in tapping into emotions and finding a way to communicate them through the medium. As a contemporary artist, I see myself as a free spirit, living a life that is a masterpiece in itself. I’m deeply interested in philosophy, mysticism, and quantum physics—asking questions without easy answers. I love engaging with the world and



helping others see that we can create beauty, even in a world that often feels overwhelmed by scarcity and ugliness. Our outlook is a personal choice we make every day, whether we are aware of the decisions or not.

HNA: What is your creative process?

My work explores the relationship between cosmology and divinity. I approach my practice in series, exploring a specific theme and concept, each painting part of a puzzle—each piece contributes to the whole. The underlying theme of my work has been individuality within universal consciousness, honoring nature’s uniqueness while recognizing its connection to the whole. Paintings are mirrors of self-reflection, imbued with meditative energy and passionate emotion. They inspire to look within and question external reality. Just as electrons orbit atoms, atoms make up molecules, molecular structure takes form, planets form solar systems, and the big bang erupts energy and matter into existence, the paintings play on the interconnectedness and representation between the micro and the macrocosm—as a continually blossoming fractal. Primordial essence is explored through color and form demonstrating vibration of an emotion in motion. Light is used as knowledge, and the way it is used changes what we perceive “To Be”.

I mix my own colors, carefully selecting pigments, precious stones, gold, silver, phosphorescent and bioluminescent materials. The physical act of creating becomes a gathering and release of energy on the canvas, at first raw, full body engagement, representing free-will and allowing for destiny to take its place, as the materials become alive, followed by precise and detail-oriented brushwork as I build layer upon layer. I work obsessively, each layer representing time, growth, and the process of being.

I have developed my technique over three decades that utilizes light to shape perception and alter our understanding of reality. I harness the subconscious mind and intuition to guide the flow of energy. Just as humans, reflect light in our physical bodies and spirit, so too do the pigments and raw minerals I use. They absorb, reflect, and refract light, creating a living dialogue between color and energy. My goal is to create paintings that are alive with color, transforming and flowing as the viewer interacts with them.

HNA: You’ve spent a lot of time in Greece in recent years. Can you tell us about your inspirations and aspirations there? What is your next project?

My projects in Greece are an honoring and merging of the ancient



Agni with His Excellency Koichi Ito, the Japanese Ambassador in Athens and Ilias Katsos, president of EMBCA

world—my roots—with the modern world where I belong. During the pandemic, trapped in NYC and forced to look even deeper within myself, I revisited the Odyssey and the question of “what is home?” This exploration reinforced the idea that home is the acceptance of self, a concept that I continue to reflect on in my work.

Returning to Greece has also been inspired by the support of my collectors and supporters. While my network has always been international in New York City, I feel it’s now time to connect more deeply with my heritage.

This journey feels like a nostos (homecoming)—a personal Odyssey. I’ve come to appreciate Greece more fully as an adult. I’m drawn to its simplicity, its complex history, and the humanity embedded in its culture.

Last year, I painted a body of work on Paros at Cycladic Arts, inspired by Despotiko, an important recent archaeological discovery. Despotiko, located near Antiparos, was a hub of commerce in the ancient world. My series, Odyssey of Time, Devotion and Resilience. Antiparos, which my son introduced me to over a decade ago, remains one of my favorite islands in Greece, and we’ve shared many precious memories as a family.

In past September, I was invited by Iliia Katsos to create a new series of paintings called Fireflies, which contemplates the ethereal and impermanent nature of being. This project draws from the writings of Lafcadio Hearn, 17th-century Japanese Haiku masters, and the heroic act of the Japanese captain who saved over 4,000 Greek and Armenian lives during the barbaric burning of Smyrna in 1922. The event, Hellenic/Japanese Relations: From Lafcadio Hearn to the Tokei Maru, was sponsored by EMBCA and hosted by Mary Cardanas and The Demos Center at The American

College in Athens. In Athens, I was honored to speak about my work in the presence of ambassadors and representatives from Greece, Japan, Ireland, and the United States. During this event, EMBCA presented the Humanitarian Award to His Excellency Koichi Ito, the Japanese Ambassador in Athens.

In late October, I participated in a group exhibition with Gris Festival at the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation in Athens.

During my time in Greece, I also revisited my hometown of Kastoria. I plan to create a project reflecting the 8 millenniums of fascinating history in this beautiful city. It is home to one of the oldest lake settlements, to the Byzantine Empire to name a couple. Looking ahead, I hope to visit Epirus and Dodona, which hold deep personal and historical significance for me. There are also plans for exhibitions in Athens and teaching opportunities. I’m working on several exciting projects with tremendous potential, which I’ll share as they come to fruition. One major project is preparing a major exhibition in New York City, while also developing global teaching initiatives.

In my view, it’s time for us, as Greeks, to rediscover and celebrate our own history—beyond the suffering caused by war. Understanding our past is essential to creating a better future. More importantly, I believe it’s time for the world to recognize Greece for what it truly is: not just a beautiful tourist destination or a place defined by political corruption, but the cradle of Western civilization. Greece represents pure intellectual light and humanity, which should be recognized and honored before the forces of globalization transform it irrevocably.

Ultimately, I aim to connect the dots between Greece’s ancient past and its place in the modern world, sharing her story with a global audience.

The Greek Flag Raised at the United Nations



Hellenic News of America attended the flag-raising ceremony for the new members of the UN Security Council. Evangelos Sekeris, Greece's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, expressed his gratitude and commitment to global peace. Greece also made its first intervention at the Security Council, addressing peace efforts in the Middle East.

In a ceremony filled with emotion, the Greek flag was raised outside the United Nations Security Council chambers in New York on Friday, January 2nd. The annual event marks the beginning of the term for new members of the Council. Greece, elected as a non-permanent member for 2025-2026 on June 7, 2024, received overwhelming support with 182 votes out of 193 UN member states. This is the third time in its history that Greece has held this position, following terms in 2005-2006 and 1952-1953.



The Flag-Raising Ceremony

Held in a specially designated area outside the Security Council chambers, the ceremony attracted significant media attention. Diplomats, staff from Greece's Permanent Mission to the UN, and a select group of guests, including family members, gathered to witness the event.

Leading the delegation was Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris, who raised the Greek flag and delivered a brief address. He expressed gratitude to Kazakhstan for initiating the tradition of this ceremony and congratulated the other new members: Denmark, Pakistan, Somalia, and Panama. He also thanked the outgoing members—Ecuador, Japan, Switzerland, Mozambique, and Malta—for their contributions.

"Standing here, I feel both gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility representing my country," said Ambassador Sekeris. "Greece assumes this critical role for the third time in its history during a particularly challenging period." He emphasized Greece's dedication to the principles of the UN Charter and international law, aiming to act as a "bridge" between North and South, East and West, while contributing to peaceful conflict resolution.

Ambassador Sekeris, addressing the Greek attendees in their native language, reaffirmed Greece's commitment to UN principles and the importance of resolving disputes fairly and

peacefully.

A Symbolic Moment

After the ceremony, Greece's delegation took commemorative photos in the Security Council chambers, where the country's nameplate was positioned between Guyana and France. The placement symbolically highlighted Greece's historical ties to France, a founding EU member and a permanent Security Council member.

Greece's First Intervention at the Security Council

Later that day, Greece participated in its first intervention during an emergency Security Council session convened by Algeria, the current Council President, to address the situation in Gaza.

Ambassador Sekeris called for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of hostages, and unhindered large-scale humanitarian aid delivery. He condemned the tragic conditions in Gaza and emphasized adherence to international law, including the prohibition of using hospitals for military purposes and attacks on such facilities.

While affirming Israel's right to self-defense, Ambassador Sekeris noted that military pressure alone cannot eradicate terrorism or extreme ideologies. He stressed that all actions must align with international and humanitarian law.

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The 34th Annual Hermes Expo: A Premier Platform for Business Growth and Networking – June 25, 2025

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The 34th Annual Hermes Expo is back, bringing together an incredible mix of industries, professionals, and innovators for a day of business growth and networking opportunities. Scheduled for Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at the prestigious Grand Marquis in Old Bridge, NJ, this event is the ultimate marketplace for forging connections, building partnerships, and growing your business.

Now is the time to register as an exhibitor or sponsor and position your brand at the forefront of this influential platform!

Why the Hermes Expo?

For over three decades, the Hermes Expo has built a reputation as a cornerstone for business growth and collaboration. With a focus on fostering connections, the Expo provides a live marketplace for industries including:

- Food and Beverage
- Healthcare and Technology
- Real Estate and Finance
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Manufacturing and Retail
- Non-Profit Organizations

This year, the Expo will deliver even more opportunities to:

Connect with Decision-Makers: Meet industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals eager to collaborate.

Showcase Your Brand: Gain exposure to a targeted audience and stand out in a competitive market.

Leverage the Hermes Network: Access an influential network that spans local, national, and international businesses.

The Hermes Expo is not just an event—it's a business growth engine that opens doors to new collaborations, markets, and strategies for success.

Who Attends?

The Hermes Expo attracts a dynamic mix of professionals, including:

- Entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Corporate executives and decision-makers
- Investors and financial leaders

Government officials and policymakers

Industry innovators and community leaders

This diverse audience ensures that exhibitors and sponsors connect with the right people to elevate their businesses.

Exhibiting or sponsoring at the Hermes Expo gives your business:

Prime Visibility: Stand out with print, digital, and event promotions.

Targeted Networking: Meet high-value attendees and decision-makers.

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Grand Awards Dinner

The day will conclude with the prestigious Grand Awards Dinner, celebrating exceptional Greek Americans and Philhellenes who have excelled in their industries and contributed to their communities. This elegant evening features:

Networking with high-profile attendees and honorees.

Recognition of outstanding achievements across industries.

A night of celebration, inspiration, and connections.

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The 34th Annual Hermes Expo is your gateway to building connections, expanding opportunities, and driving success. Whether you're looking to exhibit your business, sponsor the event, or simply attend and network, now is the time to secure your spot.

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About Hermes Expo

Since 1992, the Hermes Expo has been a driving force for business growth and collaboration in Greek-America. With its strong network, multi-industry focus, and ability to connect professionals across borders, the Expo continues to foster innovation, partnerships, and economic development.





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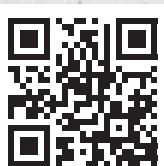
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Discover Ithaca: The Timeless Beauty of Greece's Mythical Island

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Nestled in the heart of the Ionian Islands, Ithaca is more than just a destination—it's a journey into the soul of Greek mythology, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Known as the legendary home of Odysseus, Ithaca continues to captivate travelers with its idyllic landscapes, rich history, and authentic Greek charm.

Explore the Mythical Legacy of Ithaca

Ithaca holds a special place in Greek mythology as the homeland of Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*. Visitors can immerse themselves in the island's mythical allure by exploring landmarks like the Cave of the Nymphs, the Archaeological Museum of Vathi, and the Palace of Odysseus ruins, thought to be the remnants of the hero's ancient kingdom.

Natural Beauty That Inspires
With its lush green hills, tur-

quoise waters, and secluded beaches, Ithaca is a paradise for nature lovers. The island offers stunning coastal views, crystal-clear bays like Filiatro Beach and Sarakiniko, and picturesque hiking trails that lead to breathtaking vantage points. Ithaca's unspoiled beauty makes it a must-visit for those seeking a tranquil escape.

Authentic Greek Culture

Ithaca's charm extends beyond its natural wonders. Visitors can experience authentic Greek culture in the island's quaint villages, such as Stavros and Kioni, where traditional architecture meets warm hospitality. Enjoy local delicacies at seaside tavernas, explore artisanal shops, and immerse yourself in the island's vibrant festivals, which celebrate its history and traditions.

A Destination for All Travelers

Whether you're a history enthusiast, a nature adventurer, or simply seeking a relaxing get-



The Charming Village of Kioni. Source www.Greeka.com

away, Ithaca offers something for everyone. Its timeless appeal combines a sense of adventure with peace and serenity, making it a perfect destination for families, couples, and solo travelers alike.

Plan Your Ithaca Adventure

Ready to discover the magic of Ithaca? Plan your journey to this mythical Greek island and expe-

rience its blend of history, beauty, and culture firsthand. Whether you're tracing the steps of Odysseus or soaking up the Ionian sun, Ithaca promises an unforgettable escape.

For more travel inspiration and updates, visit Hellenic News of America to explore the best of Greek destinations, culture, and heritage.



Athens to host the 39th European Film Awards in January 2027

OMOGENEIA

Athens is set to become the first city in southeastern Europe to host the 39th European Film Awards, on January 16, 2027. According to an announcement on Wednesday, this is the result of a successful proposal submitted by the Hellenic Centre for Cinema, Audiovisual Media and Creation (EKKOMED) – Creative Greece, to the European Film Academy. The proposal was supported by the Ministries of Culture, National Economy and Finance and Tourism.

The event marks a prime moment for the Greek film industry and the promotion of the country on the European and international cultural scene.

EKKOMED – Creative Greece, in collaboration with the European Film Academy, will undertake the organisation of the main ceremony and the parallel events that will take place in January 2027. The event will be support-

ed by important public entities, including the three ministries, the Municipality of Athens, the Region of Attica, the public broadcaster ERT, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (SNFCC) and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

Culture Minister Lina Mendoni stated: "Athens welcomes one of the most emblematic events of European cinema, having the honour of hosting, for the first time, the awarding of the 39th European Film Awards, on the initiative of the Hellenic Centre for Cinema, Audiovisual Media and Creativity – Creative Greece, which also undertook the joint organisation of the event. The selection of Athens validates its dynamism as an international cultural pole, hosting events of supralocal scope, a dynamic core of the modern creative industry, strengthening the extroversion of domestic audiovisual production. It is, at



the same time, an outstanding opportunity to renew the bonds of our creators with their European counterparts. It highlights their high-quality work, proving that the systematic efforts of the Ministry of Culture are bearing fruit with the constant encouragement and substantial support of the Greek audiovisual

sector. By combining the perfect aesthetic result with commercial extroversion, it demonstrates that culture is both a good and a product, supporting the workers in it. I am sure that in a few days creators and audience will enjoy a unique event, the success of which is guaranteed".

SOURCE; ANA-MPA

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers,

As we welcome 2025, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. May this year bring peace, joy, and countless opportunities for personal and collective growth.

This January, as we reflect on our shared journey, I am reminded of the vital role the Hellenic News of America plays in connecting, informing, and empowering the Greek-American and Philhellenic communities. For 38 years, we have been your trusted source of news, culture, and inspiration—championing the stories and values that unite us.

Your support, as subscribers, is what makes this possible. Subscribing or renewing your subscription is not just about receiving a newspaper; it is an investment in preserving our heritage, amplifying our voice, and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their roots. It is through your continued engagement that we can thrive, grow, and deliver the quality journalism you deserve.

With each issue, we strive to provide meaningful content, celebrate our achievements, and address the challenges we face as a community. Whether it's highlighting the contributions of Greek entrepreneurs, showcasing cultural milestones, or advocating for our collective interests, the Hellenic News of America remains steadfast in its mission to serve as the heartbeat of our community.

I encourage you to subscribe or renew your subscription today to ensure that this legacy endures. Together, we can build on our shared successes and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for being part of our story. Your trust and loyalty inspire us to continue our work with passion and purpose.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful New Year filled with health, happiness, and hope.

Warm regards,

Aphrodite Kotrotsios

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SCAN ME

Mitsotakis: Greece a country of stability in an unstable world

OMOGENEIA

“Our first meeting for 2025 is an opportunity to pursue our tasks with enhanced vigour. A difficult year is ahead of us. Beyond our borders, wars are raging, economic uncertainty and instability prevail in many societies, while the climate crisis is becoming increasingly threatening if we think about the unprecedented fires in California,” Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a cabinet meeting on Friday.

“However, despite the difficulties that exist, Greece is responding positively as a country of stability in an unstable world and as a political and governmental majority which today inspires confidence in the midst of repeated governmental crises from Germany to Canada, another G7 country which has entered a politically testing time,” he pointed out.

He also spoke of an economy “which continues to be an optimistic exception in Europe,” noting that this fact was also reflected by the further de-escalation of inflation.

As the premier pointed out, however, there were still problems and this was why the government was “starting the year with an initiative that essentially concerns the proper functioning

of the state, a reform that aims to ensure that disciplinary justice in the State is administered much more quickly and that those guilty of breach of faith do not go unpunished.”

“Despite the progress that has been made, today we have more than 2,500 cases that are still stagnating in 92 disciplinary councils. In half of them, in fact, the process has not yet started, a rapporteur has not been appointed and the time to complete the procedures can sometimes exceed five years.

“Obviously, this situation is not acceptable, and that is why the Interior Minister will propose a new scheme, which will involve many more officers of the Legal Council, who will focus on this. I believe that this legislative initiative constitutes a profound political choice that clearly states our position for speed, transparency, and full accountability of the State,” he said.

The cabinet will also have the opportunity to discuss a bill of the Ministry of Finance, which strengthens the capital market, the premier noted. “The capital market is a key tool for the development of the private economy. We are particularly interested in the way in which we will establish additional incentives, specifically for the listing of companies on the stock exchange, and we place an emphasis on small and



medium-sized enterprises. It is important that dynamic Greek enterprises can obtain new financing channels so that they can in turn support the overall growth potential of the economy,” Mitsotakis emphasised.

But, of course, he added, “our minister will also talk to us about a sector that has been widely discussed recently, that of cryptocurrencies. We will attempt to bring order to a field that remains, for the most part, cloudy and unregulated. We do not demonise a rapidly growing market, but we are attempting to establish some rules for public protection and mainly safe information controls, warnings about the very high risks involved in such investment activities.

“We are essentially aligning the national framework with the European one regarding abusive

practices that are recorded in this environment,” he said.

The Greek premier noted that Greece is “a leading force of certainty and growth. Together, we are leading Greece to progress, but I believe that we also play an important role in European developments. But, of course, no leadership position is predestined. It depends on the continuation of our work, on the intensification of our pace and, above all, on the implementation of our election programme. That is why the Greek citizens trusted us 18 months ago and this is what we have a duty to implement, and obviously 2025 is an absolutely critical year in the link of the chain that will ultimately lead us to the national elections of 2027,” he concluded.

SOURCE; ANA-MPA

Our relations with the US were, are, and will remain very close, and of strategic importance

OMOGENEIA

Greece’s relations with the United States “were, are, and shall be very close, of strategic importance,” government spokesman Pavlos Marinakis said in the Mega TV program “Live News” on Wednesday.

“This is well-known and has been cultivated several decades now, and will continue to be cultivated under the new leadership. We have every reason to believe that,” he added in the interview.

He pointed out however that what events showed within Europe and beyond it is that “Greece exports stability, radiates security, and is one of the few exceptions – including very powerful economies even – it

votes for budgets that reduce taxes and increase citizens’ incomes. [...] It has political stability, it has an economic stability, and none of this is a given in very large economies in Europe. This was not accidental. It is certainly the result of a specific policy by the government of Kyriakos Mitsotakis. It is a result of citizens’ sacrifices.”

Marinakis said that despite progress, a lot remained to be done yet, including in creating better and better-paid jobs, increasing households’ incomes, and providing more funding to health. The goal for 2025 and 2026, he said, is to bring Greek wages closer to the average European ones, especially for the middle class, young people, and



pensioners with low monthly checks.

SOURCE; ANA-MPA

A last farewell to Costas Simitis at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral



Friends, family, politicians and representatives of foreign delegations bid their last farewell to former Greek premier Costas Simitis at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens on Thursday, alongside many ordinary citizens who wished to pay their last respects to the former prime minister.

The funeral service was officiated by Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece. Eulogies were delivered by the President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, main opposition PASOK leader Nikos Androulakis, as well as professors Yannis Voulgaris, Tasos Giannitsis (former minister) and PASOK spokesperson Konstantinos Tsoukalas.

After the ceremony at the Athens Cathedral, the procession headed to the First Cemetery of Athens for the final farewell. The ceremony will be concluded with a rendering of honours for the twice-elected prime minister of Greece.

Sakellariopoulou: We say goodbye to a major figure of our contemporary history

“Today, we sorrowfully and with honour say farewell to a major figure of our contemporary history,” stated President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou on Thursday, during her eulogy at the funeral of former prime minister Costas Simitis at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral.

Sakellariopoulou underlined that “Costas Simitis defended democracy and its principles steadfastly and with conviction, passion and reason, through words and deeds, throughout his life. He fought against the dictatorship, he was a distinguished academic and teacher, a man of ideas and practical reason, who left his deep mark on the post dictatorship era with his own distinct and timeless political example.”

Speaking about his work, she noted that “with European social democracy and the reformist wave as his guiding principles, Costas Simitis introduced into our political consciousness and culture a new method and perception of governance. He focused on rationality, planning, commitment to high goals and the ethics of duty, on low-key, daily and systematic work. He steered clear of popular but

cheap rhetoric and easy populism, with a moderate and measured speech and a democratic ethos”.

Mitsotakis: An opponent of the dictatorship and a steadfast advocate of democracy

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis described Simitis as “an opponent of the dictatorship and a steadfast advocate of democracy,” while delivering his funeral address on Thursday.

Mitsotakis spoke of a “noble adversary,” whose institutional position demanded that he be honored as he deserves, adding: “Our parties succeeded in coming together at two critical milestones: Greece’s accession to the euro and Cyprus’ entry into the EU.”

The prime minister stated that Costas Simitis now belongs to history and referred to three legacies of the deceased that are already visible:

The first was “his unwavering faith in the European orientation and his constant effort to bring Greece closer to the most developed states of Europe.”

The second was his way of governing and the methodical recording of the priorities that had to be turned into action, based on planning, careful work and control, aiming for measurable results. The third legacy, according to the prime minister, was that in

addition to his involvement in politics, he always found time to read, to listen to music, to go to the theatre, and that he loved the role of a simple husband and father.

Greece honours the prime minister who ‘made a strong Greece within Europe reality’

Greece honours the prime minister who “made a strong Greece within Europe reality and left an indelible mark on the post-junta history of the country,” main opposition PASOK-KINAL leader Nikos Androulakis said on Thursday in his eulogy for Costas Simitis.

“The country’s political world is diminished, as it has lost a great personality of international stature, who creatively and with sound arguments enriched the public debate,” Androulakis said, delivering his eulogy at the funeral of the former prime minister at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral.

“Simitis had identified early on the historical roots of the state’s maladies and had shaped the political vision for overcoming them,” he added.

Listing the former premier’s accomplishments, Androulakis noted that the Simitis had succeeded in turning Greece into a country with national self-confidence, social justice and extroversion, adding that Simitis “strove for these values and rallied a large social majority around the political vision of reform... while giving it a clearly progressive content, as his works attest, long before the words lost their real meaning.”

“Costas Simitis helped to shape history and was an equal interlocutor of the world’s most powerful leaders, someone who always knew how to win with his credibility and realism,” Androulakis emphasised.

SOURCE; ANA-MPA



Minoan Palace of Phaestus to get new protection shelters, become accessible to disabled



OMOGENEIA

Improvements in the archaeological site of Phaestus (Phaistos) on Crete will protect the architectural remains from the weather and allow better access to people with disabilities, the Ministry of Culture said on Wednesday.

According to a statement, the projects are fully funded by the Regional Business Program 'Crete'-NSRF 2021-2027.

The Central Archaeological Council approved among others the reports on stabilizing and restoring ancient remains at the site south of Heraklion, replacing the shelters of exposed architectural parts that were built in the '60s, and supporting the slopes of the Minoan Palace, particularly against flooding.

As Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said, "The Minoan Palace of Phaestus, the second most important palace complex on Crete, is a major archaeological site of high tourist attraction, which is included in the candidacy folder Greece has submitted for a serial registration of Minoan palaces on UNESCO's World Heritage List of monuments in 2025."

The new shelters relate to those of the Royal Apartments and a section of the Old Palace, while three smaller shelters cover the extant wall slip and the western bastion.

Mendonis said the program to improve accessibility for people with disabilities is already being run by the



ministry through the 'Crete' 2021-10127 program, and is budgeted at 2.5 million euros.

Site history

The hill the palace is built on was inhabited continuously from the 4th millennium to the 2nd century BC. The Old Palace was built between the hill between 1900 and 1700 BC. By the end of the Old Palatial period, it had a surface of nearly 9,000 square meters. It was twice destroyed by earthquakes and rebuilt, and the remains of three successive building phases are well

preserved and visible in the southwestern section under the shelter (walls up to 6 m meters high).

The New Palace was built at a higher elevation, following its predecessor's complete destruction around 1700 BC. The new one was inhabited continuously until the middle of the 15th century BC, when it was completely destroyed. The city around it continued to be inhabited, flourishing in Geometric years (810-700 BC) and in the Hellenistic era (323-67 BC). Around 150 BC, the city of Phaestus itself was

completely destroyed.

Excavations began in 1900 by Italian archaeologists Federico Halbherr and Luigi Pernier, the latter of whom discovered the Phaestus disc. Excavations on the New Palace were completed by 1909, and work at the site continued occasionally until it fully resumed in 1950 by Doro Levi, who also excavated the Old Palace before wrapping up the excavations in 1971.

SOURCE; ANA-MPA

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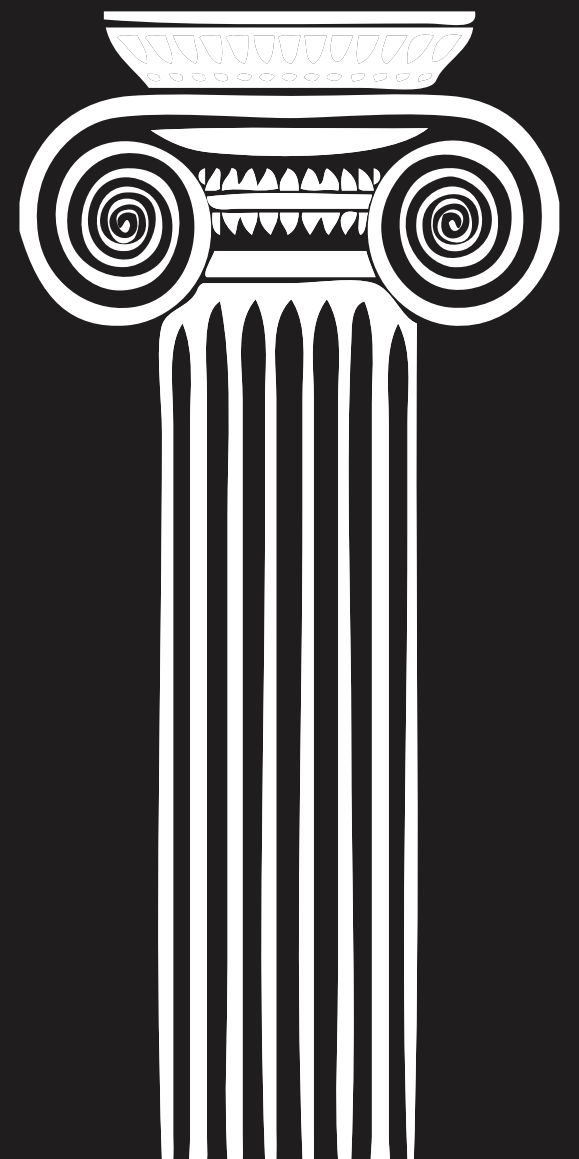


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Σχέδια επέκτασης της ερευνητικής δραστηριότητας της TESLA στην Ελλάδα

ΟΜΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ

Με τον επικεφαλής Έρευνας και Σχεδιασμού των ηλεκτρικών κινητήρων της TESLA, Δρ. Κωνσταντίνο Λάσκαρη, συναντήθηκε την Τετάρτη η υφυπουργός Ανάπτυξης, Ζωή Ράπτη.

Όπως αναφέρει σε ανάρτησή της στα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης η υφυπουργός, «... προκειμένου η καινοτόμος έρευνα που παράγεται από την εταιρεία να επεκταθεί, συζητήσαμε με τον Δρ. Λάσκαρη, τις δυνατότητες περαιτέρω στήριξης που υπάρχουν».

Αναλυτικά στην ανάρτησή της η υφυπουργός αναφέρει:

«Σήμερα είχα την χαρά να επισκεφθώ το κέντρο Έρευνας και Ανάπτυξης της TESLA στο ΕΚΕΦΕ «ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ», στο πλαίσιο των αρμοδιοτήτων μου ως υφυπουργού Ανάπτυξης, αρμόδιας για την έρευνα και την καινοτομία, και να συναντηθώ με τον Δρ. Κωνσταντίνο Λάσκαρη, επικεφαλής Έρευνας

και Σχεδιασμού των ηλεκτρικών κινητήρων της TESLA, καθώς και με το ερευνητικό προσωπικό της εταιρείας.

Στη διάρκεια της συνάντησής μας, ο Δρ. Λάσκαρης ανέλυσε τις ερευνητικές δραστηριότητες της TESLA στην Ελλάδα οι οποίες περιλαμβάνουν:

α. Την ανάπτυξη του λογισμικού για τον σχεδιασμό των ηλεκτροκινητήρων

β. Τον σχεδιασμό, την παραγωγή και τη δοκιμή πρωτοτύπων για τη βελτίωση των υπάρχοντων ηλεκτροκινητήρων και την παραγωγή νέων

γ. Τις δοκιμές νέων υλικών για τη χρήση στους ηλεκτροκινητήρες της εταιρείας.

Το Υπουργείο Ανάπτυξης έχει στηρίξει την ερευνητική δραστηριότητα της Tesla στην Ελλάδα με χρηματοδοτικά εργαλεία, όπως το πρόγραμμα «Έρευνώ – Δημιουργώ – Καινοτομώ» για την εκτέλεση δύο ερευνητικών έργων συνολικού προϋπολογισμού 1.483.468,05 ευρώ με δημόσια συμμετοχή



763.129,01 ευρώ.

Η TESLA, στις ερευνητικές της εγκαταστάσεις στην Ελλάδα απασχολεί περισσότερους από 40 μηχανικούς, στην πλειοψηφία τους Έλληνες αλλά και από άλλες χώρες της ΕΕ, εξαιρετικά υψηλής εξειδίκευσης και συμβάλλει, τόσο στην παραμονή στη χώρα κορυφαίων επιστημόνων, όσο και στην επιστροφή τους από το εξωτερικό, προσφέροντας ευκαιρίες υψηλής ερευνητικής καριέρας.

Προκειμένου η καινοτόμος

έρευνα που παράγεται από την εταιρεία να επεκταθεί, συζητήσαμε με τον Δρ. Λάσκαρη τις δυνατότητες περαιτέρω στήριξης που υπάρχουν.

Ολοκληρώνοντας τη συνάντησή μας, έδωσα συγχαρητήρια στον Δρ. Κωνσταντίνο Λάσκαρη και στους ερευνητές της TESLA, οι οποίοι, μέσω της πρωτοπόρου εργασίας τους προάγουν διεθνώς τις επιστήμες και την καινοτομία».

ΠΗΓΗ: ΑΠΕ-ΜΠΕ

Η Hellenic News of America στο χριστουγεννιάτικο εορταστικό γκαλά του Ελληνοαμερικανικού Εμπορικού Επιμελητηρίου του New Jersey

ΟΜΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ

Στην εκδήλωση απονεμήθηκαν τα ετήσια βραβεία του επιμελητηρίου ενώ δυναμικό παρόν έδωσαν οι ομογενείς καθώς και οι νεολαία.

Του Φώτη Καλιαμπάκου-Special to the Hellenic News of America.

Έναν από τους πιο δημοφιλείς και ποιοτικούς χώρους εκδηλώσεων της ελληνικής ομογένειας του New Jersey επέλεξε για την ετήσια χριστουγεννιάτικη χοροεσπερίδα του το Ελληνοαμερικανικό Εμπορικό Επιμελητήριο - Greek American Chamber of Commerce. Επρόκειτο για το μεγαλοπρεπές "The Venetian" στην περιοχή του Garfield. Η εκδήλωση είχε ως στόχο όχι μόνο να φέρει κοντά τους ομογενείς επιχειρηματίες μιας περιοχής που σφύζει από Ελληνισμό αλλά και να βραβεύσει διακριθέντες επιχειρηματίες, να δώσει έμφαση στη νεολαία και τη νεανική επιχειρηματικότητα αλλά και να απονεμίσει με επισιμότητα τα ετήσια βραβεία του.

Τους επισκέπτες στην πολυτελή αίθουσα που κατακλείστηκε από τους επισκέπτες υποδέχτηκε ο πρόεδρος του επιμελητηρίου Γιώργος Σαρρής. Ανάμεσά τους πολλοί διακεκριμένοι ομογενείς είτε ως απλοί επισκέπτες, είτε και με την επίσημη «ομογενειακή» ιδιότητα, ανάμεσά τους ο Δρ. Πάνος Σταυριανίδης, πρόεδρος της ομοσπονδίας των ομογενειακών οργανώσεων του New Jersey, αλλά και μέλος του ινστιτούτου με τη ιδιότητά του ως ιδιοκτήτη χρυσοχοείου, την παραμονή μάλιστα των εγκαίνιων ενός νέου καταστήματός του ομίλου του. Επίσης σημαντικά μέλη και πρώην πρόεδροι του Επιμελητηρίου Χατζηλουκάς και Κυρίτσης, εκπρόσωποι των τραπεζικών ομίλων M&T Bank Connie Manolas and Sotiris Hatzimanolis, Alma Bank Margarita Pappas and Paul Kalamaras. Παρών και ο ιδρυτικός πρόεδρος της Hermes Expro, της έκθεσης-θεσμού για τη διασύνδεση της ελληνικής επιχειρηματικότητας με την Ελλάδα και όχι μόνο, αλλά και εκδότης της Hellenic News of America Paul Kotrotsios.

Ο Γιώργος Σαρρής πήρε το λόγο για να ευχαριστήσει

τους παρευρισκόμενους για την παρουσία τους, να αναφερθεί εκτενώς στην ιστορία του επιμελητηρίου, το οποίο ιδρύθηκε το 1992 και βρίσκεται έτσι ήδη στην τέταρτη δεκαετία της παρουσίας του στα ομογενειακά δρώμενα και να πλέξει το εγκώμιο των δύο προσώπων που επελέγησαν να τιμηθούν στη φετινή εκδήλωση. Η πρώτη από τους τιμώμενους ήταν η δικηγόρος Κυριακή Χριστοδούλου, η οποία επελέγη όχι μόνο για την επαγγελματική της επιτυχία, αλλά και για την ακαδημαϊκή της παρουσία, αφού συνεχίζει να τις έρευνες και τις δημοσιεύσεις σε έγκριτα επιστημονικά περιοδικά. Αυτή της η έρευνα, τόνισε ο κύριος Σαρρής, την έφερε, ως μία από τις πέντε μόνο από όλες τις ΗΠΑ, επιλεγείσες υποτρόφους, στη Ρωσία, σε κάποια επαρχία στην οποία η κ. Χριστοδούλου μελέτησε κάποιες πτυχές της ρωσικής κοινωνίας, και αργότερα αυτή τη φορά από προσωπικό ενδιαφέρον, έμεινε για περαιτέρω έρευνα για έξι μήνες στη Μόσχα, κάτι που ήταν ασφαλώς μια σπουδαία εμπειρία. Η Κυριακή Χριστοδούλου διευθύνει με ενθουσιασμό τα προγράμματα νεανικής επιχειρηματικότητας αλλά και διασύνδεσης του επιμελητηρίου. Στην ευχαριστήρια ομιλία της εμφανώς χαρούμενη από την ιδιαίτερη τιμή, η κ. Χριστοδούλου αναφέρθηκε στις δράσεις του επιμελητηρίου αλλά και στο γεγονός ότι η δική της εργασία θέλει με κάποιο τρόπο να ανταποδώσει στην ελληνική κοινότητα και στο ίδιο το επιμελητήριο τη βοήθεια που αυτό προσέφερε στην ίδια, αφού όπως τόνισε τόσο η πρώτη εργασία, όταν τελείωσε το πανεπιστήμιο, όσο και οι επόμενες μεγάλες ευκαιρίες επαγγελματικής ανέλιξης που της προσφέρθηκαν, έγιναν από πρόσωπα που γνώρισε σε εκδηλώσεις του Greek American Chamber of Commerce, και κάλεσε τους νέους να έρθουν πιο κοντά σε αυτό.

Το επόμενο βραβείο απονεμήθηκε στον προηγούμενο πρόεδρο του επιμελητηρίου Μιχαήλ Χατζηλουκά, για τις άοκνες προσπάθειες του για το επιμελητήριο, την ομογενειακή επιχειρηματικότητά αλλά και τον τριψήφιο αριθμό εκδηλώσεων που οργάνωσε, όπως τόνισε στην εισαγωγική του ομιλία ο Γιώργος



Σαρρής, λέγοντας ότι ο πήχης είναι ψηλά για τον ίδιο. Ο κύριος Χατζηλουκάς ευχαρίστησε από καρδιάς τον νέο πρόεδρο και ευχαρίστησε για τη βοήθειά τους σε αυτό του το έργο τα παρόντα στην αίθουσα, μέλη της οικογένειάς του.

Ακολούθησε ένα ξέφρενο γλέντι με χορό στον οποίο με τη συμμετοχή όλων.

Σε δηλώσεις του Hellenic News of America, ο πρόεδρος του επιμελητηρίου Γιώργος Σαρρής, αφού ευχαρίστησε την εφημερίδα για την παρουσία της στην εκδήλωση, θέλησε να τονίσει την προσωπική αφοσίωση στο

επιμελητήριο, αφού και ο ίδιος όπως μας είπε, έκανε στην πρώτη μάλιστα εκδήλωση στην οποία είχε παραβρεθεί, γνωριμίες που τον βοήθησαν αποφασιστικά, στα πρώτα του βήματα και τόνισε την έμφαση που δίνει και θέλει να δώσει και ο ίδιος στα προγράμματα που αφορούν τους νέους επαγγελματίες και επιχειρηματίες. Πέραν όμως από την επαγγελματική δικτύωση ο κύριος Σαρρής θέλησε να τονίσει και την ελληνική διάσταση των εκδηλώσεων του επιμελητηρίου ως σημείων συνάντησης της ελληνικής ομογένειας.

Εορταστική ατμόσφαιρα, Glamour, ξέφρενη διασκέδαση αλλά και συγκίνηση στο sold-out 12ο εορταστικό γκαλά της The Hellenic Initiative



ΟΜΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ

Βραβεύτηκαν οι Ολυμπιονίκες της Παραολυμπιάδας και οι Μάριαν και Ντιν Μητρόπουλος

Του Φώτη Καλιαμπάκου – Special to the Hellenic News of America

Το ετήσιο πολυτελές γκαλά της οργάνωσης The Hellenic Initiative αποτελεί πλέον ένα μείζον κοσμικό γεγονός για την ελληνική ομογένεια των ΗΠΑ, στο οποίο όμως συρρέουν καλεσμένοι και προσωπικότητες από όλον τον κόσμο, οι οποίοι ταξιδεύουν στη Νέα Υόρκη ειδικά με αυτή την αφορμή. Η φετινή, 12η από τότε που καθιερώθηκε, εκδήλωση ήταν, παρά το ιδιαίτερα υψηλό λόγω του φιλανθρωπικού χαρακτήρα, τίμημα, πολλές μέρες πριν sold-out και το πολυτελές Cipriani της Wall Street κατακλείστηκε από τα ελληνικά χρώματα. Οι καλεσμένοι είχαν την ευκαιρία να συνομιλήσουν και να φωτογραφηθούν στο χώρο του κοκτέιλ προτού η εκδήλωση μεταφερθεί στον καθιερωμένο χώρο.

Στην εκδήλωση παραβρέθηκε μια πλειάδα διακεκριμένων ομογενών και προσωπικοτήτων του Ελληνισμού από διάφορες χώρες. Επισήμως την Ελλάδα εκπροσώπησε η πρέσβης της Ελλάδας στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες κυρία Αικατερίνη Νασσικά, η οποία ταξίδεψε από την Ουάσιγκτον, ενώ παρών ήταν εκ μέρους της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και ο υφυπουργός Προστασίας του Πολίτη Ανδρέας Νικολακόπουλος, ο οποίος βρισκόταν στις ΗΠΑ για σειρά επαφών στα πλαίσια των αρμοδιοτήτων του. Δύο από τα πρόσφατα επανεκλεγμένα ελληνικής καταγωγής μέλη του Κογκρέσου έδωσαν το παρών. Πρόκειται για τους βουλευτές (US House of Representatives) Νικόλ Μαλλιωτάκη, και Κωνσταντίνου (Γκας) Μπιλιράκη. Από την Ουάσιγκτον ταξίδεψε και ο Μάικ Μανάτος.

Παραβρέθηκαν επίσης ο ομογενής μεγιστάνας Γιάννης (Τζον) Κασματίδης, συνοδευόμενος από τη σύζυγό του Μάργκο και τη στενή του συνεργάτη Ευτυχία Πυλαρινού-Piper, πολλά από τα μέλη των αρχόντων του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου με παρόντα τον επικεφαλής της οργάνωσης στην Αμερική Δρ. Αντώνη Λυμπεράκη, οι επικεφαλής των ομογενειακών επαγγελματικών ενώσεων, όπως ο Πώργος Ζαπάντης από το σύλλογο των δικηγόρων, από το χώρο των τεχνών η ιστορικός τέχνης Σωζίτα Γκουντούνα επικεφαλής της πρωτοβουλίας "Greece in USA", η Όλγα και ο Νίκος Μπορνόζης από την Capital Link, η Ανθούλα Κατσιματίδη, η γνωστή σεφ Μαρία

Λόη και πολλοί δημοσιογράφοι από όλα τα ομογενειακά μέσα. Επίσης ο πατήρ Άλεξ Καρλούτσος ο οποίος έκανε και την καθιερωμένη στις ομογενειακές εκδηλώσεις προσευχή.

Τους καλεσμένους καλωσόρισαν εκ μέρους της The Hellenic Initiative οι δύο συμπρόεδροι και ιδρυτικά μέλη της οργάνωσης Andrew N. Liveris και George P. Stamas, με τον πρώτο μάλιστα να έχει ταξιδέψει στη Νέα Υόρκη από την Αυστραλία. Και οι δύο έκαναν εκτενή αναφορά στην ιστορία της ίδρυσης της οργάνωσης και τις πρωτοβουλίες τους, τονίζοντας τη μεγάλη δυναμική και τις δυνατότητες του Ελληνισμού τονίζοντας ιδιαίτερα την αλλαγή του κλίματος από την εποχή της κρίσης στη σημερινή ανάκαμψη, με την Ελλάδα να διατηρεί εν μέσω κατακλυσμιαίων αλλαγών στο διεθνές σκηνικό, την ανοδική της πορεία.

Στο ίδιο κλίμα και τα δύο ηγετικά στελέχη της οργάνωσης που ανέλαβαν επίσης να αναφερθούν στην ιστορία της και να παρουσιάσουν τους τιμώμενους. Πρόκειται για τον Μάικ Ψαρρό και τον Τζον Κουδούννη, με το δεύτερο να τονίζει την πορεία της Ελλάδας τα τελευταία χρόνια, ενώ ο πρώτος μίλησε για την The Hellenic Initiative ως την οργάνωση που χρειαζόταν για να αποτελέσει τον δεύτερο πόλο οργάνωσης της ομογένειας δίπλα στην ορθόδοξη εκκλησία που είχε όλα τα προηγούμενα χρόνια σχεδόν αποκλειστικά αυτή την ευθύνη.

Εκτός από το χαρακτήρα της συγκέντρωσης των χρημάτων για τους σκοπούς της οργάνωσης, κάτι το οποίο ξεπέρασε τις προσδοκίες, τόσο λόγω της πώλησης όλων των θέσεων αλλά και λόγω των μεγάλων προσφορών κατά τη διάρκεια του δείπνου, οι οποίες προβάλλονταν στις γιγαντοοθόνες του χώρου, και αυτόν της συνάντησης των ομογενών, το γκαλά της The Hellenic Initiative έχει κάθε χρόνο και τον σκοπό της βράβευσης διακεκριμένων προσωπικοτήτων του Ελληνισμού από όλους τους χώρους. Διττός ήταν ο φετινός χαρακτήρας της βράβευσης. Από τη μία τιμήθηκαν δύο διακεκριμένοι ομογενείς για την φιλανθρωπική προσφορά τους στην ομογένεια και τον Ελληνισμό, από την άλλη αποδόθηκαν τιμές σε ανθρώπους των οποίων η προσφορά είναι ανεκτίμητη και δεν μπορεί να αποτιμηθεί σε χρήματα.

Στην πρώτη περίπτωση οι τιμώμενοι ήταν το ζεύγος Μάριαν και Ντιν Μητρόπουλος. Ο γεννημένος στην Αρκαδία Έλληνας μεγιστάνας και οι σύζυγός του, οι οποίοι συνομίλησαν με όλους τους παρευρισκόμενους με ταπεινότητα και μια φυσική ευγένεια τιμήθηκαν



George P. Stamas, Senior Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP; THI Board President/Co-Founder
2024 Honoree Marianne Metropoulos, Metropoulos Family Foundation
2024 Honoree Dean Metropoulos, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Metropoulos & Co. and THI Board Member
John Koudounis, CEO, Calamos Investments; THI Board/Executive Committee and Gala Co-Chair

για την πολύπλευρη φιλανθρωπική τους προσφορά. Ο διακεκριμένος επιχειρηματίας τόνισε ότι είναι υπερήφανος για την καταγωγή του, δεν ξεχνάει ποτέ την Ελλάδα και καταχειροκροτούμενος είπε ότι θα συνεχίσει να προσφέρει ότι μπορεί για τον Ελληνισμό. Η Μάριαν Μητροπούλου, υποσχέθηκε ότι θα τηρήσει την παρότρυνση του επικεφαλής της The Hellenic Initiative κ. Στάμου, που της είπε αστεειύμενος, αφού της έπλεξε το εγκώμιο: «Μάριαν συνέχισε να ξοδεύεις τα λεφτά του Ντιν για την Ελλάδα!» Η κυρία Μητροπούλου απέσπασε τα χειροκροτήματα του συνόλου των παρευρισκόμενων όταν είπε ότι αισθάνεται περισσότερο υπερήφανη για την ελληνική πλευρά της ταυτότητάς της από ότι για την Αμερικανική! Η Μάριαν Μητροπούλου είναι μεταξύ άλλων η παραγωγός της ταινίας «Cliffs of Freedom» που αναφέρεται στον ηρωισμό των γυναικών του Σουλίου. Τόσο εκείνη όσο και ο σύζυγός της αναφέρθηκαν στο δέος που τους προκαλεί η ενασχόληση με την ιστορία της ελληνικής επανάστασης.

Αποδέκτης του τιμητικού βραβείου της οργάνωσης ήταν επίσης η ελληνική ολυμπιακή ομάδα των Παραολυμπιακών Αγώνων, την οποία στηρίζει, και θα συνεχίσει όπως υποσχέθηκαν τα στελέχη της, η Hellenic Initiative. Στη Νέα Υόρκη ταξίδεψαν για να παραλάβουν το βραβείο η χρυσή Ολυμπιονίκης της κολύμβησης Αλεξάνδρα Σταματοπούλου και ο αργυρός Ολυμπιονίκης, επίσης της κολύμβησης Αντώνης Τσαπατάκης. Η παρουσία των δύο κορυφαίων αθλητών γέμισε χαρά την αίθουσα και χαρά μετατράπηκε σε βαθιά συγκίνηση, όταν η Αλεξάνδρα Σταματοπούλου, ιδιαίτερα συγκινημένη και η ίδια, έχασε για λίγα δευτερόλεπτα τον ερμό της,

εκφράζοντας της χαρά της για την βράβευση και για το κλίμα υποδοχής από την ομογένεια. Επίσης συγκινημένος αλλά και ιδιαίτερα δυναμικός ο Αντώνης Τσαπατάκης μίλησε με υπερηφάνεια για τη σημασία του να είναι κανείς Έλληνας. Οι δύο ομογενείς καταχειροκροτήθηκαν από τους ομογενείς με τη συγκίνηση αλλά και την ευγνωμοσύνη για το έργο αυτών των σπουδαίων αθλητών διάχυτα στην ατμόσφαιρα.

Το τέλος της βραδιάς είχε το χαρακτήρα ενός ξέφρενου πάρτι. Το μουσικό κομμάτι ανέλαβαν από την πλευρά του Cipriani η Jimmy Valli Band, ενώ η Hellenic Initiative κάθε χρόνο φροντίζει η διασκέδαση να έχει εκπροσώπους και της ομογένειας και από την Ελλάδα. Ο Σπύρος Εξάρας, διακεκριμένος κιθαρίστας και συνθέτης ήταν ο επικεφαλής των ομογενών μουσικών με τον Κώστα Ψαρό στο μπουζούκι, ενώ το κλίμα της ελληνικής διασκέδασης μετέφερε στη Νέα Υόρκη ο Θάνος Πετρέλης, ο οποίος όχι μόνο με το τραγούδι του αλλά και με τον ιδιαίτερο τρόπο με τον οποίο επικοινωνούσε με το κοινό κατά τη διάρκεια της βραδιάς ξεσήκωσε το κοινό όλων των ηλικιών που ανέβηκε στην πίστα. Ανάμεσα στους «φαν» του Θάνου Πετρέλη που χόρεψαν σε έντονους ρυθμούς και φωτογραφήθηκαν μαζί του ξεχώρισαν η Τατιάνα Μπλάτνικ, η Μάργκο Κατσιματίδη αλλά και ο Τζον Μπιλιράκης, ενώ ο Έλληνας τραγουδιστής έδωσε και το μικρόφωνο για ένα τραγούδι στη νεαρή ομογενή τραγουδίστρια Elaine Poulos, με το γλέντι να κρατάει ως τις πρώτες πρωινές ώρες και να συνεχίζεται ως τις 4 το πρωί σε γνωστό μπαρ της πόλης, στο οποίο είχε οργανωθεί η παράλληλη εκδήλωση των νεαρών μελών της Hellenic Initiative.

2024 St. Photios Shrine Essay Contest, Upcoming Events

OMOGENEIA

Congratulations to the students who participated in the 2024 Kathie D'Anna Essay Contest where they were challenged to reflect on how the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine stands as a beacon of strength and hope to the Greek Orthodox people and how, such a witness to Orthodoxy, serves as an anchor and a beacon to our youth.

Submissions were received in the senior division from Stella Grace Hodges of Winston Salem, NC; Paulina Kakalos of Merrick, NY; Emmanuel Pittas of Midland Park, NJ; Nikki Blathras of Charlotte, NC; and Theodore Marshall of Ellicott City, ND. The judges chose the essay of Theodore Marshall, of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Baltimore, MD, as the writer who spoke to the topic and met the criteria most fully.

Submissions were received in the junior division from Matthew Gervescu of Charlotte, NC; William Hartgraves of Cleveland, TN; Evie Soriano of Winston-Salem, NC; and Irene

Maria Zografos of Garden City, NY. The judges unanimously gave the highest points to essayist Evie Soriano of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Winston-Salem, NC.

This is the final year of the competition which was launched in November, 2005. The trustees of the St. Photios Foundation are ever grateful to the D'Anna family for underwriting all its expenses over the past fifteen years in memory of their beloved matriarch, Kathie D'Anna.

Theodora Sergiou, St. Photios Trustee and chair of the Essay Committee, extends her thanks to the judges Tom Lekas, Elena Constantine and judge/consultant Dianna Christakos who noted, "the winning essays in this competition were well-written and focused on relationships between God and us; and how our faith and the Shrine impacts our daily lives."

The certificates of participation will be signed by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and sent to each student. Each winner will also receive a check for \$1,000.

The Trustees of the St. Photios Foundation, Inc.
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Writer and director,
Christina Eliopoulos
and
British actress and social activist,
Julia Ormond

Saturday, January 11th at 2:30 p.m.
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Here's Yianni shows Saturday, January 11th at 12 noon in the Lewis Auditorium in St. Augustine. Tickets can be purchased at: <https://www.axs.com/events/773672/saff-presents-heres-yianni-tickets>. Call Polly at 904-829-8205 for further information.

Embark on a Life-Changing Experience: AHEPA's Journey

OMOGENEIA



The AHEPA Journey to Greece program is back for 2025, offering students a unique opportunity to explore their Hellenic heritage, immerse themselves in Greek culture, and create life-long memories. Organized by the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), this transformative program combines education, travel, and cultural exploration, fostering a deeper connection to Greece's rich history and vibrant traditions.

What is the AHEPA Journey to Greece?

The AHEPA Journey to Greece program is designed for high

school and college students of Greek descent—or anyone passionate about Hellenic culture—providing an unparalleled experience to study, travel, and grow. Participants will:

Attend accredited courses on Greek language, history, and culture.

Visit iconic landmarks such as the Parthenon, Delphi, and Olympia.

Engage in cultural activities, including traditional dance, music, and cuisine.

Network with peers and professionals who share a passion for Hellenism.

Why Join the Journey?

Supreme President Savas C. Tsivicos emphasizes the importance of this program in his 2025 announcement, stating, "The Journey to Greece program is a cornerstone of AHEPA's mission to promote education and cultivate an appreciation for our Hellenic roots. It's not just a trip—it's a journey of self-discovery and connection."

For participants, the Journey to Greece program is more than a travel experience; it's an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their identity, build friendships, and strengthen their connection to the global Hellenic community.

Key Highlights of the 2025 Program

Dates: The program runs during the summer, offering flexibility for students with varying schedules.

Academic Credit: Participants can earn college credits through partnerships with renowned Greek institutions.

Cultural Immersion: From ancient ruins to modern urban life, the program provides a holistic view of Greece.

Affordable Access: AHEPA works to make this program accessible to all eligible students, ensuring a life-changing experience at an affordable cost.

How to Apply

Applications for the 2025 Journey to Greece program are now

open! Students are encouraged to apply early, as spaces fill quickly. Detailed program information and application forms can be found on the AHEPA website.

Support the Future of Hellenism

AHEPA invites community members, alumni, and supporters to help expand the program by sponsoring a student or contributing to the Journey to Greece fund. Your support ensures the continuation of this vital initiative, connecting new generations to their Hellenic roots.

Final Thoughts

The AHEPA Journey to Greece program embodies the organization's dedication to promoting Hellenism, education, and cultural exchange. By participating in this program, students not only gain valuable knowledge and experiences but also carry forward the torch of Greek heritage to future generations.

Join us on this incredible journey. Discover Greece. Discover yourself.

Sparta Taverna: Authentic Greek Cuisine in Ridgefield Park, NJ

OMOGENEIA

Sparta Taverna: Bringing the Flavors of Greece to Ridgefield Park Since 2004

For nearly two decades, Sparta Taverna has been a cherished destination in Ridgefield Park, NJ, serving up authentic Greek cuisine in a warm, family-friendly atmosphere. Whether you're dining in, taking out, or opting for their fast local delivery, this beloved eatery delivers a consistently exceptional experience.

What Makes Sparta Taverna Special?

Sparta Taverna is more than a restaurant—it's a testament to Greek culinary traditions and hospitality. Led by Executive Chef and owner George Gkouveris, who hails from Sparta, Greece, the taverna captures the essence of authentic Greek cooking. Chef George's journey began in his family's restaurant in Sparta, fostering a deep appreciation for the flavors of Greece. This passion brought him to the United States, where he earned a Culinary Arts certificate and

opened Sparta Taverna.

Chef George's dedication extends beyond the restaurant's kitchen. In 2022, he published *Simply Greek: From My Restaurant to Your Home*, a cookbook sharing classic recipes from Sparta Taverna. Now, fans can recreate these beloved dishes in their kitchens.

Authentic Greek Dishes for Every Taste

The menu at Sparta Taverna features a wide range of traditional Greek dishes crafted with love and precision, including:

- Gyros
- Moussaka
- Fresh Greek salads
- Delectable desserts like baklava

Each dish reflects Chef George's commitment to bringing the flavors of Greece to the local community, making it a must-visit for Greek food lovers.

A Community Favorite

Sparta Taverna stands out not just for its food but for its heartfelt connection to the community. With its focus on family values, quality ingredients, and



authentic dining experiences, the restaurant has earned a loyal following in Ridgefield Park and beyond. It's a shining example of the importance of supporting local businesses that bring vibrancy to our communities.

Visit Sparta Taverna Today
Whether you're craving hearty

Greek classics or a cozy spot to enjoy a meal with loved ones, Sparta Taverna is the perfect destination. Located in the heart of Ridgefield Park, this local gem invites you to savor the rich flavors of Greece and experience true Greek hospitality.

Visit www.spartataverna.com for more information.



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3Peak Global Leadership Forecast: Navigating 2025 with Vision and Resilience

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As the world transitions into 2025, 3Peak Coaching & Solutions shares critical insights for leaders navigating today's turbulent global landscape. With operations spanning North America, Europe, the Middle East, South America, the Caribbean, and Africa, 3Peak's mission is to empower leaders with strategies to adapt, thrive, and drive impactful change.

By sharing regional trends and actionable resources, the organization is helping leaders worldwide embrace proactive leadership in uncertain times.

Global Leadership Insights for 2025

Drawing from its work across multiple regions, 3Peak has identified key leadership challenges and opportunities for 2025:

Middle East: Leading Through Crisis and Rebuilding

In 2024, the Middle East faced unprecedented upheaval due to war and instability. 3Peak worked directly with leaders in Lebanon, providing essential crisis management support and resources for regulating emotions and making sound decisions during chaos.

Key Challenges:

Navigating unpredictable conditions.

Rebuilding from physical and emotional devastation.

3Peak's Recommendations for Middle Eastern Leaders:

Focus on reflection and processing of recent events to find physical and emotional safety.

Use tools like sound healing and guided visualization sessions to foster inner stability.

Europe: Breaking Free from Stagnation

In Europe, leaders are caught in a "holding pattern," hesitating to act as they await external developments involving the United States, Russia, and China. This reluctance has prevented many organizations from adapting to shifting realities.

Key Challenges:

Fear of disrupting the status quo. Loyalty to outdated systems and practices.

3Peak's Recommendations for European Leaders:

Develop a clear vision and take proactive action rather than remaining frozen in uncertainty.

Engage in self-leadership exercises and decision-making strategies to move beyond stagnation.

United States: Embracing Change and Building Stability

The United States experienced a cascade of crises in 2024, from environmental disasters to geopolitical instability. Many leaders struggled to adapt, overwhelmed by the rapid pace of change and the uncertainty it brings.

Key Challenges:

Resistance to addressing organizational changes.

Lack of emotional grounding during transitions.

3Peak's Recommendations for U.S. Leaders:

Strengthen leadership teams and organizational structures to navigate changes

Prioritize emotional intelligence and inner resilience to maintain stability during upheaval.

The Case for Global Leadership Collaboration

Despite unique challenges in each region, 3Peak emphasizes that leadership adaptability is a universal



Mazen R. Harb, Ph.D., Gerasimos (Mino) Vlahos, and Krisana Locke

need. The interconnectedness of today's world requires leaders to learn from one another, share insights, and collaborate to solve shared challenges.

As 3Peak reminds us: "We are not alone. Together, we can accomplish so much more."

Practical Tools for Leaders

To help leaders address the challenges of 2025, 3Peak has curated a range of resources:

Podcasts self-leadership, decision-making, and adapting to change.

Guided visualizations for finding emotional stability and inner strength.

Articles on crisis leadership and change readiness.

Explore these tools and more at 3Peak's Website to empower yourself and your organization for success.

About 3Peak Coaching & Solutions

3Peak Coaching & Solutions is a leadership consultancy dedicated to Elevating Executive Mastery. We specialize in transforming businesses through leadership and team development during transitions and times of crisis. We focus on the 3 critical areas where chaos and conflict are most likely to appear: Board, CEO, and C-Suite Misalignment; Transitions into Executive Leadership; Conflict Between Functional Departments.

For more information, visit 3Peak's Website or contact Co-Founder Mino Vlachos at mino@3peakcoaching.com.

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In Loving Memory of Harry P. Keares: A Life of Dedication, Kindness, and Legacy



Harry P. Keares, 83
March 1, 1941 – January 05, 2025

It is with great sadness that our family announces the passing of Harry P. Keares, age 83 of Lancaster, PA on January 5, 2025 at Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center. Loving husband, father and eldest of seven siblings, Harry was born March 1, 1941 on the island of Kos, Greece, to parents Petros and Maria Keares and step-mother Evangelia Keares.

An eternal optimist and adventurous at heart, Harry immigrated to the United States in 1956 seeking education and opportunity, making the three-week transatlantic voyage alone at the age of 15 without knowing a word of English. He settled in Lancaster where he lived with his uncle Apostoli and aunt Lillian. Always a hard worker, he often held multiple jobs during his high school and college years to help support his family in Greece and to pay his way through school.

Harry was a truly kind and honorable soul who, in his 83 years, never had a bad thing to say about anyone. He led by example exhibiting honesty and integrity, always looking for the best in people and was quick to offer a genuine smile and assistance to those in need. He instilled these qualities in his children and took great pride in their accomplishments and education; daughter Maria and Husband Jeff owners of Wyant Architecture and sons Peter and Nicholas, restaurateurs, brewers and distillers. He also loved the church and the Greek Orthodox Service and remained a lifelong member of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Lancaster as well as St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Naples, FL.

An engineer and mathematician, Harry was always interested in the science and numbers behind how things worked. He attended McCaskey High School and, given his English language handicap, excelled at mathematics and physics. In 1964 he graduated from Millersville University with a degree in mathematics and minor in Russian language.

Harry's first job was at RCA, where he worked as an engineer as part of the team tasked with improving performance of the color picture tube, and he quickly excelled at process and data analysis. In 1968, after accepting an engineering position at Honeywell Corporation, he moved his wife Irene and young son Peter to the Boston suburbs where daughter Maria and son Nicholas were born.

As the first of his immediate family to arrive and establish himself in this country, Harry was very instrumental in helping his siblings travel to and adjust to living in the United States; the spare bedrooms in his home often occupied by his brothers and sisters as they arrived from Greece in the 1960's and early 1970's.

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In 1975 Harry joined brothers-in-law Peter, Ted, George and Pete Skiadas in Skiadas Brothers Enterprises, a family company operating restaurants and gift shops in Pennsylvania. Harry learned the business and applied his systematic approach to managing operations at the Windmill Restaurant where his genuine smile and kindness made him a local favorite. In 1993, along with sons Peter and Nicholas, Checkers Restaurant in Lancaster was launched, followed by Doc Holiday's, Gibraltar and Lancaster Brewing Company. Throughout his professional career Harry believed strongly in giving back to the community that supported him and his family, supporting local farmers, donating food and beverages and raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for countless causes in central Pennsylvania.

Harry is survived by his loving wife Irene Keares (nee Skiadas); children Peter, Maria (Jeff) and Nicholas (Athena) and grandchildren Reni, Kelli, Harris, Rina and Effie. Harry is also survived by brothers Steven, Nicholas John, Costas, and sisters Christina Hatzivasilis and Eleni Kourgelis.

A viewing will take place Thurs-



day, January 9, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm with the Trisagion Service at 7:00 pm at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 64 Hershey Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603. A second viewing will take place Friday, January 10, 2025 at 9:30 am, followed by the funeral at 10:30 am; the service officiated by Rev. Hector Firoglanis and, brother of the deceased, Rev. Costas Keares, at Annuncia-

tion Greek Orthodox Church, 64 Hershey Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603. Interment in Conestoga Memorial Park Cemetery, Lancaster, PA.

In lieu of flowers kindly consider a contribution in Harry's memory to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 64 Hershey Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603.

Philoptochos Ladies of "Saint Barbara" Host Luncheon Honoring Their Patron Saint



On Sunday, December 1, 2024, the Philoptochos Ladies of Saint Barbara at Saint George Greek Orthodox Church in Piscataway, NJ, hosted a special luncheon at Pithari Taverna following the Divine Liturgy to honor their Patron Saint. This annual gathering celebrated faith, community, and philanthropy, bringing together parishioners and supporters.

Leadership and Gratitude

Mrs. Ann Sullivan, President of the Philoptochos, warmly welcomed attendees, expressing heartfelt gratitude for their continued support of the organization's charitable missions. In her remarks, she highlighted the Philoptochos' vital role in uplifting the community through acts of charity, emphasizing the importance of unity and service.

Special Announcements

A highlight of the event was a brief address by Paul Kotrotsios, who shared details about an upcoming event on Sunday, December 8, 2024, at Saint George's Community Center. The event will feature a keynote speech by Dr. Charalambos Zacharatos of Hackensack Meridian Health, providing valuable insights to the community.

Celebrating Faith and Fellowship



The luncheon was filled with camaraderie, delicious food, and a shared love for the parish. The event was attended by notable figures, including:

V. Rev. Nektarios Cottros, Presiding Priest and newly appointed Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

Mr. George Athanasopoulos, President of the Community

Eleni Parlapanidis, Chairlady of the event

Honoring the Mission of Philoptochos

This gathering exemplified the extraordinary efforts of the Philoptochos Ladies of Saint Barbara, who continue to uphold their mission of faith, charity, and service. Through their unwavering dedication, they foster a spirit of fellowship and gratitude within the parish and beyond.

Inspiring Community Engagement

The Philoptochos reminds us all of the power of community, service, and faith. Events like these not only honor their beloved Patron Saint but also inspire others to contribute to the greater good, ensuring that the spirit of Orthodoxy remains vibrant and strong.



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Christmas Customs and Blessings of Greek Global Diaspora Schools

OMOGENEIA

By Catherine Tsounis

An extraordinary Christmas zoom program of Greek schools in the USA, Europe and Africa were presented on Saturday, December 21, 2024. The Federation of Hellenic American Educators and Cultural Association of America and the Institute of Greek Language of the University of Western Macedonia, Greece hosted the event. Carols in Greek and English was sung by children on 3 continents. A feeling of pride and identity was expressed by children in their Christmas celebrations and traditions.

“Religion and the Greek language unite all of the Greek Diaspora communities,” said Mrs. Stella Kokolis, President of The Federation of Hellenic American Educators and Cultural Association of America. A special tribute to President Kokolis leadership on education was expressed by all speakers. The Holiday season is a time connection for Greeks worldwide, through century old traditions. From Christmas to January 6th, traditions strengthen Greek communities in their heritage. Traditions are a bridge to memories of Greece.

Peace and no war were echoed by children and their educators on 3 continents, referring to the economic hardships of the wars. I was impressed with third, fourth and 5th generation Students in African Greek schools singing Greek/ English carols. The Greek community of Albania is holding on to their Greek traditions. Children were cooking traditional Greek foods in their celebrations.

The program included the following education, diplomatic leaders, and universities: Welcome by Ms. Stella Kokolis, President of Hellenic American Educators and Cultural Associations of America; Program Moderator Spyridon Bouras, PhD in Applied Linguistics, member of the “Timenos” Research Center of MFA, ; Zetta Makri, Deputy Minister of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports of Greece; Ioannis Katsaros, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education,

Religious Affairs and Sports of Greece; Panagiotis Passas, Head of the General Directorate of International, European Affairs, Education of the Diaspora and Intercultural Education; Ifigenia Kanara, Consul General of Greece in New York; Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis, Director of the Office of Education of the Holy Archdiocese of America; Ioannis Chrysoulakis, Professor Emeritus Chairman of the Ahepa National Committee – former Secretary General of Hellenism Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Philippos Fortomas, Member of Parliament for Cyclades and Chairman of the Special Standing Committee of the Hellenic Parliament for Hellenism in the Diaspora; Eleni Griva, Vice-Rector for International Relations, Outreach and Holistic Care, University of Western Macedonia, Director of the Greek Language Institute of the University of Western Macedonia; George Vlachos, Coordinator of Greek Language Education, Johannesburg; Dimitra Patronidou, Education Coordinator at the Consulate General of Greece in New York; Mrs. Vasiliki Filiotis, President of the Hellenic Education Organization of America; Christina Tsardikou, President of the Greek Cultural Event “Nostos” in Argentina; Konstantina Kapetanaki, Representative of Hellenic Classical Charter School in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

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The Greek Diaspora community schools that participated included: Zografeio Lyceum of Constantinople with Ioannis Demirtzoglou, Principal of Zografeio Lyceum, Athens; Greek Schools of Cairo, Egypt; Georgios Kokorelis, North Africa and Middle East Education Coordinator; Athenian Academy Clearwater and Fort 13.15PM Myers, Florida Sevasti Varitimidou, General Manager of the Greek Program; Plato Charter Schools, Florida, Konstantinos Aretis, General Director of the Greek Program; -Sakheti School Johannesburg, Africa and Demosthenis Archondoulis, Professor of Greek Music and Culture, SAKHETI School; Odyssey charter School, Delaware, Dr. Ioanna

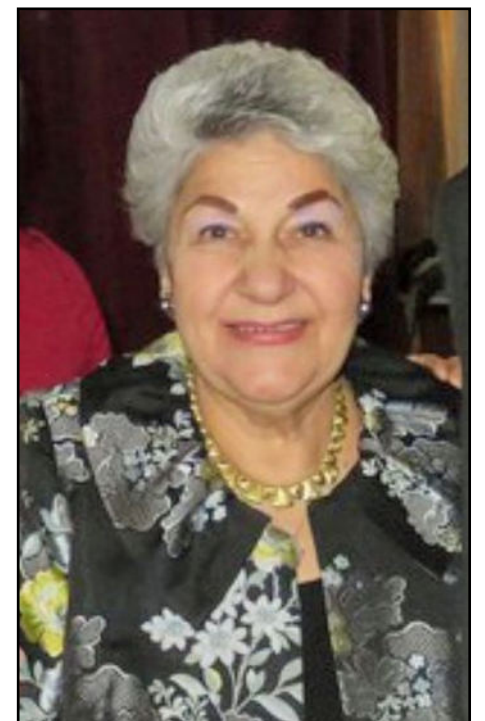


Greek School caroling, Florida



Greek School students dancing, Zimbabwe, Africa

Lekakou General Director of the Greek Program; Vouliarati Unified School, Albania; Panagiotis Barkas, Associate Professor, Department of Greek Language, Literature and Greek Culture, University of Argyrokastro, Albania; Department of Greek Language (TEG) of Malta; “Saint George” Mr. Kyrillos Katerelos, His Eminence Exarch of Malta; Primary School of Louboutin, D.R. Congo; .M. Angeliki Kotsoridi, Headmistress of the Primary School of Louboutin, D.R. Congo; Greek Language Departments Waiblingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; Kalliopi Zarogianni, Teacher of the Greek Language Departments Waiblingen; Greek Language Department of Lusaka 13.55 P.M. Zambia, Rania Tsirigoti, teacher at TEG Lusaka; Gavria Primary School & Kindergarten, Arta, Aikaterini Zafeiri, Headmistress. Gavria Kindergarten Arta, Greece; Hellenic Academy Harare Zimbabwe, Africa, Ioannis Economou, President of the Greek Community Harare Zimbabwe; Greek Schools Kinshasa D.R., Congo, Fotini Kyriakopoulou, Director of the Greek Schools of Kinshasa, Congo; Plato Afternoon School, Brooklyn,



President Stella Kokolis of The Federation of Hellenic American Educators and Cultural Association of America

Dimitra Tsafou.

Greek Christmas traditions blend faith, family, and custom, creating a unique holiday experience. These traditions bring joy and unite Greek communities worldwide, fostering a strong sense of connection within the diaspora.

Saint Demetrios Greek Language School Brings New Year Carols to Greek Consulate in NYC

OMOGENEIA

The Greek Consulate General in New York City was filled with festive melodies and joyful children's voices on a memorable Friday afternoon. Students from the Saint Demetrios Greek Language School in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, brought the traditional Greek New Year carols to Manhattan, highlighting the enduring legacy of Hellenism in the United States.

Traveling several hours by car, the delegation—comprising students, parents, and teachers—numbered around 50 individuals. The group was led by Rev. Fr. Alexander Kaitidis, community leader John Vasiliou, and members of the community council and faculty. They were warmly welcomed by Iphigenia Kanara, the Consul General of Greece in New York, alongside Petros Dorizas, Consul of Greece, and Mary Vaxevanidou, Director of Public Diplomacy in New York.

Upon arrival, the children were greeted in the festively decorated consulate. Guests enjoyed traditional Greek Christmas treats such as melomakarona and kourabiedes, along with hot chocolate and coffee.

Under the guidance of their teachers and accompanied by a metallophone played by one of the older students, the children sang traditional Greek carols at the building's entrance. The scene was set with a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and the ever-present Greek flag, creating a symbolic connection between the homeland and the diaspora.

Consul General Kanara, celebrating her first Christmas in New York, joined the choir, radiating joy and holiday spirit. She also took photos with the children, parents,



and teachers, making the event truly memorable.

The event highlighted the resilience and vibrancy of Greek traditions in the diaspora, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage. Visitors expressed their excitement and gratitude for the warm reception and the opportunity to connect with representatives of Greece.

As the delegation departed for their return trip, Ms. Kanara personally thanked the attendees, including the media representatives such as the Hellenic News of America, and extended heartfelt wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all.





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11th Interantional Summer University “Greek Language, Culture, And Mass Media”



UNIVERSITY OF
IOANNINA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
SOCIAL ISSUES, MASS MEDIA
AND EDUCATION LABORATO-
RY
MALIOTIS CULTURAL CEN-
TER AT HELLENIC COLLEGE

11th INTERANTIONAL SUM-
MER UNIVERSITY
“GREEK LANGUAGE,
CULTURE, AND
MASS MEDIA”

May 24-29 2025, Boston
Under the auspices of the Hel-
lenic Parliament

The Social Issues, Mass Media
and Education Laboratory of the
Department of Early Childhood
Education, School of Education, of
the University of Ioannina, and the
Maliotis Cultural Center at Hellenic
College in Boston,

with the participation of:
– Ecumenical Patriarchate, Greek
Education Department,
– Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America, Department of Greek
Education,
– Greek Applied Linguistics As-
sociation
– Athens – Macedonian News
Agency
– Study in Greece
– The University of Chicago, Cen-
ter for Hellenic Studies, and
– Fondazione Vexillum,

organize the 11th International
Summer University “Greek Lan-
guage, Culture, and Mass Media.”
The project is scheduled to take
place in Boston, on May 24 – 29
2025, at the Maliotis Cultural Cen-
ter (campus of Hellenic College at
50 Goddard Avenue) in Brookline.
It will be conducted through the
Center for Lifelong Learning of the
University of Ioannina.

The program enjoys the auspices
of the Hellenic Parliament and
will be held under the auspices and
with the support of the General
Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and
Public Diplomacy of the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs. It is underlined
that the program has been included
in the strategic plan of the Minis-
try of Foreign Affairs for Hellenism
Abroad (2024-2027).

The 11th International Summer
University has the special title:

Diaspora mass media: challenges
and prospects for the Greek lan-
guage and culture

Indicative topics:

- The international presence of
diaspora mass media and their con-
tribution to the modern Greek cul-
ture
- The contribution of the diaspo-
ra mass media towards spreading
and preserving the Greek language
- Depictions and representations
of Greece in diaspora mass media
- Diaspora mass media, identity,
and multicultural horizons
- Diaspora mass media and mod-
ern crises (memoranda, refugees,
climate, war, energy). Language
representations and symbols
- The teaching role of diaspora
mass media
- Possibilities for cooperation
and synergies, in the framework of
a global forum for Greek diaspora
mass media

A tradition of extroversion

Following 10 years of renowned
success for the program, the tradi-
tion of fostering extroversion and
synergies with prominent inter-
national institutions in education,
culture, and mass media continues.
It is reminded that, in the previous
years, the International Summer
University “Greek Language, Cul-
ture, and Mass Media” has been
supported by the Harvard Univer-
sity Center for Hellenic Studies, the
Hellenic Representation of the Eu-
ropean Parliament, the Association
of European Journalists (Greek de-
partment), the Orthodox Academy
of Crete, the French Department of
the Club de la Presse Européenne
in Paris, the Centre Culturel
Hellénique in Paris, the Instituto
De Letras in Rio De Janeiro Uni-
versity, the Department of Media,
Communications, Creative Arts,
Language and Literature, Faculty of
Arts of Macquarie University, the
Macquarie Greek Studies Founda-
tion in Sydney, and many more.

Participation

Directors and journalists of di-
aspora mass media in America,
Europe, Australia, Asia, and Afri-
ca will participate in the program.
Moreover, academics and research-
ers, intellectuals and artists from
Greek and foreign universities and
research centers will join the pro-
gram.

Free participation. The program
is addressed to

The program will be offered for
free. The program is addressed to
journalists, undergraduate and
graduate students, PhD holders,



Professor Nikoletta Tsitsanoudis – Mallidis,
Dean of the School of Education, University of
Ioannina

educators, and it accepts a number
of professionals with relevant inter-
ests, in the framework of lifelong
learning. The program offers certifi-
cates of attendance and education-
al material to the participants.

The presence of mass media in
Greece and in the diaspora

The following organization sup-
port the program as communica-
tion sponsors: ERT, ERT 2, ERT3,
ERT WORLD, the First Program
105.8, the Voice of Greece, and the
Parliament Channel. Real FM, Real
News, and real.gr, along with ATH-
ENS VOICE and CNN GREECE,
serve as media sponsors, as well. The
Greek Service of Deutsche Welle is
also a media sponsor. The following
media sponsors also participate in
the program: Orthodox Observer
News, The National Herald in the
U.S.A., the daily edition of Greek
Herald, and the newspaper Neos
Kosmos in Sydney, the Hellenic
Public Radio of New York COS-
MOS FM, the H W Media Group in
Austria (diaspora websites <https://hephaestuswien.com/>, <https://pyramisnews.gr> and the Greek-speaking
radio in Austria Hephaestus
Radio). Furthermore, the Pyramis
News, addressed to the Diaspora in
Africa and the Arab countries, also
participates in the program. Me-
dia sponsors also include the fol-
lowing diaspora media: Kallimera
Massalia, WNTN Radio-1550 AM/
Grecian Echoes in Boston, Hellenic
Radio from Bedfordview in Johan-
nesburg, the newspaper “Eleftheria”
in London, 2mm Radio, Sydney,
Darwin, Wollongong, the website
«Hχώ» of Central and South Afri-
ca, Broadcast Canadian & Interna-
tional TV Network (BCI media) in
Canada, NEWSVILLE in Belgium
and more.

Promoting the program

In 2025, the program is promot-
ed through a TV and radio spot,



Chrysoula Kourkounti, Executive Director of
Maliotis Cultural Center

with Giannis Bezos as the leading
actor and director. The production
was undertaken by the film produc-
tion company Production House,
with the directorial supervision of
Mr. Panos Manolitsis and his team.
Watch the spot here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=852poHqA-Wkw>

Program direction

Professor Nikoletta Tsitsanoudis – Mallidis, Dean of the School of
Education at the University of Ioan-
nina and Harvard CHS – GR Asso-
ciate, is the Founder and Scientific
Coordinator of the Program. She is
also responsible for the unit “Greek
language, culture, and mass media”
unit within the Social Issues, Mass
Media, and Education Studies Lab-
oratory at the Department of Early
Childhood Education, University
of Ioannina. Ms. Chrysoula Kourk-
ounti, Executive Director of Mali-
otis Cultural Center, is responsible
for the administrative direction of
the program in Boston.

Information:

– Professor Nikoletta Tsitsanoudis – Mallidis, Dean of the School of
Education, University of Ioannina

email: nitsi@uoi.gr
website: <https://summerschool.ac.uoi.gr>

ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟ ΜΕΛΕΤΗΣ
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΘΕΜΑΤΩΝ,
ΜΜΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
Παιδαγωγικού Τμήματος
Νηπιαγωγών Πανεπιστημίου
Ιωαννίνων

Nikoletta Tsitsanoudis Mallid-
is, Όμιλος Αποφοίτων Διεθνούς
Θερινού Πανεπιστημίου.

– Chrysoula Kourkounti, Exec-
utive Director of Maliotis Cultural
Center
email: ckourkounti@hchc.edu,
website: <https://maliotis.hchc.edu/>

My Service to President Carter and His Service to the World



By Andrew Manatos

WASHINGTON, DC, January 9, 2025 – As I attend the funeral today of President Jimmy Carter, under whom I served as an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, I am struck by what a unique and extraordinary man he was in many ways that are generally unknown. For example, he showed his humanitarian focus, which later in life became widely recognized, soon after his election. He had his State Department establish an Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. It created a hyper focus for America on these important topics.

President Carter's Administration also accomplished major steps toward today's admired goals of attacking waste, fraud, and abuse in our government. Prior to President Carter our country's ability to redress mistreatment of citizens by our federal government's was terrible. Typically, citizens' complaints were referred to the office of the Secretary of the department who usually referred it to the Department's General Counsel. The problem was that frequently the General Counsel was a long-term personal friend of the Secretary who appointed him or her to this prestigious position. President Carter replaced that age-old, "old boy's" network with the establishment in each department of an "Inspector General." Those appointed had a background in such investigations and were beholden to justice for the citizen instead of the Secretary.

Two long-forgotten acts of President Carter give insight into his deep concern about our African-American community. He moved each department to do whatever it could to help lift the African-American community. At the Department of Commerce for example, we set aside 10% of federal government building contract funds for minority contractors. President Carter also presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the highest religious leader to join Martin Luther King in his dangerous Selma, Alabama civil rights march. That leader was Greek Orthodox

Archbishop of America, His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos.

President Carter showed to me personally his unusual humanity and the understanding when I submitted my resignation. Every week at the White House, in a room next to the Oval Office, I and the other Assistant Secretaries for legislation met, led by President Carter's congressional right hand, Frank Moore, to learn what the President wanted us to lobby in the US Congress. In one of those meetings, I learned that the President's target was to lift the US Arms Embargo on Turkey, imposed for Turkey's illegal use of American arms for its invasion and occupation of Cyprus. I submitted my resignation to Frank. I explained that I could not work to end such an important and just embargo that I had spent years on Capitol Hill enacting. I had led that lobby effort out of the office of philhellene US Senator Tom Eagleton and worked with fellow Hellenes Paul Sarbanes and John Brademas in the House. Our embargo success over President Nixon and Henry Kissinger was the only time in modern history the US Congress overrode the White House on a major foreign policy issue. Generously, President Carter overlooked my insubordination and asked if I would stay if I was completely uninvolved with the effort to lift the Turkish Arms Embargo. I agreed.

Soon after President Carter's time in the White House, he became the first US President to stand up for the oppressed spiritual head of the second largest Christian Church in the world, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Orthodox Christianity, by visiting the Patriarchate. His presence at the Patriarchate resulted in the Government of Turkey allowing the repair of major damage to the Patriarchate. Following Carter's example, sitting President Bill Clinton visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate as did sitting Vice President Joe Biden, twice.

Years later I noticed that President Carter had a lasting impact on those who worked for him. Nearly to a person everyone who worked for Carter spent a good deal of their lives thereafter devoted to improving America, as



President Jimmy Carter and Andrew E. Manatos, Former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Congressional Affairs and youngest Assistant Secretary in the Carter Administration



President Carter had worked so hard to do. For example Stuart Eizenstat, the person who in his early 30's led President Carter's domestic policy, among other things successfully secured well over one billion dollars from

outside of America for victims of WWII in the world Jewish community. Others in the administration similarly followed Carter's example of trying to leave the world a better place.

AHEPA Family Joins Tarpon Springs Epiphany Celebration

OMOGENEIA

Members of the AHEPA Supreme Lodge, Daughters of Penelope (DOP) Grand Lodge, Maids of Athena (MOA) Grand Lodge, and the broader AHEPA Family gathered in Tarpon Springs, Florida, for this year's annual Epiphany celebration. Partnering with St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral and AHEPA Epiphany City Chapter 16, attendees immersed themselves in the vibrant traditions and events that make Tarpon Springs a centerpiece of Hellenic heritage.

A Warm Welcome and Weekend Festivities

The festivities began on January 3 with a welcome dinner hosted by AHEPA Epiphany City Chapter 16 at the AHEPA House. Over 150 guests attended the event, enjoying a sumptuous buffet that set the tone for the weekend's activities. Supreme President Savas Tsvicos addressed the attendees, expressing gratitude to the host chapter for their hospitality and commitment to preserving Hellenic traditions.

A standout highlight was the AHEPA District 2 Memory Eternal Epiphany Golf Tournament on January 4 at Innisbrook Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida. The tournament attracted 72 golfers for an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start in a spirited four-person scramble format. Special thanks were extended to Peter Sarris, who hosted a buffet breakfast for participants. That evening, AHEPA Family members gathered at the elegant Epiphany Ball, held at Theophilos Hall at Spanos Pappas St. Nicholas Community Center.

Ahepa-Tarpon-Springs-2025 Celebrating Hellenic Heritage and American Values

On Sunday, AHEPA hosted the 2025 Epiphany Banquet in Safety Harbor, Florida. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros delivered stirring remarks, commending AHEPA as a vital bridge connecting Hellenic heritage and American values. He highlighted the organization's embodiment of "progress in life, faith, and spiritual understanding."

The banquet welcomed nu-



merous distinguished guests, including Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta, newly appointed Secretary General for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad H.E. Maira Myrogianni, DOP Grand President Margaret Dritsas, MOA Grand President Stephanie Owens, and other dignitaries. Supreme President Tsvicos honored Past Supreme Presidents Nicholas A. Karacostas and George G. Horiates with the AHEPA Heroes Medal, recognizing their years of dedicated service to the Order.

A Triumphant Epiphany Day

The weekend concluded with the sacred Epiphany Day celebrations on Monday, featuring the traditional blessing of the waters at Spring Bayou and the annual dive for the cross. This year, congratulations went to Luc Boillot, the young man who successfully retrieved the cross in a moment that symbolized faith and community unity.

Supreme President Tsvicos and AHEPA leaders, including AHEPA Canada President Emmanuel Constan, DOP President Margaret Dritsas, AHEPA

Foundation Chairman Nicholas A. Karacostas, and PSP George G. Horiates, met with H.E. Maira Myrogianni to discuss pressing issues affecting the Greek diaspora. In a special moment, Secretary General Myrogianni was officially welcomed into the AHEPA Family as a new member of the Daughters of Penelope.

The Tarpon Springs Epiphany events underscored the enduring strength and unity of the Greek-American community, celebrating faith, heritage, and the values that connect generations across the diaspora.

AHEPA Eureka Chapter 52 Celebrates 100 Years of Brotherhood and Service in Union, NJ

OMOGENEIA

Union, NJ — AHEPA Eureka Chapter 52 marked its 100th anniversary with an unforgettable celebration at Galloping Hill Caterers. The event brought together members, dignitaries, and community leaders to honor a century of promoting Hellenism, education, philanthropy, and civic responsibility.

Founded in 1924, AHEPA Eureka Chapter 52 has been a cornerstone of the Greek-American community in Union, NJ, fostering unity and service for generations. The milestone event highlighted the chapter's rich history and remarkable contributions, strengthening the bonds of brotherhood that define the AHEPA experience.

Honoring a Century of Legacy and Leadership

The evening included inspiring speeches from chapter leaders and distinguished guests, paying tribute to past presidents and members whose dedication has shaped the chapter's success. A special presentation recognized families and individuals who have carried the torch of leadership, ensuring the chapter's mission thrives for future generations.

President John Protopappas was commended for his steadfast leadership, and Event Chairman Kostas Lappas received accolades for organizing a memorable celebration that honored AHEPA's legacy in style.

Distinguished Guests and Dignitaries

Among the honored attendees were:

Father Eugenios Tsaramanidis
Betty Spiropoulos, President of St. Demetrios Church

Past Supreme Presidents
George Horiates, Esq., and Andy Zaharadis

Supreme Secretary Dr. Zenon Christodoulou

District 5 Governor T.J. Borzaka

District 28 Marshal Andreas Zapounidis

Paul Kotrotsios from AHEPA Hercules Spartan Chapter 26 of Greater Philadelphia

Athena Ronchonchon of the



Daughters of Penelope

A Night of Celebration and Camaraderie

Guests enjoyed a delicious dinner, lively entertainment, and moments of fellowship, reflecting the AHEPA spirit. The night concluded with a celebratory toast, reaffirming the chapter's commitment to preserving Hellenic values and serving the Greek-American community for generations to come.

"It was an honor to offer my greetings to the attendees of this milestone event," said Paul Kotrotsios. "This centennial celebration is a testament to the strength and unity of the Greek-American community and the enduring legacy of AHEPA."

Looking Ahead to the Next Century

As attendees departed, they carried a renewed sense of pride and inspiration from being part of an organization that has stood the test of time, leaving an indelible mark on the community.



AHEPA Foundation's Journey to Greece Christmas Benefit Inspires and Unites the Community

OMOGENEIA

The second annual AHEPA Foundation's Journey to Greece Christmas Benefit brought together AHEPA family and friends for an evening of celebration and purpose at The Graycliff catering facility in Moonachie, New Jersey. The event highlighted the transformative Journey to Greece program, one of AHEPA's most impactful initiatives for youth, while fostering a festive holiday spirit.

The evening commenced with a warm welcome from George G. Horiates, PSP, who served as the master of ceremonies. His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey opened the program with an invocation, setting a reflective and celebratory tone. Distinguished guests included Daughters of Penelope (DOP) Grand President Margaret Dritsas, AHEPA Canada President Emmanuel Conostas, and The Honorable Iphigenia Kanara, Consul General of Greece in New York, who addressed the attendees with inspiring remarks.

A highlight of the event was the testimonials from four participants in the 2024 Journey to Greece Program. Introduced by SOP Supreme Governor George T. Horiates and MOA PGP Maria Ana Pantelous, the students shared heartfelt stories of how this life-changing program deepened their connection to their Hellenic heritage and enriched their personal and educational journeys.



A moment of special recognition was reserved for Supreme President Savas C. Tsvicos, who presented a commemorative honor to Anastasios Efstratiades of the George W. Rentschler Foundation. His generous \$200,000 donation as a grand underwriter has significantly advanced the Foundation's goal

of raising \$1 million to establish an endowment for the Journey to Greece program. This endowment will ensure that future students can participate in the program at an affordable cost, securing its legacy as an invaluable educational opportunity.

Thanks to the support and gener-

osity of benefactors and attendees, the AHEPA Foundation is well on its way to achieving its fundraising goal. This memorable event not only celebrated the holiday season but also underscored the enduring mission of AHEPA: to preserve and promote Hellenic heritage, culture, and education for generations to come.

The Greek Orthodox Christian Cathedral of Saint Sophia Serves as Relief Center for Fire Victims and First Responders

Los Angeles, CA – In response to the devastating fires impacting our communities, The Greek Orthodox Christian Cathedral of Saint Sophia is opening its doors as a designated Relief Center to provide much-needed support to those affected, as well as to the brave firefighters, law enforcement, and first responders working tirelessly to protect us.

Items to Donate: We are accepting donations of the following items to assist those in need:

- Non-perishable food items
- Bottled water and sports drinks
- Hygiene products (soap, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.)
- Clothing (new or gently used, all sizes)

- Blankets and sleeping bags
- Baby supplies (diapers, formula, baby wipes)

- Pet food and supplies
- Donations to Fire Relief Fund: 100% of all donations received will aid the

- Donations to Fire Relief Fund: 100% of all donations received will aid those affected by the fires. These contributions will directly support individuals and families in every way possible during this critical time. Click here to DONATE. <https://saintsophia.org/fire/>

- Meal Preparation: Throughout the week, volunteers will be preparing meals at the Cathedral to distribute to fire victims, firefighters, and first responders. Hot, nu-

tritious meals will be available to anyone in need.

All Are Welcome: Whether you are seeking assistance, looking for a place to rest, or simply need a comforting presence, the Cathedral is here for you. We invite the entire community to join us in providing relief and support during this difficult time.

How to Help: If you would like to contribute or volunteer, please contact the Cathedral office at 323-737-2424 or visit our website at <https://saintsophia.org/>. To assist in the relief effort complete this form: <https://forms.gle/EuoU28hKtyB-N6Xgb7>

Together, we can make a differ-

ence.

To RECEIVE ASSISTANCE: If you have been directly affect by the fires, please complete this form so that we can better serve you: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrLGj3mXEBxT1Nk-bE8KP_na1pHos-FH0q4c5DZ-kO4iRQvv_w/viewform

Location: The Greek Orthodox Christian Cathedral of Saint Sophia 1324 S. Normandie Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90006

We thank everyone for their generosity and prayers as we come together to support those in need. Our faith and unity as a community will guide us through this challenging time.

Daughters of Penelope Manhattan EVRYKLEA Chapter Donates \$2,000 to Robin Hood Foundation

OMOGENEIA

Daughters of Penelope Manhattan EVRYKLEA Chapter Donates \$2,000 to Robin Hood Foundation

New York, NY – December 4, 2024 – The Daughters of Penelope Manhattan EVRYKLEA chapter made a generous donation to the Robin Hood Foundation, contributing \$2,000 to support the foundation's vital work in combating poverty in New York City. Chapter President Elsa Jonsson, Vice President Maria Ntini, and members Maria Papageorgiou and Chrysoula Giakos visited Robin Hood's offices to present the donation in person. The group was warmly welcomed by Margaret Schilling, Managing Director of Individual Giving at Robin Hood, who shared insights into the foundation's impactful work.

Founded in 1988 by Paul Tudor Jones II, the Robin Hood Foundation is one of New York's most prominent and effective organizations dedicated to fighting poverty. Through data-driven philanthropy, Robin Hood invests in innovative solutions that address the root causes of poverty in the areas of education, employment, housing, healthcare, and criminal justice. By applying rigorous metrics and collaborating with diverse partners, including nonprofits, government



agencies, and corporations, Robin Hood ensures that its resources are used to create lasting, systemic change.

Since its inception, Robin Hood has distributed over \$2 billion to initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty in New York City, and continues to advocate for policies that address poverty at a structural level. The foundation's approach combines direct financial support to individuals with funding for large-scale initiatives, making a profound and long-term impact on vulner-

able communities. Robin Hood spends 100% of its donations to its charitable endeavors.

The Daughters of Penelope Manhattan EVRYKLEA chapter is proud to contribute to Robin Hood's mission and excited to support its ongoing efforts in creating positive change.

Thanks for reading Hellenic News of America

Subscribe to HNA

After the donation was made at the Robin Hood Headquarters, the

chapter held its election at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church which was attended by Lt. Governor Effie Argyropoulou. The newly elected board is:

President: Maria Ntini

Vice President: Elsa Jonsson

Treasurer: Madalena Aravosita

Correspondence Secretary: Maria Papageorgiou

Recording Secretary: Sonia Skounaki-Garbidakis

To become a member or for inquiries please contact the chapter at nycdop36@gmail.com

Pan Gregorians of NJ Celebrate Annual Vasilopita at Graycliff Catering

The Pan Gregorians of New Jersey hosted their highly anticipated annual Vasilopita celebration at the elegant Graycliff Catering, owned and operated by Archon Anthony Papamarkos. The event united prominent members of the Greek-American community, celebrating tradition, unity, and the start of a prosperous new year.

A Ceremony Rooted in Greek Tradition

His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey graced the occasion, officiating the blessing and cutting of the Vasilopita. In his remarks, His Eminence commended the Pan Gregorians for their philanthropy and steadfast dedication to preserving Hellenic culture and values.

Pan-Gregorian-Enterprises Notable Guests and Speeches

The celebration featured inspiring addresses from:

Mike Zavolas, President of Pan

Gregorian Enterprises (PGE)

Alex Theodosiou, President of the PGEI of America Foundation

Dimitri Kafchitsas, President of PGE Metro NY

Adding to the significance of the evening, the Consul General of Cyprus in New York, Mr. Michalis Fyryllas, delivered a heartfelt speech, highlighting the importance of community unity and collective efforts to support Greek heritage.

Strengthening Greek-American Bonds

This gathering showcased the unwavering commitment of the Pan Gregorians to their members and the broader Greek-American community. It reinforced their role as a cornerstone of philanthropic initiatives and cultural preservation.

Wishing everyone a blessed and successful New Year, as the Pan Gregorians continue to inspire through their dedication and leadership!



George Danis' Memoir Inspires with a Message to "Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek"

OMOGENEIA

Last June, the highly anticipated memoir of businessman and philanthropist George Danis, titled *Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek*, was published, capturing the attention and hearts of the Greek American and broader communities. The book, which details Danis' remarkable journey from humble beginnings to becoming a successful entrepreneur and dedicated philanthropist, has already made a significant impact, sparking conversations about the importance of ambition, generosity, and cultural pride.

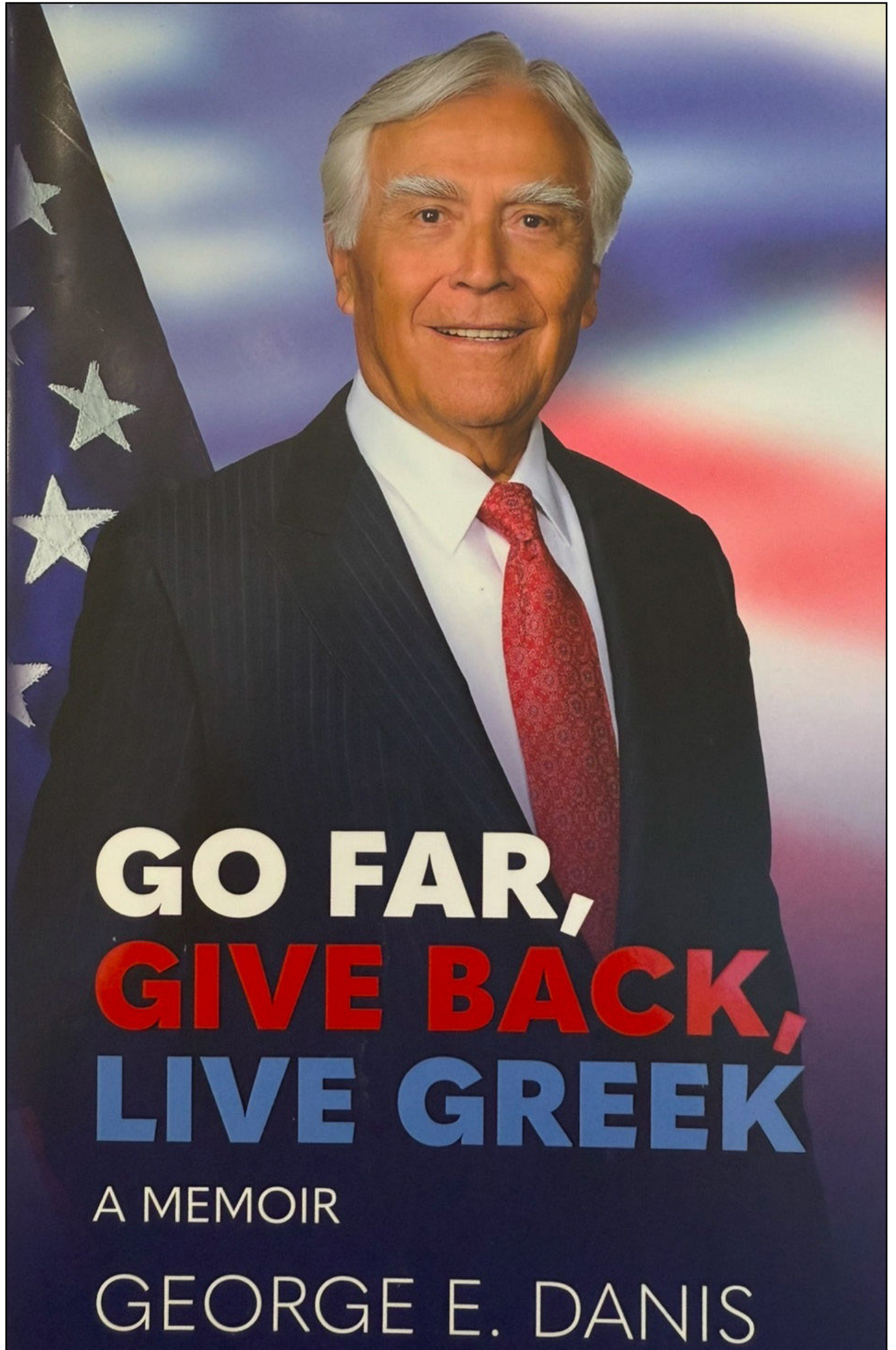
In *Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek*, Danis shares deeply personal anecdotes, tracing his roots in Greece and his journey to the United States. The memoir chronicles his struggles, triumphs, and the values instilled in him by his family and heritage. With candid reflections, Danis reveals how his Greek identity shaped his perspective on hard work, community, and the importance of giving back.

The title of the book encapsulates the guiding principles of Danis' life. *Go Far* highlights his relentless pursuit of success, which saw him build a thriving business empire. *Give Back* underscores his philanthropic endeavors, including support for education, cultural preservation, and humanitarian causes. Finally, *Live Greek* is a testament to his deep connection to Hellenism, emphasizing the values of family, faith, and culture.

The memoir's release was celebrated by the Greek American community, with several events and book signings drawing large crowds. Leaders and readers alike praised Danis' storytelling and his dedication to empowering others. "George Danis' story reminds us that no matter how far we go, our roots and values guide us," said one attendee at a recent book event.

Beyond the Greek American community, *Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek* resonates universally, offering lessons in resilience, gratitude, and the transformative power of philanthropy. Danis' commitment to supporting causes both in the U.S. and Greece serves as an inspiring blueprint for others to follow.

Through his memoir, George Danis not only reflects on his



own journey but also challenges readers to think about their legacy. His story is a powerful reminder that success is not just about personal achievements but about uplifting others and stay-

ing true to one's roots.

Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek is more than a memoir; it is a call to action for anyone who aspires to lead a meaningful and

impactful life. It is available now in bookstores and online, a must-read for those seeking inspiration and a deeper connection to their cultural heritage.

Paul Kotrotsios Strengthens Community Ties at Rutgers Football Game with Jim Polos

OMOGENEIA

Somerset, NJ – In a day that blended sports, culture, and community leadership, Paul Kotrotsios, the Founder and Chairman of the Hellenic News of America and Founder and President of the Hermes Expo, joined prominent Greek-American leader Jim Polos for an unforgettable experience at the Rutgers vs. Wisconsin football game. The event highlighted the power of connections and the enduring spirit of the Greek-American community.

Thanks to a warm invitation from his esteemed friend Jim Polos, Kotrotsios attended his first game at the iconic Rutgers Stadium in Piscataway, NJ. The experience was enriched by a personal touch—parking at the nearby historic Saint George Greek Orthodox Church—a symbolic reminder of the deep ties between the local Greek-American community and broader cultural events.

Jim Polos, a former Mayor of Highland Park, NJ, and current Executive Director of Middlesex County, leveraged his network to introduce Kotrotsios to a host of influential individuals. These included Governor Phil Murphy, executives from leading area hospitals, and prominent business leaders. Among the memorable encounters were heartfelt moments with Mr. Koumbitsis and his family, as well as Dr. Peter Polos, Jim's brother, whose warmth and hospitality further enhanced the day's significance.

"Jim Polos is a remarkable connector whose influence bridges civic, business, and cultural sectors in New Jersey. His leadership and dedication to fostering meaningful relationships are truly inspiring," Kotrotsios remarked.

The day wasn't just about football; it was a celebration of collaboration and a testament to Polos' unique ability to unite leaders from diverse fields. Whether in government, healthcare, or business, the introductions facilitated by Polos showcased the potential for shared experiences to build lasting bonds and create oppor-



tunities for future partnerships.


Reflecting on the event, Kotrotsios expressed heartfelt gratitude: "I am incredibly thankful to Jim Polos for his hospitality, friendship, and his efforts in making this day so memorable. It was an extraordinary experience that underscored the importance of community and the incredible impact of building strong, meaningful connections."

The outing at Rutgers Stadium serves as a vibrant example of how shared cultural and community experiences can foster deeper relationships. Kotrotsios looks forward to future opportunities to engage with the dynamic individuals he met and to continue building bridges that benefit the wider community.

About Paul Kotrotsios

Paul Kotrotsios is a prominent advocate for the Greek-American community, championing cultural heritage and business collaboration through the Hellenic News of America and the Hermes Expo. His dedication to connecting people and creating opportunities for growth has made him a trusted leader and a dynamic presence in both local and national circles.





**Ο πρόεδρος, Δρ. Πάνος Σταυριανίδης,
και το
Δ.Σ. της Ομοσπονδίας Ελληνικών Σωματείων Νέας Ιερσέης
εύχονται στα μέλη και σε ολόκληρο τον Ελληνισμό:**

**Χρόνια Πολλά και Καλή Χρονιά!
Ευτυχισμένο, ειρηνικό και αποδοτικό έτος,
με Υγεία, Πίστη και Ελπίδα για το μέλλον.**

HELLENIC FEDERATION



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2025

happy new year

from

THEODORE VAKRINOS & DR. HELEN ABADZI



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Wishing you and your family a Happy New Year!

Save the Date

Awards Ceremony & Gala – Saturday, June 14, 2025

2024-2025 Scholarship Application Is Open! Due Jan. 31



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Happy

NEW YEAR

AS WE STEP INTO 2025, WE EXTEND OUR
WARMEST WISHES FOR HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND
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HELLENIC NEWS OF AMERICA.

HERE'S TO A BRIGHT AND PROSPEROUS 2025!

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