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Merry Christmas



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and the world was made through him. . ."*

*John 1:9-10*

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for a  
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filled with much  
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All our love,  
Sofia and Angelo K. Tsakopoulos  
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# Rejoice!

**MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS BE FILLED  
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In 2024, we will celebrate 20 years of supporting the development of over 2,100 extraordinary young people within the Hellenic American and Greek Orthodox community and empowering them to reach their full potential academically and beyond as future leaders.

*FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism* is an independent 501(c)(3) organization that supports the development of innovative educational, cultural, and scholarship programs that promote Hellenism, an understanding of the Greek Orthodox faith, and the relationship of the two to America's history and multicultural landscape for young people.

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*Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year!*

Best wishes for a Happy & Healthy Holiday Season from our family to yours!

Supreme President Savas C. Tsivicos &  
The Order of AHEPA Supreme Lodge

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A modern, bright dining room with white walls, large windows, and contemporary decor. The ceiling features recessed lighting and a blue accent light. The space is open-plan, showing a bar area in the background.

# LIMANI

NEW YORK

A dining experience like no other, Limani offers the best Mediterranean cuisine in New York City.

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A dining room with a warm, wood-paneled wall and a large glass display case filled with bottles. The tables are set with white tablecloths and cream-colored chairs.

# LIMANI

ROSLYN

Limani, a Mediterranean seafood restaurant focusing on traditional Greek specialties.

1043 Northern Blvd  
Roslyn, NY, 11576  
(516) 869-8989

A bright dining room with large windows, white walls, and a modern ceiling with a grid of lights. The tables are set with white tablecloths and white chairs.

# LIMANI MEZZE

Our philosophy is simple; food should be authentic, delicious and shared with good company.

1512 Old Northern Blvd  
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(516) 801-0881

A dining room with a green-tinted background. The tables are set with white tablecloths and white chairs. The lighting is warm and focused on the tables.

# PRIME 1024

All items are expertly prepared using traditional Italian techniques and only the finest and freshest ingredients.

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*Happy New Year - Καλή Χρονιά!*

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*Wishing all our  
friends a very  
Merry  
Christmas and a  
Happy New  
Year 2024*



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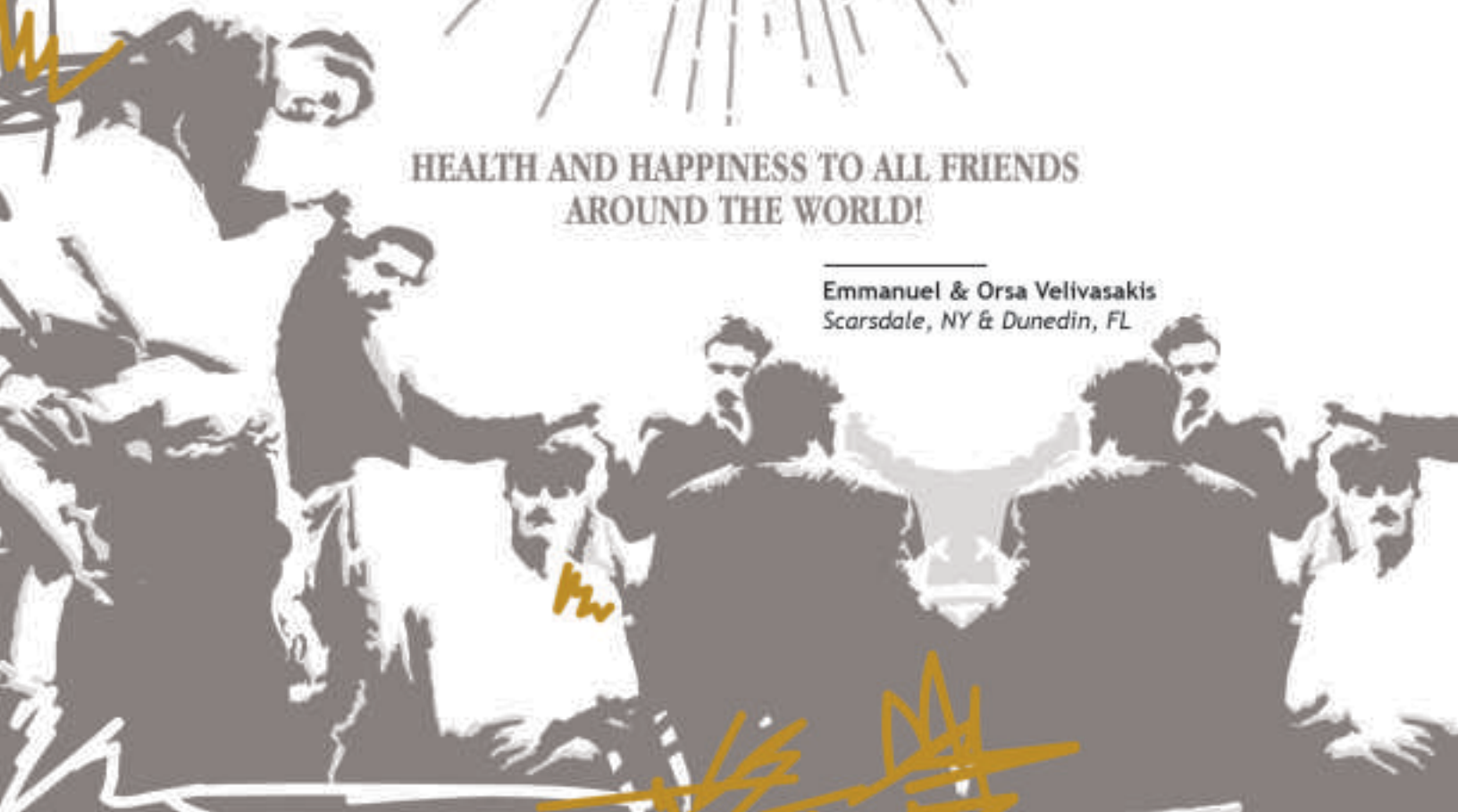
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HCCS-Park Slope: 646 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215

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HCCS-Staten Island: 1641 Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY, 10314

## ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS for SEPTEMBER 2024



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The Hellenic Classical Charter Schools will provide a diverse student body with a rigorous education in a dynamic environment. Using a standards-based curriculum, enriched with the Greek and Latin languages, students will engage in dialogue using the Socratic Method to become critical thinkers. Students will become college and career ready and well-prepared to succeed and contribute to the global community as responsible citizens.

### OPEN HOUSE DATES

Hellenic Classical Charter Schools Park Slope, Brooklyn	Hellenic Classical Charter Schools Staten Island
<b><u>Pre-K Open House Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Pre-K Open House Dates</u></b>
February 6, 2024      5:30pm – 6:30pm	February 5, 2024      5:30 – 6:30 pm
<b><u>Grades K-8 Open House Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Grades K-6 Open House Dates</u></b>
February 8, 2024      5:30pm – 6:30pm	February 12, 2024      5:30pm – 6:30pm
March 7, 2024      5:30pm – 6:30pm	March 5, 2024      5:30pm – 6:30pm



*We take knowledge, wisdom, and truth with us to help make the world a better place.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION please visit our website at [www.hccs-nys.org](http://www.hccs-nys.org).

HCCS-PS: Call 718-499-0957 & press 1 or email [officeps@hccs-nys.org](mailto:officeps@hccs-nys.org)

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and  
a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous  
New Year!*

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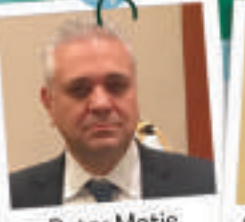
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***The Officers and Directors of the  
Hellenic Lawyers Association  
Wish our Members, Friends, and our Entire Community  
A Blessed Christmas and a  
Happy New Year!***

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FOUNDED IN 2005 BY

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FROM THE EDITOR



## THE OLD AND THE NEW

The good thing about the Christmas holiday is that first you have Christmas, with family and a celebration of the happy times with your family: the birth of Christ, a happy event, all the Christmas movies, the gathering where everybody shows their appreciation of each other,

and in, our case, the addition of a new baby to the family: so we all get to see the world through the wonder of her eyes. I can imagine her gushing over the presents she gets, the hugs she gets, like an animated doll among us, and the way she will dig into all the cookies and sweets and stuff them in her mouth with both hands.

Seeing the wonder of the world through her eyes, is like the baby Jesus bringing us all innocence and hope in our jaded world: you forget about the wars, the suffering, the incendiary politics, and for a moment you are in the cocoon of the warmth and love of your family.

When I was a kid, I remember going to church on Christmas, but it was during the day, and the church was flooded with light: it was such a joyous time. And, as I write in this issue, we would have the ceremony of visiting lovely people, like my Greek teacher, who I knew from school, only now I saw her at home being a chattering and happy hostess with pearls: a fairytale auntie.

New Year's Eve has a different feeling. On New Year's Eve people try to make themselves

deliriously happy because they're welcoming the New Year. But they can't help themselves, the more they drink, and as the New Year comes closer, they keep remembering the old year, which had its ups and down, but will now be lost forever. And they're also thinking about the unknown of the New Year, and how frail happiness is. At least the old year was knowable and broken into, like an old shoe—the New Year is a new shoe that might pinch and give you calluses.

Where you're young, you jump into the new: no regrets. You can't wait. As you get older, you realize with every passing year that you are getting older, too, and celebrations have the bittersweet quality of Auld Lang Syne: things lost forever, and new things maybe more of the same.

I don't remember my papou and yiayia in the old country mourning the old year, or particularly welcoming the New Year. They took life for what it was: a continuum of survival. For Greeks, they were a stoic lot and not particularly philosophers or sentimentalists, expect about the people in their family. The constant was the people in their family, their community, their faith. They were mostly uneducated, but the most balanced people in the world.

Hope your Christmas was Merry, hope your New Year's is full of memories, but also full of hope, and Kali Hronia.

DIMITRI C. MICHALAKIS

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# Annual Conference to Commemorate 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Leadership 100

The 33rd Annual Leadership 100 Conference, which will take place February 29-March 3, 2024, at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples in Naples, Florida, will commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Archbishop Iakovos



Leadership 100 Fund, according to Demetrios G. Logothetis, Chairman. “We anticipate with great excitement the celebration of our 40th Anniversary. In preparation we have arranged for the exhibit titled Leadership 100, 1984 to 2024, 40 Years of Philanthropic Service until February 2024 at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago and a video produced at the exhibit which will be shared with all attendees at our Conference.”

Archbishop Elpidophoros will deliver a lecture in acknowledgement of the 40th Anniversary on Friday, March 1. Speakers include Deacon Marek Simon, Executive Director, and Maria Tsarnas and Chris Kontomaris, of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), General Andrew Poppas, Commanding General, US Army Forces Command, and Drs. Theodoros Teknos, President and Scientific Director at the UH Seidman Cancer Center and Professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, and Leonidas Platanius, Director of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center and Professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, on Thursday, February 29; Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, Chief, Antiquities Trafficking Unit New York District Attorney’s Office, on Friday, March 1; and Matina Kolokotronis, Chief Operating Officer, Sacramento Kings, on Saturday, March 2.

Other events include Young Professionals Networking and Event and the Hellenic Glendi on Friday, March 1, the Annual Walk/Run and Golf and Tennis Tournaments and Awards on Saturday morning, March 2, the Obelisk and Icon Photo Presentation, Children’s Program, and Grand Banquet on Saturday evening, March 2, and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Katherine’s Church in Naples, Florida on Sunday, March 3.

## Paulette Poulos Receives 2023 Phidippides Award

GAEPIS and its media outlet Cosmos FM, New York, 91.5 Hellenic Public Radio honored Paulette Poulos with the 2023 Phidippides award for passionate advocacy of Hellenism. “Currently serving as the Executive Director of the Archbishop Iakovos

Leadership 100 Fund, Paulette received this recognition with great pride. AXIA!” said Stelios Taketzis Chairman of the GAEPIS Board of Directors. He also expressed gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, all attendees, the board, and the organizing team for their collective efforts in ensuring the success of the event.



Archbishop Elpidophoros addressed the event, stating among else: “This evening’s celebration of our beloved Paulette Poulos with the Phidippides Award for Passionate Advocacy of Hellenism and Orthodoxy seems to me the most natural, if not consequential, awarding of this special prize in its history. I think I can safely say – everyone knows Paulette! And not only because of her stewardship of Leadership 100 for the last two decades as Executive Director. Paulette has been a fixture of solid gold in the life of the Omogeneia since before Leadership 100 even came into existence.”

In accepting the honor, Paulette Poulos addressed the gathering. She included in her remarks: “It is with great humility that I accept the 28th Phidippides Award from Hellenic Public Radio Cosmos FM, the voice of our common Hellenic Heritage in the Tri-State area and beyond. Cosmos FM stands as a sentinel for Hellenism in America, advancing the mission of the Greek American Educational Information System, providing informative bilingual programming which advances our Greek culture, issues and concerns in America, Greece, Cyprus, and the Hellenic Diaspora since 1987.”

She added among else that “as the Executive Director of the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Fund, I strive to carry on the legacy of my mentor (Archbishop Iakovos) who so successfully led our Church and Community into a new era. I am deeply indebted to our beloved Spiritual Leader, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, who has picked up the torch and is leading our Church forward in the path of Orthodoxy and Hellenism... I am deeply indebted to the Leadership 100 family, especially to our current Chairman, Demetrios Logothetis and

to our past Chairman, Argyris Vassiliou, whom we call RJ, and who is the Gala Chairman this evening.”

## Michael N. Bapis Elected Vice Chairman

Michael N. Bapis, Managing Director, Private Wealth Advisor and Head of Sports and Entertainment with Vios Advisors at Rockefeller Capital Management, was elected Vice Chairman of Leadership 100 by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of November 3, 2023, succeeding James Pantelidis of Blessed Memory, according to Chairman Demetrios G. Logothetis. Bapis has been a member of the Executive Committee since February of 2022 and of the Board of Trustees for fourteen years and has served as Chairman of the Audit Committee. He currently serves as a member of both the Audit Committee and Grant Committee.

“Leadership 100 is very pleased to have Michael Bapis as our next Vice Chairman. He represents a new generation of leadership and brings exceptional professional experience, as well as a long history in a variety of roles with our organization. I am personally delighted to have him working beside me,” said Logothetis.

Bapis has over 20 years of wealth management and private banking experience and collectively oversees approximately \$1.3 billion in assets under management with his firm. In his role as a Private Wealth Advisor



Michael Bapis

and Head of Sports and Entertainment at Rockefeller, he assists clients and families, institutions and professional athletes and entertainers in achieving their financial goals and objectives by providing knowledgeable insight, tactical wealth management investment strategies and highly personalized client service.

As Chairman of The Ronald McDonald House of New York Greek Division, Bapis led successful fundraising efforts in support of the organization. He was named as the 2019 Honoree for the annual Tuesday’s Children Plandome Benefit, an award that recognizes a renowned individual in the community for their passion for volunteerism.

Bapis is a member of HANAC, The Hellenic Initiative, Hellenic Hearts, and Archangel Michael Church. He serves on the Board of Trustees for the American College of Greece and The Hellenic College- Holy Cross School of Theology, as well on the Investment Committee of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Foundation.

*BEST WISHES  
FOR  
A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON  
AND  
A NEW YEAR FILLED WITH  
GOOD HEALTH, JOY AND SUCCESS*



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# ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH AND NATIONAL SHRINE: AN ORTHODOX PLACE OF WORSHIP RISES TO INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE

by Athena Efter



Of the many inspiring stories that emerged in the wake of our nation's unfathomable tragedy on September 11, 2001, one of the more indelible would be that of the St. Nicholas Greek-Orthodox Church. The small church, built in 1916 by Greek immigrants in Lower Manhattan, had held a unique repose for 85 years in a neighborhood that was transformed into the world's hub for finance and commerce, just footsteps away from the World Trade Center. But, on that fateful day in September, the church was reduced to rubble as a result of the collapse of the second tower. Although, thankfully, no one was inside the church at the time, virtually all relics were lost. And, thus began a 21 year Odyssey to rebuild it.

On July 4, 2022 - the church was consecrated as the "St. Nicholas Greek-Orthodox Church and National Shrine," a breathtaking architectural marvel designed by world-renown Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava. It was a highlight of a remarkable journey that transformed a little church into an internationally renowned symbol for the power of faith and a beacon for hope and resilience in the face of religious intolerance. Now, the Church has the unique distinction of being the only house of worship at Ground Zero.

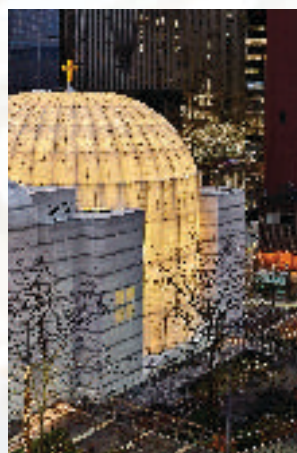
And a year ago, last December, the Church and Shrine re-opened to the public for the first time since 9/11. Since then, almost 140,000 people have walked through its doors. Incredibly, the vast majority of visitors have not been Greek-Orthodox, a testament to the Church's and Shrine's other purpose: to celebrate and unite people as a bastion of religious freedom.

The St Nicholas story is also a story of the dedicated and tireless efforts of several leaders from both the Greek-American community and the Archdiocese who willed it to happen. Since its inception from just after the tragedy, the mission to rebuild the church had been wrought with obstacles, from a jumble of red tape with the Port Authority to cost overruns and funding shortages. It wasn't until the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese In America, along with Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Port Authority, called for the creation of a new entity that would oversee the completion of the project. And thus, the "Friends Of St. Nicholas," was formed in 2019 to meet that challenge. The organization would count some of the most notable Greek-Americans in the nation as its board members

But, the mission of the "Friends Of St. Nicholas" owes much of its resounding success to the stewardship and dedication of Michael Psaros, its Chairman and guiding force. Psaros, a prominent New York businessman and philanthropist, steered the project to completion in three short years, having raised over 60 million dollars - a remarkable feat. But, to engage with Mr. Psaros, is to be rewarded with a man of incredible passion for his faith and community and an indefatigable energy that reverberates with gratitude and pride for the eminence of a St. Nicholas Church And Shrine that will shine for generations to come. "The members of the Friends Of St. Nicholas, a group of our leading Greek-Orthodox

Christians in this country, are heroes. They literally put their names and reputations on the line to build this Church," he says. "I am deeply grateful for their extraordinary leadership that has resulted in the miracle of St. Nicholas," as he thanks "Friends" Vice Chairman Dennis Mehiel, a prominent community leader, and Father Alex Karloutsos Protospesbyter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for their valuable roles. And, of course, the commitment of the Church leader. "Also galvanizing the effort was the declaration by His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros - the day of his Enthronement - that the completion of St. Nicholas was one of his top priorities," Psaros says. "That sent a message to everyone." Father Alex Karloutsos also reflects on how the "Friends" changed the course: "It almost divided us as a community, but so many people stepped up and made sure that division did not happen."

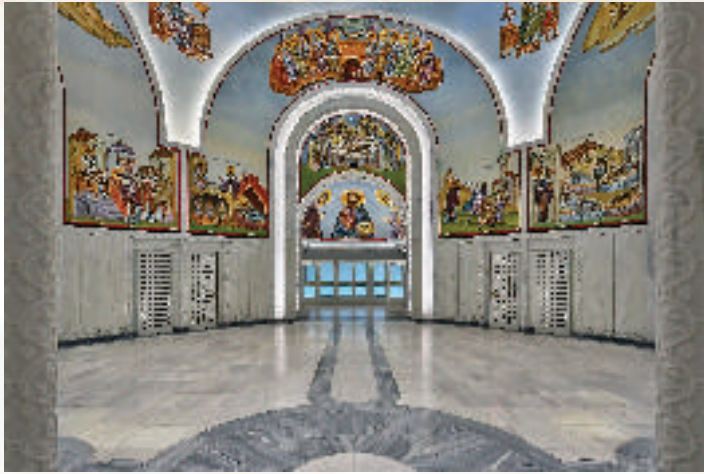
But, now that the doors have opened and the "miracle" has come to fruition, Psaros is proud to share the great new moments of the re-born Church and their significance. He mentions this past Pascha as one of them. "On Good Friday, we had 140 people inside the Church. When we opened the doors for the Procession of the Epitaphion, we were shocked see over 2,000 people waiting outside," he says. And on Easter "We had thousands of people holding candles to proclaim 'Xristos Anesti.' To celebrate the Resurrection at Ground Zero is unlike anything you will ever experience."



The exuberance is also shared by St. Nicholas Parish Council President, Demetri Papacostas. "We have thousands of people who come through that have never experienced Orthodox Christianity. It's new to them," says Papacostas. "So, we literally have become witness to Orthodoxy in America because we have so many people coming through here." Papacostas is also eager to point out the unique iconography in the Church, created by Father Loukas from Mt. Athos, which incorporates depictions of New York City,

the victims, and the first responders. One of those is the Platytera over the altar that shows the Virgin Mary protecting the city of New York. Another is the depiction of the Anastasis with Christ pulling firefighters and first responders from death. "And those were modeled after people who actually gave their lives on 9/11. It's so touching and amazing,"

says Papacostas. "It is a unique place that communicates our responsibility we have to 9/11."



The edifice itself, the only place of worship ever designed by Calatrava, is modeled after the Hagia Sophia and The Chora, two of the most recognizable symbols of both Byzantium and Orthodoxy. Moreover, the marble used to sheath the exterior was Pentelic marble, the same marble used to build the Parthenon. It's a type of marble that is used on a very limited basis, but the Greek government agreed to its export for use in the Church. Fr. Karloutsos is quick to point out the significance: "The Pentelic marble truly reflects our Greek legacy of freedom and democracy."

The real beauty of the materials used in the design truly gleam at night when the lights from the Church radiate in an ethereal glow that is downright stunning. Other singular touches include sayings from the Book Of John and from Pericles' famous funeral oration at the entrance.

Perhaps the greatest gift from the effort to rebuild St. Nicholas is the sort of personal transcendence it bestows upon those who've worked tirelessly to will it to being. For Michael Psaros it's not only the wedding of his daughter, held at the church, "the greatest day of my life," he says, but

the shared experience with others. "I love to observe the faces of the visitors who are entering an Orthodox church for the first time," he offers. "You have to see their faces. You can tell they are experiencing something spiritual in their own way. They immediately start asking questions about our faith. This is why we built St. Nicholas; this is why St. Nicholas matters."

And, for Papacostas, it's perhaps the outpouring of parishioners and volunteers

who've come to make the Church their own. They come from all over the Tri-State area. "We have more young people coming to the Church than I have seen in any other parish," he says. "And they are becoming our stewards." And that involvement will spur on more events at the Church which have already included piano recitals and choral chanting, as well as an exhibit of recovered relics from a Greek monastery done in conjunction with the Morgan Library.

It's also a precious moment for Andrew Veniopoulos, the Executive Director of the Church and Shrine, whose father's first paying job was to fix the iconostasis of the old church. "After I was born, he used to take me down there and show me the icon he fixed with great pride; that it was something he did and how he started in America," says Veniopoulos. "When I was asked to be the project executive in the rebuilding of the Church, I did it in honor of both my parents who have since passed away."

And now, the new St. Nicholas can take its place as the Hagia Sophia of the New World. And, like its predecessor, it will not only preside as a symbol of Orthodoxy but a candle for light in the face of darkness. The St. Nicholas Church And Shrine is open to the public from Monday to Sunday, 10am - 3pm, except on Tuesdays. The Church is open for Orthros on Sundays at 9:30am and Divine Liturgy at 10am.

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# CHRISTMAS AT KYRIA SAKELLARIOUS

by Dimitri C. Michalakis

When we lived in Chicago back in the '60s, we spent most Christmas Days at Kyria Sakellariou's house in the suburbs.

She was the formidable lady who ran the Greek program at my dad's school where he was principal: Plato School of the Assumption Church. She had teased white hair, sometimes bluish, she wore shiny dresses, always with jewelry, sometimes with pearls, and when she walked down the hallway of the school we could hear the tap of her heels like a drumbeat; before she popped into our room, hugging her big notebook of Greek curricula and mimeographed sheets to her chest, and ready

to address us with an enthusiastic speech, in her signature lisp.

*"Paidakia mou, are you ready for Christmas?!"*

*Yes, we would say!*

*"Have you been good this year?!"*

*Yes, we would say!*

*"Ayios Vasilis wants you to be good!"*

*Yes, we would say!*

"Christos, have you been good?" she would say to Chris, who was never good, and never did his homework, and talked in class, so he was always in my father's office. "Were you nice to everybody this year?"

Yes, Chris would say, because he was an agreeable kid, despite never doing his homework, and talking in class all the time, and Kyria Sakellariou was satisfied and addressed us all.

"So now we'll all have a Kala Kristougena—because Christos was good!" she would say, because she was always enthusiastic and positive.

With just about everybody, particularly the kids, so when she talked to you she usually ran out of breath, and had to pat her chest, with the big notebook of her Greek curricula and mimeographed sheets, amidst the pearls, and we always wanted to please her, because nothing was nicer than having Kyria Sakellariou gush over you.

Which she usually did, so I liked going to her house every Christmas, also we had no family in Chicago, so Kyria Sakellariou became our family, and I liked going through our Christmas ritual of getting ready to visit her: my dad putting on his suit from Hart Schaffner Marx, me putting on my suit from Robert Hall, my sister teasing her hair and hair-spraying it so she looked just like Shelley Fabares on *The Donna Reed Show*, a teen idol of the time, and my mother warming up the house on a Chicago winter and making it smell sweet as she baked for days whipping up her koulouria and kourambiedes and swaddling them on a plate with Saran Wrap, like a mummy.

Before we got in the Chevy Impala with the red vinyl seats, and red steering wheel that clicked with my father's college ring, as we drove past Columbus Park near our house, usually blanketed in snow, while Johnny Mathis crooned Christmas carols on the radio, and we marveled at his high notes.

Until we cruised into the woods of the suburbs, where the grim brick apartment buildings where we lived switched into these sunny homes in white brick, with expansive lawns, and big picture windows showing their Christmas trees, many of them silver, and their tons of cars in the driveway, Buicks and Oldsmobiles and even Cadillacs, with fins like spaceships.

Until we got to the big, bustling street sparkling with stores, where the streetlights were hung with Christmas balls, past the fortress of Marshall Field, the department store, looking like a giant gingerbread house, only strung with lights; with Santas outside clanging their bells by their red buckets, Christmas carols blasting out of speakers, and crowds of people charging across the street



with their Christmas packages like fullbacks.

Before we got into the peace and quiet of the outer suburbs, where all the houses twinkled with Christmas lights, all those ranch houses and split-levels, with lawns that looked just like the one on *My Three Sons*, with its Pontiac station wagon in the driveway, and its mailbox by the street, where Fred MacMurray would toddle out with his pipe and in his cardigan and pluck out his mail, while waving to his neighbors, including the ones with the pearls who looked just like Donna Reed.

Until we finally got to Kyria Sakellariou's house, with its big picture window sparkling like a flare with her silver Christmas tree, only changing colors with the colors of the rotating wheel on the floor.

And I thought, wow, that's classy.

Before we parked our Chevy in her driveway, at the tail end of all the Buicks and Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs of all the other guests, who might be doctors and lawyers and college professors, and then knocked on her door, and Kyria Sakellariou would bustle out chattering in her pearls and shiny dress and teased white hair, but wearing a frilly kitchen apron; or her husband Evan might come, Vangelis, she called him, who was a chemist, and talked as softly as she talked volubly, and always smoked a cigarette.

"Here they are!" Kyria Sakellariou would announce us to her guests, like they were all waiting for us.

All those people in her living room with the silver Christmas tree, all those doctors and lawyer and college professors in their Hart Schaffer Marx suits and horn-rimmed glasses, cupping their glass of Metaxa on their armrest, and their wives in their silk dresses and Donna Reed hair, cupping their glass of punch or eggnog on their silk laps.

She always announced my dad to the company as Dr. Michalakis! and always called him Dr. Michalakis herself, even though they worked together; she once introduced my sister as—The new Corinna Tsopei!—who had just won the Miss Universe Pageant; she took the plates of my mother's koulouria and kourambiedes and showed them around like a Christmas miracle; and one year she introduced me as the president of the Official Plato School Girl Hater's Club!

"Only Jimmy loves girls!" she teased me.

"No, I hate them!" I insisted.

But not too insistently, cause I meant it as a joke to make Kyria Sakellariou laugh, only she liked it, so I kept pretending to be the president of the non-existent Official Plato School Girl Hater's Club (with Harry Michas as co-president).

And after my introduction, she would lead me to the kitchen to show me her famous Popping Fresh dinner rolls toasting in the oven, on the way to send me downstairs to the basement to "play with the other kids!"

So I would trudge down, a little nervous to meet some kids I didn't even know, most of them cousins, down the stairs and through her laundry room, to the paneled walls of her finished basement, where the kids would be wandering around like shy deer and keeping to the paneling on the walls.

And her son Niko, the one with the flattop, would come down with my sister in tow, the two teenagers, and him being gallant by showing her his new Beach Boys album, a 33 LP, with the Beach Boys on the cover in their striped shirts, like Greek sailors; and all the rest of his new 33 LPs: Lesley Gore—"It's My Party!"; Dusty Springfield, with her haystack blonde tease, Herman's Hermits, with haircuts like those other mop tops, that annoying group all the girls kept screaming at and had their picture in their lockers, The Beatles.



While the girls in our basement wandered around together, attached at the hip, whispering behind their hands, smelling the plastic flowers on the shelves, a thing girls would do, we boys snickered; while we snuck around behind the bar and wowed ourselves looking at the sink back there, and turned on the water—so it actually worked!—and also stared in wonder at all the liquor bottles on the shelf in front of the smoked mirror: the Metaxa, the green bottle called Tanqueray, and the one with the Cutty Sark sailing ship, which was the same one we saw on the billboard every time we drove to the Loop.

And we also snapped on the colored party lights behind the bar so we could change colors and look just like the aliens on *Star Trek*!

But I also got respectful wandering to the shelf off the bar, this one with books, Kyria Sakellariou's Greek language workbooks, Mr.

Sakellariou's fat chemistry books, and this fat tome of *War and Peace*, the greatest book in the world, someone said, so I was very impressed, and, naturally, it was in Kyria Sakellariou's basement library.

Before we kids broke the ice and got goofy and familiar, so the boys ran around "like cowboys and Indians" in our Robert Hall suits, our ties flying behind us, the girls giggled at us, and also snuck whispering into the laundry room to peek into the spare refrigerator with the spare bottles of soda and beer and the Greek pastry for dessert, and Niko would play his more risqué Motown records, to show my sister that even though he was just another square Greek kid with a flattop, he was also hip.

Until it was time for dinner!

Kyria Sakellariou announced it down the stairs, and we kids all thundered upstairs, and then sat like angels around the dinner table, and peeled open Kyria Sakellariou's Popping Fresh rolls and watched them steam in our face, while my dad told funny stories about the kids at school, and Kyria Sakellariou told funny stories about the kids at school, and sometimes they overlapped, while we kids chugged soda and tried not to burp, but we burped, anyway, and made each other laugh.

And then after dinner, the kids would sprawl on the floor and look rumpled and play board games, *Parcheesi* and *Aggravation* and *Stratego*, while the adults talked boring subjects like Greek politics over coffee and my mom's koulouria, and the TV droned some Christmas movie, like the spooky English version of *The Christmas Carol*.

Until the kids started yawning, the adults started yawning and hiding it, and Kyria Sakellariou would bustle into the kitchen and chatter from there as she made doggie bags for everybody, while we took one last look at the silver Christmas tree sparkling and rotating and changing colors.

And then we saw it changing colors from the outside, as we drove away in our Chevy, through the hush of the streets, the houses with the blinking lights, and their silver trees in the window; past the looming walls of Marshall Field, now closed, but still garlanded with lights, and the Christmas music still playing on the speakers; while in the car we listened to more Johnny Mathis on the radio.

Till we finally got back to our apartment near Columbus Park, the park all dark now and the snow sparkling like sugar, and we kept hearing Kyria Sakellariou's voice in our heads as she saw us off at the door in her frilly kitchen apron.

"Drive carefully now, and watch the snow—and Jimmy don't hate girls and become a kallogeros!"

# NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THIO STELIOS'

by Dimitri C. Michalakis

We were living in Brooklyn then, in the late 60s, and I remember for one New Year's Eve my Thio Stelio invited us to his house to "play some cards and have some trella."

Thio Stelio was my favorite uncle, then and now, and I knew everything he did would be fun. When I came from Greece with my yiayia back in 1960, he was the one who picked us up at the ship, the Queen Frederiki, in his big old American car—the first American car that one of my relatives actually owned, instead of being a taxi back in Greece. And he drove us all around Brooklyn to see the relatives, with my yiayia in her mantilla, and me in my short pants from Greece—fortunately, it was the summer—but who cared about anything when Thio drove us around in his own koursa and bought us ice cream from the ice cream store!

America was great, and Thio Stelio made it great!

Only then he put us on the train that would take us to my parents in Montreal, Canada, and I was a little disappointed: I thought Thio Stelio would be around forever to take us for rides and buy use ice cream and talk to me like I was his son—he wasn't married then—and sing "Mandouvala" with me in the car with the windows open, which I had learned in Greece.

But he came to visit us in Montreal, in a two-toned Chevy, maybe it was a classic '57—where did Thio get all his cars? Only he knew everybody, and everybody knew him, and he was always horse trading and doing business with one person or another. "Eh, he's from across the lagada," he would say about yet another of his friends or business partners, wherever that lagada was, somewhere back in Chios, for sure.

And we came to stay one summer in Brooklyn with him and his new wife, Thia Mary, and he drove a symoria of us to the beach one day in his Chevy Malibu station wagon that was powdered with flour from the donut shop he owned then, so we call came out looking floured, but we were going to the beach, so

who cared? Me and some boy cousins rolled around in the back of the station wagon full of kefi and sang Kazantzidis and Perpiniadis and Yiota Lidia songs Thio was blasting from the little record player he had on his dashboard—a marvel of the time.

"Stelio, make it lower!" Thia would tell him, cause everybody was staring at these crazy Greeks, stuffed twelve to a car, blasting their crazy Greek music.



But Thio was a proud Greek, so he blasted it louder, with us singing from the back of the station wagon, and when some girls stared at us from some other car at a red light, Thio told them my name was Jimmy and I wanted to marry them.

"Thio--!" I said, and wormed myself under to hide.

"Ela, re, si—" Thio said to me, waving his arms like he was conducting a symphony orchestra. "It's about time you got married and lost all your hair like me."

Yes, he no longer had his Greek single-guy pompadour.

"Stelio's hair fell out and I made a paploma," Thia Mary teased him.

Now for New Year's Eve, we were living back in Brooklyn, while my father worked in Chicago but came over for the holidays, and Thio Stelio had invited us to his house in Long Island, Hicksville, where he had moved, so we could spend New Year's Eve with all the friends and relatives he had invited for the night: his house was always busy, anyway, but now we imagined there would be people spilling out of rooms and windows.

Tsiyaro and potio and poka, Thio had promised us, and then winked at me, like I was going to do tsiyaro and potio and poka, when I was still in 7th grade—but you never knew with Thio.

My father never played cards, but he was very good at counting everybody's winnings, my sister's fiancée never played cards, his last name was Michalakis, Mario, and he was a classic Michalakis: no tsiyaro, no potio, no poka, but he liked to have a good time, and he wanted to make my sister happy, and my sister wanted to have a good time, she was young and in love.

So we all packed into Mario's mauve Rambler, the only car of its kind in Brooklyn, or anywhere--Mario followed his own passion--and we tooted along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and Long Island Expressway, with no Greek music blasting from the radio, Mario liked Mantovani, but we were all excited because we were going to have a wild night out at Thio Stelios'!

And just as we thought, when we got to his house in Hicksville, Long Island, all the lights

were on, all the windows were open, and all you heard were Greeks talking loud, like they were all deaf, and every parking spot on the block had been taken with their cars, some with Greek flags and stickers, and the whole driveway spilling over with cars that were parked crooked on the lawn.

“Get ready,” my father said to us before we went in, because for teetotalling Michalakis’ to walk into a house with nothing but tsiyaro and potio and poka was a real challenge: what do you do with yourself?

But when we walked in, first the place was full of women and kids, the women carrying plates of food like harem girls from the kitchen, where Thia Mary was holding the big koutala and giving orders, the kids were running all over the house, thundering up and down the stairs, and then in the sala were the men, already having tsiyaro and pioto, and telling stories from their jobs and from the old country.

“Ella, Kosta, we’re telling stories!” Thio yelled to my father, cause my father was the great storyteller of the family, who knew every story about every chorianio and had funny stories about all of them.

Like the one about the chorianio who said he saw a whale devastating the countryside. And when his father told him whales don’t have legs and don’t walk on land, they swim in the sea, the chorianio told him, Ella, yero, what do you know?

And there was the story about the mule outside my grandfather’s village store who wouldn’t let a chorianio in the store because the man didn’t like the mule and the mule didn’t like him, so the man punched the mule on the head to let him into the store, but the mule had a head like an anvil, and he grabbed the man by the shirt and tossed him into the lagada, wherever that was.

And there was the story about the chorianio who thought he was shrewd in business, so when somebody offered him 100 drachmas for his donkey, the chorianio got suspicious and said, And why not 200? So the man selling the donkey said, All right, give me 200, and the chorianio gave him 200 drachmas and boasted about how shrewd he was in business. Because nobody fools me, he said.

My dad sat down with the men and told all his stories, and everybody laughed, while the women traded family gossip, and food, and made sure the kids didn’t kill themselves, only then things got serious: because the poker chips came out, also the bag of fasolia when the chips and money ran out, and now the poka began.

While my father made sure nobody cheated, and Mario sat watching to be polite, and traded jokes, but he was engaged, so after

being polite and manly, he disengaged himself from the men to be with my sister and the women and enjoy some Metaxa, which he would make an exception and drink for medicinal purposes: It kills the germs, he told me.

And I would stand and watch the men play cards, till the smoke would hang like a gray mosquito net, so then I would flee to watch cartoons with the kids in the den with the brown paneling and the sectional sofa; until the women joined us so we could see Guy Lombardo and those hazous Amerikanous, Thia called them, who were dancing with their party hats and blowing party horns at the Waldorf-Astoria and mugging for TV, with all their wives looking like Mamie Eisenhower.

“Just give us the younes and forget the kapella and troumpetes!” Thia said, cause most of the Mamie Eisenhowers were wearing their mink.

And it went on for hours: cartoons, old people dancing on TV, the men playing cards in a gray cloud, saying nothing except poker code, one word here and there about their hand, and their ante, and tossing chips and fasolia into the pot; while my dad kept a tally on a sheet of paper very neatly, drawing lines to separate the totals for the players, and I wondered how he could breathe in that cigarette haze.

Until the women made the men feel guilty because the ball was coming down and they were still playing cards, so the men stopped to stretch their legs and go to the bathroom, and then come and stand with their hands in their pockets to watch the ball drop; and everybody got sentimental and kissed and wished the New Year was better than the Old Year, but some said the Old Year was okay; and the kids were practically asleep by then, and the women wanted to go home, so some of the men began to disperse.

Cars got started and puffed with car exhaust and left, backing crookedly off the lawn, the house got suddenly quiet and you could hear the TV, but the poker game continued with Thio and the diehards, while I fell asleep on the couch watching an old Cary Grant movie, and my sister pretended she was watching it, too, but actually she was sleeping on Mario’s shoulder.

Until the last of the men left, with a big announcement about his wins or losses, Eh, it’s just money! he shrugged; and finally it was time for Thio Stelio and my dad to wander over, and Thio fall asleep on the sectional, and my dad plop in the recliner and watch Cary Grant and yawn, until it was time for us to leave.

“So now you’re going home—?” Thio Stelio woke up and told us and then winked at me. “Re, mikre, how much did you win at poka?”

I became a millionaire, I told him.

“With the fasolia?” he said.

And he grinned, and coiled an arm around my neck, and called me Jimako, and kissed me on the cheek, so I smelled the coffee and cigarettes and Metaxa and melomakarono on his breath, as he walked us to the door, with his arm still wrapped around my neck, and out to our car in his slippers, despite the cold.

And he stood outside in his slippers and waved as we drove off into the night, which became morning by the time we reached Brooklyn, and that was my one night of parelisia, when for a Michalakis I stayed up late and became a man, thanks to my Thio Stelio.



# A PENTELIC CHRISTMAS DIALECTIC

by Dean Kalimniou\*

«Καλά δε νιώθεις; Μη μ' βανς ομελέττα, αφού δεν αρταίνουμι».

My grandmother placed the pan on the table and stared at me in horror. If looks were capable of parakinesis, then that stare would have had me lifted from the kitchen table, packed, despatched to the airport and bundled onto the next available flight back to Melbourne. This was due to the fact that since my arrival in the motherland from Australia, there to spend my Christmas on Mount Penteli with my maternal grandmother, she had been continuously lecturing me about my hideous (according to her) Samian accent.

“You are supposed to have been educated,” she would ponder. “How is it possible that you are still speaking in that horribly perverted way? How did they let you graduate high school?”

According to my grandmother, given the right factors, accents were transmutable. Thus, once one had completed high school, any rural accent they may have had the misfortune to have inherited by birth and geography would immediately and seamlessly transform into Athenian. My defense, which was that we all spoke Samian at home and didn't know any Athenians was thus deemed invalid, since there was no doubt that I had finished high school, the fact that I had done so in Melbourne, rather than Athens, apparently having no appreciable effect upon the expected dialectic transformation.

“We have a certain standing in this neighbourhood,” my grandmother informed me, almost immediately after I had settled in. “You will NOT walk these streets speaking that vulgar tongue. I will not have our name shamed. If you must indulge your perversions, at least do so discreetly only within these four walls.”

Speaking Athenian was tough. Samian is economical and efficient, methodically removing all unnecessary and probably most necessary vowels. The cluster of ensuing consonants that the tongue must hurdle gives one time to pause and consider exactly what it is they are communicating. Not so with Athenian, which spurts from the mouths of its native speakers with the exuberance of a water fountain, spraying all those in the vicinity with an unrelenting lexical word jet.

Then there was the matter of vocabulary. Try as I might, I could not get the local fruiterer to understand what I meant when I spoke learnedly and enthusiastically about the cultivation of μπουρνέλλες back home, because δαμάσκηνα, the word Athenians employ to denote the plum, was unknown to me at the time. By that stage, I had lost any credibility I may have had with the fruiterer anyway, as, in fulfillment of my grandmother's wishes that I complete her Christmas shopping, I made my debut in the shop by dutifully asking for κρεμμυδάκια, expressing incredulity when the fruiterer produced what I knew back home to be σαλλοτάκια. In my mind, and to this day I maintain that it makes logical sense, κρεμμυδάκια should be that which they proclaim: small onions and not shallots.

The look of horror my grandmother gave me that fateful Christmas Eve was thus motivated by sheer exasperation. Not only was her antipodean grandson a Samian-speaking yokel, untouched by the benefits of education and western civilization as a whole, now he was proving that there truly are no limits to the depths of his depravity, by uttering aphorisms in the manner and style of her own native and long-suppressed patois: the dialect of Ioannina.

“How quaint, he's trying to speak Greek” my grandmother's neighbor remarked, as she angled her aquiline nose into her coffee cup. “What is he saying?”

At that time, the film “Basic Instinct” had just been released in Greece. I had not seen it, but had been told that it involved a particularly murderous icpick. As I observed the camber of the neighbor's nose, it assumed the sheen of steel in the gloom of the Pentelic kitchen. I had visions of detaching it from her face and using it to crush some ice of my own.

I despised her for two reasons, for the first of which she bore no blame. For in a manner deeply disquieting, she looked exactly like Josef Stalin, with the same furrowed brow and cheeks, even down to the stiff wiry hairstyle and the slightly slanted, yellow flecked, gulagesque eyes and just a hint of a bushy mustache on her upper lip.

Indeed it was those eyes that caught my eye and my ire earlier that day. After spending days ensconced in my grandmother's kitchen mulling over times past, receiving sage advice and preparing for Christmas, I was bored. So bored in fact, that I offered to weed, prune and cultivate my grandmother's garden, which was displaying signs of advanced rebellion from her authoritarian rule, this having been a particularly mild winter on the mountain. My grandmother too, I supposed, must have been bored, for she consented, even though this meant that I would be exposed to the linguistic scrutiny of the entire neighborhood. Not having anticipated that a spot of gardening would be on my itinerary, I had neglected to pack suitable clothing, which is how I found myself in my grandmother's front garden dressed in my grandmother's lilac tracksuit, with matching lilac and white tiger print fleecy top and a pair of her wooden τσόκαρα, wielding a hoe with the determination of a boy who knows that he is so extremely comfortable with his sexuality, that he hath no need to protest too much. I proceeded to pull, heave, hoe and plough with gusto.

When Josef Stalin spoke, she did so in the same rasping, reedy tones of her Georgian doppelganger: «Μέσα είναι η κυρά σου;» I realised at once that I had been weighed and found to have been the help. Furthermore, from her superior tone, I deduced that I was considered to be the help of Albanian extraction and resolved to play the part, if anything, to enhance the standing of my maternal progenitor's progenitor among her peers, as a lady who could and would, command help, when the need for such help arose.

“Është brenda,” I gestured towards the front door, adding in lisping broken Greek to add verisimilitude: «Κυρά μέσα είναι.»

As I completed my pruning, I wondered whether a Greek Josef Stalin would collectivize Albanian domestic servants, just so that he could have the pleasure of privatizing them. With that, having showered and adorned myself in garments of a less offensive hue, I hastened to the kitchen for the selamlik.

“This is my grandson, Kostas,” my grandmother announced with the poise of a dowager Sultan.

“But isn't that the Αλβανάκι you've got digging for you outside?” Josef Stalin asked.

“Please say that the Αλβανάκι is a different person, so I can go out and pretend to be him and thus confuse and confound Josef Stalin,” I prayed, looking at my grandmother pleadingly.



My grandmother caught my eye and I saw the corner of her spirit levelled mouth fight to suppress a smile. Yet such indulgences as those I craved were not to be entertained.

“No, this is my grandson. He is over from Australia, to spend Christmas with me.”

“Oh, maybe that’s why I couldn’t understand what he said. I could have sworn he was Albanian. Mind you, these Albanians....Oh get off me Kari, stop being a Christmas pest,” Jeff Kennett shouted angrily as she attempted to shoo my eponymously named grandmother’s dog who was snuffling her feet.

I burst out laughing.

“What’s funny,” Josef Stalin snarled.

“Well,” I said, “It’s just that Kar is Albanian for the male appendage” I informed her.

“I don’t get it,” she frowned. “Are you an Αλβανάκι, or are you the grandson from Australia?”

It was at this point, that my grandmother attempted to interpose an omelette between

myself and my interlocutor, eliciting the blast of Ioannite phraseology that so incensed her.

«Δεν αρτάνομαι,» means that I’m fasting,” I explained to Josef Stalin, who should have known better as he attended an Orthodox seminary. “It means the same thing as «νηστεύω.» I’m fasting for Christmas.”

“Really?” Josef Stalin marvelled. “In Albanian? Do you Albanians fast too? But of course, it makes sense. Only Albanians go to church nowadays anyway.” My grandmother rolled her eyes, albeit with grace and dignity.

When Josef Stalin finally withdrew her presence, my grandmother treated me to the longest and most impassioned stream of Epirotic pejoratives, uttered in the heaviest of accents I had ever heard. “Stupid old toad,” she finally concluded. “With her superior airs. Do you know her son has been supposedly studying dentistry in London for the past ten years?”

“Well, I came all the way to Athens to escape the fiery Melburnian Christmas,” I replied. “A ten year sojourn in freezing London to escape Josef Stalin seems perfectly reasonable to me.”

That Pentelic Christmas formed a watershed in our relationship. Notably because it was the first of many Christmases spent with one of the most linguistically complex, fascinating and loving people I have ever known. But even more so because from that time, until the day she died, some two decades later, every single one of our Christmas greetings was prefaced by the following: «Φύγε από πάνω μου Κάρυ, μη μ’ενοχλείς Χριστουγεννιάτικα.» And it is in that expansive spirit that I extend to all, the greetings of the Season.



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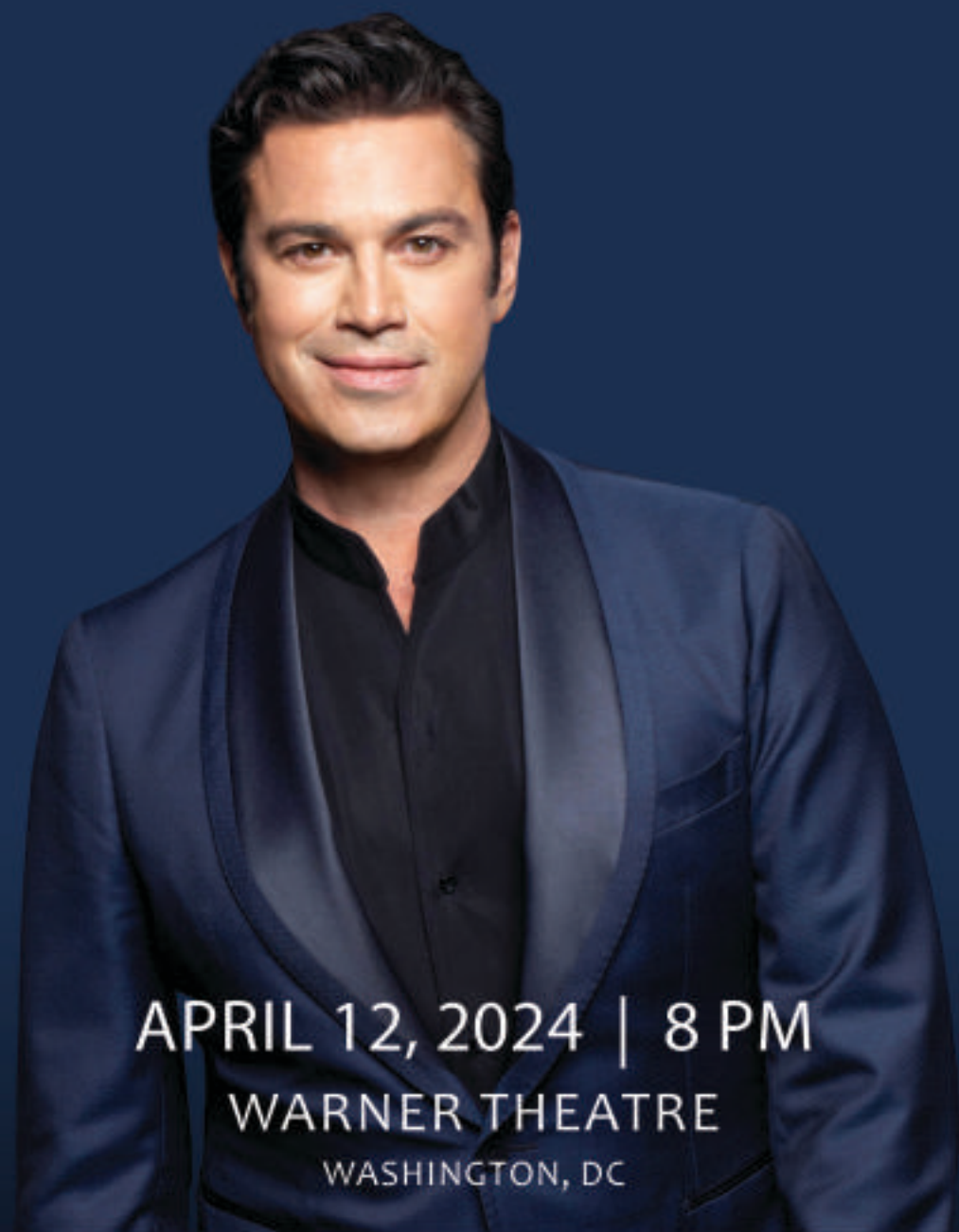
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# National Hellenic Society

## Annual NY Fundraiser a Resounding Success!



The organizing fundraiser committee: John Frankis, Nick Katopodis, Dimitri Belesis, Paul Tsoumpariotis, John Venetis, Steven Spucces, Nick Pashalis



Thanasi Mamais, Peter Mamais, Joe Litchhult



John Petras, George Themelis, Dennis Matarangas, Chris Triantafillou



The New York Committee



Ladies attending for the first time



Niko Katopodis, Nancy Papaioannou



Mr. Tsakonas and son, John Petras, Dennis Matarangas, Greg Giannakopoulos

### BY ELENA KEFALOGIANNI

NY Heritage Greece, a transformative educational and cultural immersion program, has been made possible for over 700+ students through the generous support of the National Hellenic Society and others via its Heritage Greece Initiative. Last year 100+ Greek American college students participated in the Program.

With the help of the Heritage Greece Initiative Committee led by Doctor John Frankis, the

NHS hosted its second poker fundraiser at the Strathmore Vanderbilt Country Club in Manhasset, NY. This event provides an opportunity for Hellenes to come together and celebrate our collective

commitment to preserving and passing on the rich Hellenic heritage to the next generation. "We want to thank our record number of participants this year that supported Heritage Greece at the Strathmore Vanderbilt Country Club," said Dr. Frankis.

PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Thanks to the overwhelming support and attendance by NHS members and friends, the NHS is excited to announce an expansion of the program, increasing the number of Heritage Greece student participants by an additional 40 students, bringing the total to 125+ for the upcoming summer!

Furthermore, the NHS is proud to have introduced a new host institution, The American College of Thessaloniki/Anatolia College, to the Heritage Greece family.





*The New York fundraiser committee with the ladies*



*Nick Katopodis, Dimitri Belesis*



*Maria Zoitas, Maria Giannakopoulos*



*Steve Valiotis, Chris Triantafillou, Grand Prize winner Argyris Argitakos, Ted Stamas*



*Steven Gerazounis, Christopher, Thanasi Mamais, Angelo Katopodis, Chris Kokkinos, Stelio Katopodis*



*John Frankis, Paul Tsoumpariotis, Takis Katsoulis, Nick Miller, Thomas Tsamis*



*Steve Valiotis, George Marangos and Argyris Argitakos with friends*



*Kay Livanos with daughter, Gus Karayiannis, Ted Livanos, Maria Karayiannis*



*Spiros Paliuras, Demetri Dellis, Greg Giannakopoulos*

Heritage Greece has already profoundly impacted the lives of over 700 alumni, who describe it as a truly transformative experience. Together, we can make a meaningful difference and ensure that this program continues to shine as a beacon of Hellenic culture, education, and personal

growth for generations to come. “Much gratitude goes out to the dedicated team behind the National Hellenic Society Heritage Greece Initiative for orchestrating a highly successful poker tournament in support of this transformative program benefiting Greek American college students. Our heartfelt

thanks extend not only to Dr. John Frankis and his team but to all the remarkable players involved—your contributions are truly making a meaningful impact,” said Drake Behrakis, NHS President.



PHOTO: BRITTANY NEWMAN

HLA Officers & Board with Members of the Judiciary

# The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hellenic Lawyers Association Scholarship Dinner Gala

The 33rd Annual Hellenic Lawyers Association Scholarship Dinner Gala was held recently at NYC's iconic Pierre Hotel. The lively, sold-out event, began with an extended

The program was kicked off by HLA President, George N. Zapantis, by inviting Fr. Nektarios Papazafiroopoulos, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, representing Archbishop Elpidophoros, and Fr. Evan Evangelidis of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Stamford, CT, to give the Invocation and opening prayer.

"On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, it's an honor to have you all with us this evening—we truly appreciate your presence, enthusiasm, and support. This organization is committed to serving attorneys, law students, and the community at large. Our Annual Gala is an occasion where our members, judges, in-

house counsel, government officials, dignitaries, business and community leaders gather to celebrate and support our mission, award scholarship recipients, and acknowledge the contributions and achievements of our honorees," Zapantis said.



HLA President George N. Zapantis with Major Sharad A. Samy

This year, the HLA celebrated the accomplishments of Nikiforos Mathews, Esq., the evening's Honoree, and Maria A. Raptis, Esq., who was named, Attorney of the Year. "We express our deep admiration and respect for your exceptional accomplishments. You have distinguished yourselves not only in the legal field but also through your service to our community," Zapantis commented.

President Zapantis introduced Ms. Maria A. Raptis, who is a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, and Flom, where she focuses her practice on representing clients before the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Department of Justice. He highlighted Ms. Raptis' extraordinary professional accomplishments before calling her up to the podium. Ms. Raptis thanked the HLA's Officers and Board for honoring her, and further thanked her family and husband for their incredible support. Raptis continued by dedicating the award to her father, who was present, and to the memory of her mother, for



Helen Voutsinas, Consul General of Greece Dinos Konstantinou, George N. Zapantis, Maria Raptis, Nikoforos Mathews, Maria Kazana-Sekeris, Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris

cocktail reception before the attendees headed into the venue's Grand Ballroom for the dinner which included the honoree award presentations, law student scholarship ceremony, fundraiser auction, and live Greek music and dancing.



*Eftihia Pylarinou-Piper, George N, Zapantis, Peter Kakoyiannis, John Catsimatidis*



*Honoree Nikiforos Mathews & family*



*Attorney of the Year Maria A. Raptis & family*



*2023 HLA Scholarship recipients*



dedicating herself to ensure that the family took the right path in life. In her speech, Raptis described her journey and secret to her professional success by saying that: “if you’re coming to the game, come to play- and if you’re playing, play to win.” Her words were inspirational to everyone, especially to many law students who sought out to speak with her later in the evening.

Zapantis then invited Major Sharad A. Samy, General Counsel of Commonfund, to the podium to introduce his close friend, and the evening’s Honoree, Nikiforos Mathews. As the event took place on Veterans Day, Zapantis thanked Major Samy, who was in military uniform, for his service, and called for a moment of respect in honor of all veterans. Mr. Mathews and Major Samy both served together as Judge Advocates in the US Army, and have known each other for years. Major Samy drew comparisons between his and Mr. Mathew’s immigrant backgrounds (Major Samy’s family originating from India, and Mathew’s from Greece).

As a partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliff’s New York office, Nikiforos Mathews serves as Global Co-head of the Derivatives group, and is a member of the firm’s Finance and Audit Committee. Mr. Mathews spoke about his career path, and encouraged the law students

and young attorneys in the room to “strive to be absolutely world class in your career.” Mr. Mathews further thanked his mentors, and spoke of the impact the late Judge Tsoucalas had on him. He also stressed the importance of finding fulfillment through serving and helping others, noting that, for him, there was “no higher honor than serving our great nation.” Mr. Mathews also spoke about the privilege he has to serve the Church as an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as does Mr. Zapantis. Mr. Mathews closed by thanking his wife, Lambrina and family, whom he called his “rock.”

The Honorees were then presented with Citations prepared by Assembly-member Michael Tannousis, and NYS Senator Michael Gianaris.

The program continued with the law student scholarship recipients being introduced by HLA Officers John Zervopoulos and Christina Gotsis to receive their awards. This year’s recipients were: Theodora Danias, Tiffany Deplas, Constantine Gianaris, Olga Gotsis, Vasileios Karamanlis, Yiorgos Maravelias, Sam Namias, Alexander Philliou, Anna Pierratos, Sofia Stefanou, and Eleana Tsiamtsiouris. Following the ceremony,

President Zapantis congratulated the scholarship recipients and wished them “every success in their studies and legal careers.”

In closing, Zapantis remarked: “We look forward to seeing you all at: our Annual Christmas Party, the Traditional Cutting of the Vasilopita, CLE’s, Workshops, Joint Bar Association Events, Morning Kafe with the HLA, our Supreme Court Admission Trip to Washington DC, the Greek Independence Day Parade, the Annual Judiciary Night, and we encourage your participation in HLA’s law student and young attorney Mentorship Program. We’d also like to express our sincerest appreciation to our sponsors, supporters, members, and friends. Your generosity and participation sustains and bolsters our organization, allowing us to build on our success, and better serve our members, law students and community.”

Zapantis closed by thanking the Officers and Board for working together to host such a phenomenally successful Gala. The attendees then filled the floor with kefi and danced into the night to live Greek music. For information on the Hellenic Lawyers Association, their website is hlany.org

# AHEPA Delphi Chapter 25 Celebrates 100 Years



ALL THREE PAST PRESIDENTS OF AHEPA DELPHI 25: Left to Right, Dr. Marinos Petratos, Louis Katsos, Khris Karastathis

## by Athena Efter

The Adelphi 25 AHEPA Chapter celebrated its 100-year anniversary with the Centurion Legacy Ball at the Harvard Club. Founded in 1923, AHEPA's mission is to promote education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, integrity, and family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism. A portion of the event's proceeds will benefit ARISTEiA, the Institute for the Advancement of Research and education in the Arts, Science, and Technology.

Master of Ceremonies and President of Delphi Chapter #25, Dr. Sotirios Stergiopoulos gave the welcoming remarks: "It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you all tonight...as you can see this is a very beautiful venue of the Harvard Club, a club where we are very proud



Evelio Medina, Dr. Matina Stergiopoulos with her sons Georgios and Argyrios, Mrs. Ellie Argitakos, Argyris S. Argitakos, Dr. Sotirios G. Stergiopoulos (Chapter President)

to be a part of steeped in rich tradition – one that honors the sacred values of knowledge, philanthropy, loyalty, brotherhood, and allegiance – something very dear to us as AHEPANS." He noted that AHEPA Delphi Chapter # 25 has had some very honorable people, both of Hellenic background and

philhellenes, surprising some of us with the mention that former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a Chapter member, "which is a huge, huge acknowledgment to what has been going on at Delphi 25 and AHEPA in general." He went on to acknowledge that we have had some very honorable Greeks who have been president of the Harvard Club of NY, like Andreas Peroutsos, who had his own level of participation of philanthropy as well as work that had been done for the Greek community, and "we are very proud of both the fact that we as Hellenes have had a significant role in the community of New York but also at the Harvard Club of NY." He added that A H E P A h a s

experienced a significant revitalization with more than 300 members: "We are here really to honor past presidents, award recipients of the past 100 years, people who we term true giants, people we are proud to be affiliated with. They've upheld AHEPA's mission of promoting the ancient Hellenic ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family and individual excellence through c o m m u n i t y a n d volunteerism. Many of the great giants unfortunately are no longer with us, but they leave behind a legacy that has helped shape communities and support those in need with attention to our most sacred Hellenic values. We are still blessed to have many here, such as our great benefactor, philanthropist, and friend to all the Hellenes, our Brother John Catsimatidis". He noted that he has not been a past president but an award recipient who has made a great impact. He recognized past President Lou Katsos as "a great role model to many young AHEPANS. The amount of work that Brother Lou has done to bring the understanding of Hellenism to not only us here but also to the non-Hellenes, the philhellenes, who truly value what we have as our core and background as people." In his speech, he also gave great merit to "some pillars of our community". Dr. Marinos Petratos was one of those

pillars who inspired him to become a physician and was a role model to many who have gone into medicine. He also acknowledged the late honorable John Tsoucalas. His words resonated the brotherhood that is AHEPA: "... through their positions have helped so many of us on an individual basis. I was affected by their

kindness, their civility and sense of duty to our community, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I think many of us share a common feeling of gratitude of this revitalization of AHEPA. I am honored to say that some of our past presidents such as Brother George Eliopoulos, Brother Michael Papahotes, and Brother Ted Klingos have provided a foundation for a strong future for a healthy 25. The backbone of the revitalization has been none other than my boys' grandfather Brother Agryris Argitakos." As the current president he spoke of how humbled he was by all their efforts. In his final remarks, and as a fitting tribute to veteran's Day, he talked about the ICARUS project: "A support for the community has taken center stage. Recently through the leadership of Brother Dennis Seretakos we have created a project called ICARUS that has helped the families of the fallen airmen in Greece. Many of us know of the struggles that happened over the Aegean but also the struggles that happened with the fires and so many other



Board of Directors of AHEPA Delphi 25 with Supreme President Savas Tsivicos and NYC Mayor Eric Adams

things that happened. I am also proud to say that through another brother of ours, Brother Konstantine Drosatos, we have been able to, as recently as today, provide support for ARISTEiA that shows the support we give to arts and sciences."

He acknowledged the presence of the the Daughters of Penelope District 6 Governor Lainy Damaskos-Christou, former US Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, District 6 Governor of the Maids of Athena Christine Fileas, Supreme Governor of the Sons of Pericles George Kalivas, and President of the Sons of Pericles Alex Economakis.

He introduced Dr. Marinos Petrakos who has been a member for over 55 years. Dr. Petrakos spoke of how proud he was of his service in the United States Army and reminded us of the importance of this day: "I would like to remind you that today is Veteran's Day. This is a day celebrating the service of men and women in the armed forces of the United States in war and in peace." He asked all veterans of the United States and the Hellenic Armed Forces to stand for a round of applause: "We salute you" Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral Music Director, Bass Baritone and Board of Trustees Delphi Chapter #25 Costas Tsourakis acknowledged his uncle the



*Eftihia Pylarinou-Piper, Panos Papadopoulos-Seretis, Mrs. Margo Catsimatidis, NYC Mayor Eric Adams, John Catsimatidis, Former U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Olga Bornozi*

Honorable Judge John Tsoucalas as the inspiration and role model for him being there that evening and being part of the AHEPA community. He introduced the musical program Echoes of the Century adding that “in addition to the legendary service of AHEPA Chapter Delphi 25 and its Centennial, that legacy has been intertwined with some great music of the last 100 years, and this year we are especially commemorating the centennial of the soprano Maria Callas” The musical interlude was a nod to Greek composers Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis and arias made popular Maria Callas, performed by pianist Glafkos Kontemeniotis on the piano, Rafailia Kapsokavidi on the violin, and Metropolitan Opera soprano Olga Xanthopoulou.

The invocation was given by the Archimandrite Chrysostomos Panos, along with the Dean of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Fr. Chrysostomos Gilbert. Congratulatory remarks on the Chapter’s 100-year anniversary were offered by Fr. Panos on behalf of Archbishop Elpidophoros Peter



*From the AHEPA New Rochelle Chapter #405: James Zafiros, Tom Dushas, Constantine Papademetriou, John Copulos, Harry Fotiadis*

Tagoussis, AHEPA Empire State District Six Governor, came up to the podium and introduced himself: “I am the District 6th Governor of NY. I am not supposed to be following that act, but I am a man of small words. I am honored to be here tonight in this amazing place. I didn’t think I would ever make it to Harvard but this is as close as I will ever get.” He joked in Greek that he arrived by remarking “eftasa”, the Greek word for having arrived. He proceeded to thank all the veterans that were there that night and thanked them for their service. He talked about his own service as Governor of the District: “Being the governor for the past five months, I have visited many chapters, attended many events, and have had a wonderful experience in doing so. There are so many events and projects

cause.”

The Order of AHEPA Supreme President Savas Tsvicos then took the floor to congratulate the Chapter: “It is an honor and a privilege to be standing in front of you celebrating 100 years of exceptional service to Hellenism, orthodoxy, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, individual and family excellence, and, as we celebrate this wonderful occasion we must stop and remember that today, as the president said, is a very special occasion, as we observe Veteran’s Day. We shall pay tribute and salute our veterans. Thank you all for your service.” He continued to talk about AHEPA and its growth and the value it has upheld in the community: “When AHEPA started in 1922, and this chapter was organized in 1923, nobody could foresee the future of our community. We have come a long way. We were considered third and 4th class citizens and look my friends where we are today. We should not just rest on the laurels of our past. Now it’s our time... We must step up to the plate and we must our write our own history

and we must reinforce the foundations so this organization can celebrate another 100 years. We have a responsibility to those who came before us, but we have a greater responsibility to those who will come after us. As we go forward, we have the ability to make this organization more prevalent than ever. We must civically engage. That is how we can make a difference... The responsibility is greater than the title. I attempt to do my very best and I attempt to lead by example because it is one thing to stand on the shoulders of giants and one thing to carry the torch and deliver it to the next generation... We must remember one thing. Hellenism is not simply an ethnic identity. It is an ideal, and we have the responsibility to preserve it and pass it on to the next generation. Our fight continues until Hellenism is fully preserved and Cyprus is liberated.”

NYC Mayor Adams was the last to speak and present the Chapter with a proclamation for its

historic achievement. His eloquent speech on what it means to be American was a unifying moment for all who emigrated here in search of the American dream: “What is unique about this country is you are not called American Greeks, American Chinese, or American Polish, or whatever. America says hold on to your country, your culture, hold on to your spirit, your energy, and have it infused with the foundation of America, and what you have brought to this country in so many ways... you believe in business. You believe in family. You believe in education. You believe in family. You believe in public safety. You believe in the basic principles that I believe makes our country great in the first place. No one is lining the borders of America to leave.



*Maids of Athena: Christina Fileas, Sophia Theodorou, Michelle Papandrea, Laina Tzanides*

People are lining the borders to come. We have a good product as one of the best products. No other country on the globe has a dream attached to its name like the American dream. Your love affair with Greece is proven to your love affair that’s here. When I hear in polls that state 52% of Americans won’t protect our country if it is attacked by foreign enemy, what I know is that you are part of the 48%... You can love your motherland and embrace your adopted land and your contribution to America. For 100 years these amazing organizations and chapters have contributed to everything that is great about this city and great about this country. So I thank you.”

With his humor and affection for the Greek community, Mayor Adams presented the proclamation: “And I am here tonight to give you a proclamation on behalf of the people of the city of New York, 8.3 million with 35 million opinions. I am honored to be mayor of this city with more than 3.2 million immigrant New Yorkers who enhance every facet of life in our Metropolis. Greek New Yorkers have strengthened the fabric of the five boroughs and they will continue to play a crucial role as we take more steps to move our great global city forward... I commend the greatness of this organization... I only ask please move back to Astoria so we can get some Spartan in there, and not from where you’re seated back there.”

For more information about ARISTEIA and how to help, their website is: [aristeia.us](http://aristeia.us)



(L to R) George P. Stamas, Senior Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP and The Hellenic Initiative Board President/Co-Founder; honoree Ted Leonsis, CEO Monumental Sports & Entertainment/Majority Owner Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals, and Washington Mystics; Andrew N. Liveris, Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The Dow Chemical Company and THI Board Chairman/Co-Founder.

(L to R) Princess Tatiana, THI International Ambassador; Peter J. Poulos, Executive Director, The Hellenic Initiative

Honoree Ted Leonsis, CEO Monumental Sports & Entertainment/Majority Owner Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals, and Washington Mystics

(L to R) Michael G. Psaros, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, KPS Capital Partners, LP and The Hellenic Initiative Board/Executive Committee; Greek Ambassador to the U.S. Ekaterini Nassika; George P. Stamas, Senior Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP and The Hellenic Initiative Board President/Co-Founder.

PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

# The Hellenic Initiative's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual New York Gala Raises More Than \$2.5M

The Hellenic Initiative (THI) held its sold-out 11th Annual New York Gala on Saturday, December 2 raising more than USD \$2.5M making it the most successful fundraising event not only in the organization's history but among the global Greek Diaspora. Funds raised support THI's vetted humanitarian and economic development programs in Greece.

Noted philanthropist Ted Leonsis, founder, chairman, principal partner and CEO of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, was honored for his service as a founding member of the THI board and his embodiment of *philotimo* (φιλότιμο) — translated as helping others and taking pride in community. Mr. Leonsis is the majority owner of the NBA's Washington Wizards, the NHL's Washington Capitals, and the WNBA's Washington Mystics.

A portion of the evening's proceeds will help

fund the THI Summer Youth Academy, which will debut in July 2024 with Mr. Leonsis serving as the 2024 Academy Chair. The program will offer basketball coaching, life skills workshops, and mentoring from basketball idols and special guests. THI has partnered with basketball training and sportsmanship organization Eurohoops to create an unforgettable summer experience for 100 young Greeks with limited resources.

"The Hellenic Initiative's Youth Academy leverages the unifying power of sports to strengthen communities and create brighter futures. As an NBA and WNBA team owner — as well as owning teams in the NHL and across sports, I am proud to support this important endeavor. It sits at the intersection of my Greek heritage and my conviction that team sports, particularly basketball, have the potential to empower youth and drive meaningful, positive change," said Mr. Leonsis.

The black tie New York Gala, THI's largest annual event, hosted more than 900 dignitaries and guests from the U.S., Canada, UK, Europe, and Australia. The event kicked off with a cocktail reception at the premier event space 48 Wall followed by a walk across a red-carpet across Wall Street to the celebrated Cipriani Wall Street for a seated dinner where they were welcomed by THI Board Chairman and Co-Founder Andrew N. Liveris and THI Board President and Co-Founder George P. Stamas.

"Greece's greatest export has been its people with the best and the brightest leaving for opportunities elsewhere. Now we're actually reversing this "brain drain" by giving those shining lights a reason to stay in Greece and create successful businesses," said THI Board Chairman and Co-Founder Andrew N. Liveris. "We remain steadfast in our mission — to lift the Greek people with a combination



(L to R) George P. Stamas, Senior Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP and The Hellenic Initiative Board President/Co-Founder; Georgia Stamas; Lynn Leonsis; honoree Ted Leonsis, CEO Monumental Sports & Entertainment/Majority Owner Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals and Washinton Mystics

(L to R) Dennis Mehiel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Four M Investments, LLC and The Hellenic Initiative Board/Executive Committee; Andrew N. Liveris, Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The Dow Chemical Company and THI Board Chairman/Co-Founder; honoree Ted Leonsis, CEO Monumental Sports & Entertainment/Majority Owner Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals and Washinton Mystics; Lynn Leonsis; John Koudounis, CEO, Calamos Investments and The Hellenic Initiative Board/Executive Committee



Guests of The Hellenic Initiative 2023 New York Fundraising Gala crossing red-carpeted Wall Street into Cipriani Wall Street

Dinner place setting at The Hellenic Initiative 2023 New York Fundraising Gala

Seated guests at The Hellenic Initiative 2023 New York Fundraising Gala

of humanitarian aid and financial opportunity.”

“The creation of the THI Summer Youth academy is the perfect culmination of Ted’s sports know-how, his commitment to youth empowerment, and his devotion to THI,” said THI Board President and Co-Founder George P. Stamas. “We’re thrilled to help bring this program to life and provide leadership training and mentoring to young Greeks in need.”

“From the beginning of THI in 2012 when we held our first Gala, we were overwhelmed at the outpouring of love and enthusiasm from the Greek Diaspora in their support for Greece. This year is no exception and through their generosity we have exceeded beyond our wildest dreams,” added interim THI Executive Director Peter J. Poulos.

Father Alexander Karloutsos THI Honorary Advisor opened the evening’s presentation with a message from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros. The Jimmy Vali Band provided entertainment.



Officials from Greece and the Greek American community attended, including Greek Ambassador to the United States Ekaterini Nassika; THI Board members John Koudounis, Michael Psaros, Dean Dakolias, George Anderson, Drake Behrakis, Theane Evangelis, Nikos Koumettis, George Svokos, John Georges, Pericles Navab, Peter Barris, Dennis Mehiel; and THI International Ambassador Princess Tatiana.

A silent auction of world-class art, jewelry and experiences donated by Greeks from around the world contributed more than \$120,000 to the total funds raised.

One quarter of attendees were young professionals and entrepreneurs, who are the future of the Hellenic Initiative. On Friday, December 1, a sold-out pre-Gala celebration of THI New Leaders was held at Thalassa Restaurant in New York.

Founded in 2012, THI is a global, nonprofit, secular institution mobilizing the Greek diaspora and philhellene community to support sustainable economic recovery and renewal for the Greek people. THI has become the largest Greek diaspora organization in the world, with supporters in more than 47 countries. The organization has made direct distribution of more than \$20.5 million, 60% of which has been deployed into Greece’s economic development, and 40% into programs focused on crisis relief. For more information, their website is [TheHellenicInitiative.org](http://TheHellenicInitiative.org)



by Athena Efter

The American coffee scene is a burgeoning one and has been for decades. From artisanal coffees that share shelves with the traditional giants of the industry to the myriad of coffee chains and boutique cafes that dot almost every corner of the US, one would think that entering the business – let alone finding enormous success – would be quite the challenge for even the most intrepid. But, for For Five Coffee Roasters, a New York-based company, it has been nothing short of a gilded triumph. The company, founded in 2010 as a small batch roaster working out of Maspeth, Queens, has grown into a multi-faceted empire that not only includes a roasting facility of its own signature blends but a major distribution entity that supplies clients – restaurants, hotels, and companies – all over the country.

But, even more remarkably, For Five has entered the retail space with resounding fanfare. They opened their first retail café in New York City in 2016 and now have over 35 locations around the country including one in Athens, Greece. They've even expanded their operations to own and operate over 150 corporate cafes. And they're still not done.

For Five Coffee is the brainchild of two childhood best friends from Queens, New York, Stefanos Vouvoudakis and Tom Tsiplakos, who landed on a great, big idea and have steered it towards an entrepreneurial slam dunk. The company takes its name from New York City's five boroughs and takes pride in those local roots, as a truly East Coast luxury roaster. But, the two co-founders would tell you they're only just getting started, the proper mindset for any visionaries. They've even just opened their first full-scale restaurant, Balos, in Washington, DC to appeal to the palates of the world's movers and shakers.

# “FOR FIVE COFFEE”!

FROM QUEENS, FOR THE WORLD





**Your main facility – where it all began – is located in Maspeth, Queens. Both of you are Queens natives and the “For Five” part of your brand name is an homage to New York’s five boroughs. How important was this hometown identity with the brand?**

Tsilpakos: Extremely important. We feel lucky and very proud we are from Queens. Whenever we are meeting new clients & friends - no matter where we are - we proudly will say we’re from Queens versus saying we are from New York. Queens has a special energy. Being from this borough has shaped us into who we are today. The life lessons we were taught will stay in our hearts and be passed on to future generations.

**What were the memorable moments since you started that stood out and made you say: “Wow, this dream of ours has really exceeded our own high expectations!”**

NEO sat down with Vouvoudakis and Tsiplakos to get the details of their great success story:

**You’ve known each other since the third grade. Growing up did you both know that you’d eventually start a business together? Or was it more of a reconnection as adults?**

Vouvoudakis: Tom and I have stayed friends since third grade and always joked around about starting a business together but didn’t

**What was the vision that guided you guys to venture into what most lay**

people would assume is a very competitive industry? How did you envision standing out from other luxury coffee brands?

Vouvoudakis : We always felt that our product was the best. We never cut corners, especially when it came to our roasting process. Once we established the different blends and perfected our recipes, we knew there was an opportunity to do more than roast, package and distribute coffee beans - especially considering our hospitality backgrounds; this is when we truly realized the potential we were brewing.



Vouvoudakis: The way we have expanded and the rate we have expanded at, for sure. Tom and I started For Five with dreams of giving New Yorkers locally roasted coffee. Made by New Yorkers. That dream began in 2009. Fast forward to 2016, and we are opening our first retail location in Midtown Manhattan in New York City. Fast forward to now, and we have over 35 retail locations nationwide. To expand the footprint beyond what we initially expected was when we knew we could give the world not only a better cup of coffee, but a whole new way of enjoying their coffee as well.

**You opened your first retail store in 2016. And now you have 35 across the US as well as a store in Athens. Was this always part of your initial vision? Are there more stores in the future?**



**What were the challenges you faced as new entrepreneurs during the startup period? How were you able to grow so big, so fast?**

Tsiplakos: When starting a company, you always remember the challenges - no matter how big or small - because those are the experiences you learn the most from. The biggest challenge we faced was scaling the business. To piggyback off that: how to continue scaling at the same rate when you have opened up your brand to different segments (i.e. retail, bakery program, new markets, etc.) We determined that scaling it correctly would allow a seamless and secure growth.

actually consider it seriously until 2008/2009. I always believed Tom would be the perfect partner—we share the same work ethic but also have different strengths which make us the perfect balance.





well and are look forward to continuing the Balos expansion.

**What's life like outside the For Five business day? How do co-founders relax or engage with the world beyond the office? Are you involved in the Greek community?**

Vouvoudakis: "Relax" hasn't really been one of the words in our vocabulary the last 14 years! But I do feel we have started to enjoy the time off we do have. Our infrastructure at this stage has allowed us to spend more time with our friends and families creating memories, for which we are very grateful. We're very involved in the entire community, especially within our neighborhoods and the different markets we have locations in. We try and give back as much as we can to everyone who has and keeps supporting us.

**What's the best advice for any of those who are just embarking on their entrepreneurial journey?**

Tsiplakos: Make a business plan and follow it. Believe in your vision. Wake up early. Stay late. Go the extra mile. It is always less crowded there. Put in the time. No shortcuts. Nothing is ever easy but once you accomplish your goals there is no better feeling. There is no ceiling; the sky is the limit. One of the lessons we live by - which we learned from our best friend and partner Michael Bapis of Rockefeller Vios, as well as

Vouvoudakis: Once we opened our first midtown Manhattan location in 2016, we knew we had something special. For Five is a coffee brand, but also a hospitality and lifestyle brand. While the coffee is the secret sauce of our brand, there are so many more elements we have incorporated to create an elevated experience at For Five: our architecture, the equipment, investment in a bakery partner to create artisanal fresh-baked pastries daily, as well as bringing on an executive chef to curate an amazing breakfast and lunch menu. We also have an in-house technician and marketing team to keep the brand consistently operative and innovative. We are now up to 150 corporate cafes, and have 8 new locations in the works for 2024, with more to come!

**How does For Five contribute to sustainability in an industry that is known for such commitment?**

Tsiplakos: For Five has made it a priority to do our part in increasing sustainability efforts over the last few years. We started by upgrading our roasting facility, replacing traditional lighting with as many LED bulbs as possible and perfecting our roasting process in order to reduce our energy footprint, while still producing a top-tier product. Establishing the exact roasting process for each of our blends has enabled us to produce less waste. When sourcing green coffees, we try to use as many fair-trade options as possible, as well as rainforest alliance approved coffees. Our green coffee partners are also instrumental in establishing relationships with sustainable farms and bringing in many of the coffees that we use in our facility.

**Not ones to rest on your laurels, you've just entered the full-service restaurant space**

**with Balos Estiatorio in Washington, DC. This must be an exciting new venture. Are there plans for more in the future?**

Vouvoudakis: We are beyond excited to have opened Balos Estiatorio with our friend and business partner Joe Ragonese in DuPont Circle, Washington DC. This has been a three



year project that finally came to life in November 2023, and we couldn't be prouder. We believe there is no other comparable dining experience in the area, and D.C. was in need of a high-end Greek dining concept. We are grateful the first two months have gone so

Michael Psyllos, CEO of Alma Bank - is that work ethic and creating relationships through consistent networking are key; it is extremely pivotal to growth.

# **ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ! ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΠΟΛΛΑ!**

Merry Christmas to all our Greek American friends, our American Patriots, and to all the citizens across the world!

As Christmas approaches, I am wishing you a healthy, safe, peaceful, and Happy Christmas with your loved ones!

Christmas is a celebration that brings people together all over the world to help one another and do what we can for others in need.

The celebration of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ is a time to be a good Christian and a good citizen and give a helping hand to others who need our help!

I hope and pray that we all remember how blessed we are, and we continue to do whatever we can throughout the New Year!

As immigrants, we have traveled far to come to this country, therefore my motto is:

***Go Far, Give Back, Live Greek!***

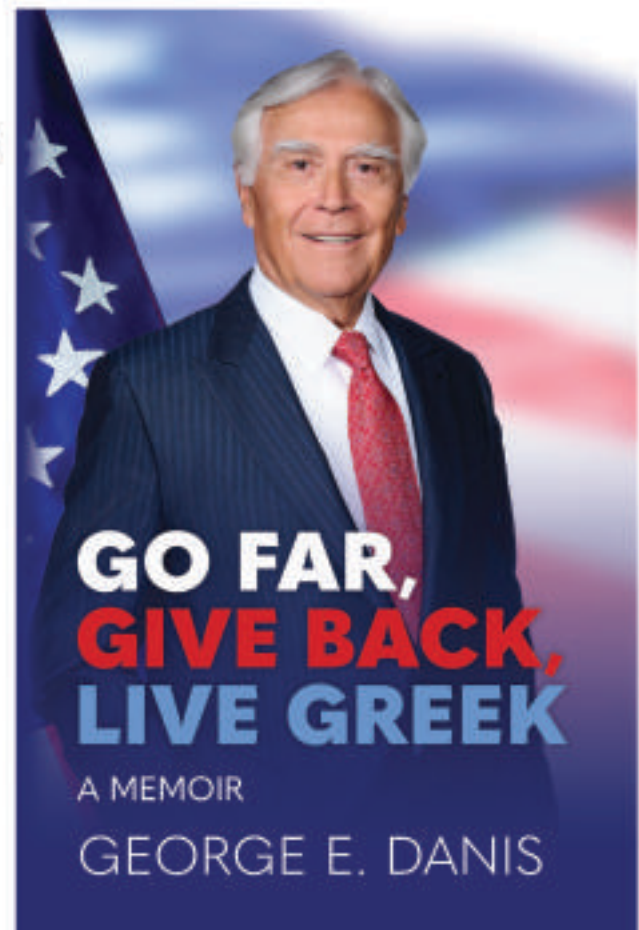
Wishing you a wonderful, enjoyable holiday!

Merry Christmas to all!!

Warmest Regards,



George E. Danis



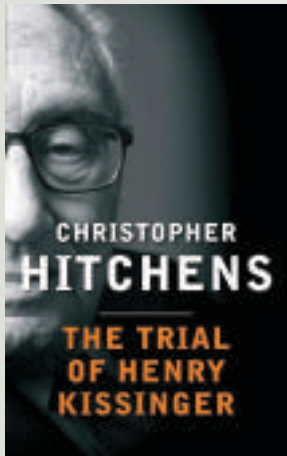
# A Reading List for 2024

By Endy Zemenides

“Read More.” Two words that almost always find themselves on the list of “top New Year’s resolutions.” In fact, over the last decade only in August – during back-to-school shopping – do book retailers sell more books than they do in January.

2023 wrapped up with several events that should make all Greek Americans resolved to read more, especially ahead of several milestones in 2024. Here are just a few suggestions [NOTE: all of the recommendations below are English language titles with the hope that Greek Americans will not only be inspired to read them but give them as gifts to American friends who could stand to be educated on these topics].

### CYPRUS



The passing of Henry Kissinger and the upcoming 50th commemoration of Turkey’s 1974 invasion should remind us all of the shameful history of U.S. policy on Cyprus. Christopher Hitchens’ *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* is a concise read which still provides a

thorough critique of Kissinger’s “statesmanship”/war crimes in Cyprus (as well as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Chile, East Timor, Iraq). Hitchens does a masterful job of emphasizing Kissinger’s amorality (which in almost every case morphed into immorality).

The shift in American foreign policy from the moral principles of Woodrow Wilson or the United Nations of FDR to the “There is no American reason why the Turks should not have one-third of Cyprus” of Kissinger is diplomatic history that all Americans should understand. What is actually true is that there is “no American reason” that — despite diplomatic high points like detente, shuttle diplomacy, or the opening to China — that

Kissinger’s amoral and crass realpolitik should continue to have such adherents in American diplomatic circles. Understanding the full bill of indictment against Kissinger is a must for anyone who wishes for a foreign policy where American interests and values are aligned.

Two of the best books on Cyprus — Hitchens’ *Hostage to History: Cyprus from the Ottomans to Kissinger* and Claire Palley’s *An International Relations Debacle: The UN Secretary-General’s Mission of Good Office in Cyprus 1999-2004* — are difficult to acquire but are required reading if one wants to understand how the people of Cyprus have been victimized by great power politics and diplomatic efforts to merely “unload” the Cyprus problem rather than to provide a lasting and viable solution.

### THE GEOGRAPHIC SIGNIFICANCE OF GREECE

Since antiquity, the Hellenic world has often considered itself the omphalos (or center) of the world. Ironically it is today’s Greece — which is one of the smaller NATO and EU member states — that finds itself at the center of so many key developments in global politics.

Many other conflicts may dominate headlines, but it is the competition between the US and China that will define this century. In her book *The World According to China* Elizabeth Economy (formerly of the Hoover Institution and the Council of Foreign Relations; presently an advisor to the US Secretary of Commerce on China) examines how this competition embroiled Greece at the height of its economic crisis. Economy’s insights help her readers understand why the US government (both directly through the Development Finance Corporation and indirectly by encouraging corporate America to invest in Greece) has stepped up its efforts in Greece.

But Greece is significant for many more reasons than Sino-American competition. Looking at maps of the two major conflicts dominating the news — Ukraine and Gaza — and you see Greece virtually at the mid-point and holding down the strategic seam between Europe and the Middle East. Tim Marshall’s *The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal the Future of Our World* is a must, as it



*Endy Zemenides is the Executive Director of the Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), a national advocacy organization for the Greek American community. To learn more about HALC, visit [www.hellenicleaders.com](http://www.hellenicleaders.com)*

tabs the map of Greece as one of those ten maps (and the map of Turkey as another).

With Greece entering the Three Seas Initiative and being part of the potential India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, there is no better time to review geopolitical literature and dust off some maps.

### THE RETURN OF THE CLASSICS

In the decade prior to the pandemic, the number of undergraduate degrees in the Classics declined by nearly 40% and more than a dozen Classics majors or departments ceased to exist. Classics were drawn into national debates about race and diversity, and there was an attempt to move away from the traditional emphasis of Classical studies — Latin and Greek language, Roman and Hellenic history.

That is why Emily Wilson’s highly anticipated 2023 translation of *The Iliad* is so welcome. Wilson’s translation is not only accessible, she wrote it so it can be read out loud (you can pretend to be Homer when reading to your family). Much has been made of Wilson being the first woman to translate both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* into English (although Wilson herself does not see this fact as significant). In the last few years we have also had Madeline Miller’s acclaimed novels — *The Song of Achilles* and *Circe* — as well as other novels like *A Thousand Ships*, *The Women of Troy*, and *Ithaca* all based on the classics and authored by women.

This doesn’t mean that there is an emerging feminist or female centric version of Homer, but the diversity in the storytellers helps counter one of the more ridiculous critiques of the Classics, and also brings them to life in a way that might not have been imagined years ago.

There are certainly more excellent books on these topics, and several others interesting topics with their own corresponding literature. Whatever your interest and whichever book you decide to pick up first, there has never been a better time to adopt a “Read More” resolution.

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# Mnemosyni's Musings...

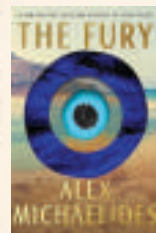
You've heard of Mnemosyni, the Greek goddess of memory. Mythology buffs will know that she's also the goddess of storytelling—and mother of the Muses! So, it's only fitting to name a literary column in her honor. Here, you'll learn about authors, poets, books, and all things "Greek" literary.

by Maria A. Karamitsos

## New Books to Add to Your List

Welcome back! Here are new releases from some Greek authors. I haven't had a chance to read most of them yet, so for those, I've included information from their book blurbs. Grab those holiday gift cards and get ready to head to the bookstore!

Keep reading for new books to add to your list!



### FICTION

**The Fury** by Alex Michaelides (Celadon)

Coming January 16, 2024 is the latest by the New York Times Bestselling Greek-Cypriot-Brit Author of *The Silent Patient* and *The Maidens*. "It's a masterfully paced thriller about a reclusive ex-movie star and her famous friends whose spontaneous trip to a private Greek island is upended by a murder."



**Mary Whitcombe** by Valerie Nifora (Author Academy Elite)

Just out in late November, Mary Whitcombe is book 2 in "The Fairmounts" series by this New York author. We met Mary in *The Fairmounts*, book 1. "She's an heiress who's lost her fortune, caught up in a whirlwind romance, and abandoned by all she once knew...If you relish deeply passionate characters, enthralling mysteries, and dramatic deceit, you'll adore Valerie Nifora's timeless storytelling." She is also the author of *Unleash the Power of You*, a guide to personal branding and a poetry collection, called *I Ask the Wind*.



**Winter Harvest** by Ioanna Papadopoulou (Ghost Orchid Press)

Recently released, it's the debut novel by this Scotland-based author.

It's a "dark reimagining of the tale of Demeter and Persephone. Steeped in lore and with a deep understanding of the many different facets of Demeter's personality, this retelling will change your perspective on one of the most well-known stories of Greek mythology."



**Oriana: A Novel of Oriana Fallaci** by Anastasia Rubis (Delphinium)

The debut novel from this New Jersey-based author will be out in March 2024. "Oriana is the first (biographical) novel about the glamorous and fearless Italian journalist who holds a place beside Mike Wallace and Barbara Walters when naming world-class interviewers... it's the story of one of the first women to break through the glass ceiling of journalism, a woman who wasn't afraid to speak truth to power and who revolutionized her field, all while trying to balance her career with love and happiness."

### NON-FICTION



**Dream On... Now Deliver: The no nonsense guide to achieving success in the entertainment industry** by Patricia Kara (The Three Tomatoes Publishing)

The first book by this Chicago actress, model, spokesperson, and TV personality best known as #9 on the TV show, 'Deal or No Deal', will be out in January. Patricia has worked in the entertainment industry for more than 30 years and shares her hard-earned wisdom about breaking into the industry and thriving in it.

**The Black Angels: The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis** by Maria Smilios (GP Putnam's Sons)



Out last fall, this is the first book by this New York-born writer. Upon learning about this story back in 2016, while working as a science editor for *Spring*, Maria was compelled to share it. "The Black Angels recovers the voices of

these extraordinary women and puts them at the center of this riveting story, celebrating their legacy and spirit of survival."

### POETRY



**She's Not Normal** by Koraly Dimitriadis (Outside the Box Press)

This new collection from the best-selling Greek-Cypriot-Australian writer, poet, and performer came out in early December. Koraly has published two other poetry collections. "She's not normal, why can't she be normal, she makes me feel really uncomfortable... It's an empowering collection of poetry... for people who are not normal."



**Whispers of the Soul: A Poetry Collection** by Despoina Kemeridou (Independently published)

Born in Thessaloniki, Despoina began writing in 2009. She is the author of two romances stories and two poetry collections. *Whispers of the Soul* came out in early December. It's a journey into the depths of human emotions. She delves deep, sharing raw and powerful emotions on a roller coaster ride from hurt and despair, to grasping for hope and finding light in the darkness.

Now you have some great new books to add to your To-Be-Read list! See you next time for more of Mnemosyni's Musings.





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# Restaurateur Peter Kambitsis: Passionate, Driven, Adaptable



Peter Kambitsis is a powerhouse in the restaurant business and many know his popular bakeries--New York Bakery and Sugarberry and he has his newest restaurant which just opened, Pappa Gallo in Long Island. He loves his Greek Community and goes the extra mile for all. In the following interview learn about his great Life Lessons & Tips and the many paths he travels and ways to get there in his words.

**What kind of a person are you? Try to describe yourself in 3 words only.**

Passionate. Driven. Adaptable.

**What are your strengths and your weaknesses as a restaurateur?**

As a restaurateur, my strengths lie in creating an inviting atmosphere, managing operations efficiently, and delivering high-quality customer service. I excel in menu development, maintaining food quality, and implementing effective marketing strategies.



*Peter in front of his newest restaurant which just opened, Pappa Gallo in Long Island*

However, my weaknesses may include challenges in managing inventory effectively, inspecting what I expect, and balancing the demands of running a restaurant with personal life. I may also face difficulties in handling unexpected crises or fluctuations in the market.

**What books do you recommend for every entrepreneur to read?**

The 5 AM Club by Robin Sharma.

**How do you manage stress?**

Each morning, I rise at 5:00 am and begin with meditation. Following that, I engage in a workout or go for a run, and then dedicate time to reading for self-improvement.

**What does your typical workday look like?**

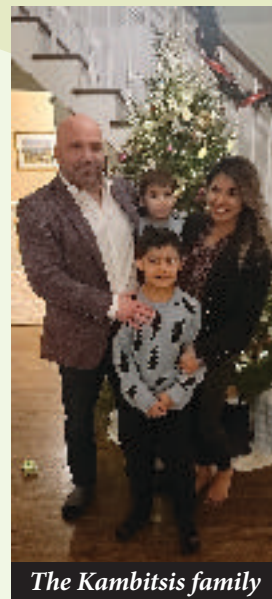
My typical workday involves overseeing the daily operations of the restaurants and bakeries, such as managing staff, ensuring quality control, and addressing any customer concerns. I also focus on menu planning, sourcing ingredients, and maintaining the overall financial and administrative aspects of the business. Additionally, I strive to create a welcoming and enjoyable dining experience for our patrons.

**What was the toughest moment in your business journey? How did you go past it and move forward?**

Three years ago, Covid-19 shook my world upside down. My stores closed because of the shutdowns, I couldn't

visit my mother with stage 4 Cancer, my wife was pregnant and had limited doctor visits, and I couldn't hug my 4-year-old because I was scared to get him sick. I will never forget coming home that cold night in March after serving that last customer. I looked my beautiful wife straight in the eyes and told her, "Baby, I am waking up at 5:00 am and I'll be back when this is all over." I had to pivot, I had to hustle. I kept all my businesses open and running. My partners and I created a marketing buzz in NYC that it is still heard today. And then just as things were going well, my mother passed on Father's Day a few months later. I came home crying and looking through past gifts my mother had given me. The last gift was a coffee mug with the quote from Carter Crocker, reading "If ever there is tomorrow when we're not together... there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we're apart... I'll always be with you." I got to work the next day and I started slaying dragons. My mother made us head strong and resilient. That is how I keep moving forward.

**What are your tips for building a great team?**



*The Kambitsis family*

It starts with clear communication and an open-door policy. I look to have a shared vision with everyone I hire or partner with. I recognize individual strengths and then I put those "aces in their places". I encourage collaboration, provide ongoing training and celebrate achievements. Most importantly I lead by example.

**What are you working on now?**

I have a few projects lined up. I am working on expanding the bakeries and restaurants to New Jersey, Connecticut and Florida. I am also working with developers in Greece to build boutique smart hotels in Athens and Kefalonia.

**What are the three most important habits to be a successful entrepreneur?**

Resilience and adaptability, continuous learning and effective time management. Nothing shakes me or moves me. When I am in the zone it's game over. I like to read and listen to audio books. One of my favorite quotes from Stoicism is, "To live the best life you should have conversations with the dead". That means to read books from people who have passed. You can put yourself in the same room as Abraham Lincoln, Socrates, Plato or even Steve Jobs. Read their books. Learn from them. And last is time management. I get up early and start my day a lot earlier than most. I plan my day accordingly and I keep a color-coded calendar for all my operations and family events. If you fail to plan you plan to fail.



**Peter Kambitsis**

**How did you win over your first customers? First investors? First business partners?**

Winning over first customers in the restaurant business often involves offering exceptional food quality, great customer service, and creating a positive dining experience.

Winning over investors may be attributed to a solid business plan, a clear vision, and potential for growth in the hospitality industry. When it comes to securing quality business partners, demonstrating a strong concept, clear communication, and a mutually beneficial partnership can be crucial in any business.

**How would you describe your leadership style?**

My leadership style often involves a combination of servant leadership and transformational leadership. This means focusing on serving the needs of both guests and employees, while also inspiring and motivating teams to provide exceptional service and achieve business goals. Flexibility,

empathy, and a strong focus on customer service are also important aspects of leadership in the hospitality industry.

**How do you handle negative reviews?**

Respond promptly and professionally. Take the conversation offline. Use the feedback constructively. And remember, at the end of the day, it is only feedback. We can have a bad day too. Nobody is perfect. I don't take it personally. I handle the business and I keep it moving.

**What's your philosophy for customer service?**

As a restaurant owner, my philosophy for customer service is to prioritize the overall dining experience. This includes providing attentive and friendly service, ensuring timely and accurate order delivery, and consistently maintaining high food quality. I believe in creating a welcoming atmosphere where customers feel valued and appreciated, ultimately aiming to exceed their expectations and leave a lasting positive impression.

**How do you balance your personal life with the demands of running a business?**

Balancing personal life with the demands of



running a business involves setting boundaries, delegating tasks, and prioritizing self-care. It's important to establish designated time for personal activities, delegate responsibilities to

trusted employees, and make time for relaxation and hobbies. Additionally, utilizing efficient time management techniques and seeking support from family and friends can help maintain a healthy balance between personal and professional life. Be a good person and do what you love in life. I am good at what I do but I also remember to be a great son, a loving husband, an amazing dad and an awesome brother.

**Do you have any advice for aspiring restaurateurs?**

If you have a passion for hospitality, consider diving into this industry. It's a challenging, non-stop 24-hour business that requires a lot of hard work and dedication, but it's also incredibly rewarding. There are ups and downs, so it's important to either have a deep understanding of the industry or partner with someone who does. Despite the challenges, I've been in hospitality since I was 9 years old and it's my true passion. I'm ready for the next endeavor with people who share my mindset.



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## Anna Rezan honored by philanthropist Brock Pierce and lobbyist Ezra Friedlander for her contribution to history, the arts and culture

Famed actress and director Anna Rezan was the special guest in Washington, DC among members of Congress, diplomats from all over the world, and businessmen and entrepreneurs in the Pierce mansion by the Capitol.

My People, the feature historical documentary that Rezan created, to make globally known the untold story of the Jews of Greece during the Holocaust, the significant role of the Christian clergy, and the impeccable Greek Resistance during WW2, had its Washington, DC premiere recently.

The film promotes the Christian Orthodox clergy and their miraculous efforts to shelter Jews and support the Resistance like no other, which touched and inspired Pierce and Friedlander.

The multi-awarded documentary, that is co-produced by Zafeiris Haitidis, Pantelis Kodogiannis and Academy Award-winners Mitchell Block and Kim Magnusson, is the first film to ever be screened at the Pierce school.

Brock Pierce is widely known for his bold investments and his big heart.

In 2020, he ran for president as an

independent candidate, while he also makes headlines for his charitable work and contribution to arts and culture.

During the reception he stated that, "Rezan's work is significant... I was impressed by the greatness of the Greek Resistance during the Second World War, and it is with immense pleasure that I get this opportunity to promote My People...."

Rezan spoke to the press and affirmed that, "I am humbled and honored by this invitation. I am a proud Greek and I promote my country every chance I get. Our history should be preserved in a meaningful way and I am excited that my film has become a part of that. Pierce is a kind individual that warmed my heart with his love for our country of Greece and his willing to support spreading the word regarding the story of the Greek Jews during the Holocaust and the Herculean efforts of the Greek people.

Friedlander has become a dear friend of mine and a valuable companion in my quest to bring back the presence of Greek Jews. Salonica, Greece was once coined the mother of Israel, because it was home to the largest Sephardic community in the world. Romaniote Jews lived in Greece for two millennia, but these communities were eradicated."

Hope Sullivan was the hostess of the evening and instantly made friends with Anna, who mentioned to the press that she has a new friend in Washington, DC.

Rezan arrived at the event with Greek American businessman Konstantinos Bouras of 776 deluxe products. Her dear friend, multi-awarded producer Krysanne Katsoolis, was also there for the occasion.

Members of the Greek diplomatic corps stated that they were impressed by Rezan's documentary, while they commented that she mastered the art of storytelling of a greatly demanding topic. Bashar Azzeq represented the state of Palestine, bringing a message of unity and peace to the atmosphere of the evening. Demetrios Rhompotis of NEO Magazine was the only member of Greek press invited.

My People is a hymn to love and courage that intends to educate, but also inspire young people of all ages across the world to learn from history: to live more and love more.





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# Happy Holidays!

Friends, we made it this year as well to the end! Soon we'll have to change a number in our calendars, phones, even in our checks, although dated 2023 ones will still be good... I wish you from the bottom of my heart, as Jose Feliciano memorably sang, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Another adventure will start soon and we can only hope for the best, even if we are pessimists, because as we say in Greek, hope is the last thing to die, like the cockroaches, but this is another story.

And since this tribune's mission has been didactic all along (here we laugh) let me explain the title so that we avoid misunderstandings that might raise unfounded suspicions of my good will! In Greece, generation after generation wishes both verbally and in written form "Happy Holidays" (Καλές Γιορτές) this season without any political connotations. The reason is simple: we have Christmas, New Year's or St. Basil's Day and Epiphany. So in order to include them all, we say "Happy Holidays". It's not bad, it has no hidden agendas, it's crystal clear like a cristalino tequila!

Before leaving you for a much needed break, I want to express my gratitude to all the friends who contributed by placing messages or ads in this remarkable edition of NEO! Besides us and our unceasing efforts, it's you that make it possible and you have every right to rejoice and feel proud. Our community needs NEO to reflect its image and this is what we are trying to do, not successfully all the time, but most I hope. And with your support and generosity we will continue doing so!

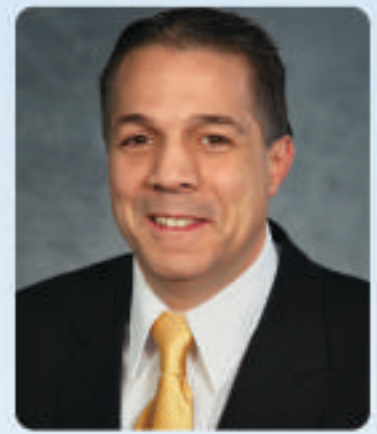
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# Through the lens of time – a tale of three generations of photographers

by Kelly Fanarioti

The small lab of the Picopoulos family on Lekka Street, in the center of Athens, exudes the air of a time capsule: a delicate blend of past and present, a journey through time framed by the click of a shutter.

*Nikolaos Picopoulos at  
a Benaki Museum Exhibition*



Entering the lab, one is welcomed by an amazing display of analog cameras, some of which have a century-old history, while at the window sits a Pica, the first Greek-made amateur camera, which was developed after the Second World War by the camera pioneer, Dimitris Picopoulos.

The camera-repair family business was started by Dimitris Picopoulos in 1953, and then with the passage of years it was passed on to his son Nikos, and later to his grandson, Philipos, who is the present owner of the business.

The 77-year-old Nikos Picopoulos has a treasury of stories to tell, from his childhood helping his father from the age of six.

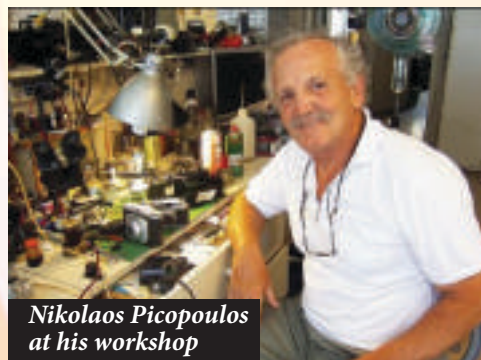
“As a child, I always loved helping in any way I could. I was eager: making myself useful. I have a strong connection with Pica. I know intimately every bit of the camera, from the moment she was born, and I really felt I was part of it, having contributed to its creation. I remember the many customers coming to the lab— those were beautiful years. Then later, at the age of 28, I moved the lab to on Voukourestiou Street, but the business didn’t go very well, and in 1981, we were re-installed on Lekka Street, where we are today.”

Despite his age, he continues to work every day. In fact, he has transformed space at his home into a lab, to be able to also work from there.

“For 71 years, crafting cameras has been the central passion of my daily existence. It is a huge part of my life – it’s impossible for me not to continue working. For as long as I will be healthy, I will not stop. Besides, the longer one continues to work and exercise their mind, the healthier, mentally and physically, they will be.”

The rapid advances in photo technology did deal a severe economic blow to the Picopoulos lab, resulting in a sizable loss of customers.

“I remember being very afraid back then. It was something entirely new—the world had plunged headfirst into digital cameras, digital cinematography, and videography. Videography no longer required film; everything was done with mobile phones. Cinematography completely disappeared, and that was a blow for us because it constituted 30% of our work. During that period, my children were studying, and I advised them to choose a different profession, because mine had essentially died. However, as the years went by, there was a shift back towards all things old. Just like what happened with vinyl records, which more and more people now prefer, the same trend occurred with film cameras. Our clientele returned, primarily consisting of collectors and analog camera enthusiasts,” says Mr. Picopoulos.



*Nikolaos Picopoulos  
at his workshop*

Both the family believes that this turn towards anything old stems from people’s need to maintain a connection with their past.

Mr. Picopoulos says: “Customers come in for repairs on their analog cameras, and even though we explain that it’s costly and not cost-effective for them, they insist on having it fixed because it holds emotional value for them.”

“In the past, we used to visit the homes of relatives and friends, and in the living room, there were albums filled with photographs from weddings, baptisms, and trips. Nowadays, everything is stored on mobile phones, and often these files are lost when the device gets wet or malfunctions for any reason. Additionally, very few people today bother to print photos taken with their phones. The entire process, back when film was in use, felt like a sacred ritual. I particularly enjoy it when young people come to the workshop and ask to learn how to use the analog camera that their father or grandfather gifted them. I guide them through the entire process with immense joy, in the dimly lit room with the film rolls.”



*Pica, the first ever Greek built camera*

He maintains that despite the race of new technology, people will continue to cherish and seek out old objects, whether they are photographic cameras, vinyl records, or any other accessories.

“Consider today’s retirees. Fortunately, many of them persist in going to the bank to collect their pensions. It’s not enough for them to have the money directly deposited into their accounts. They know that by going to the bank, just like in the past, they will encounter other retirees and engage in conversation. Their need for connection drives them to follow the old ways. Additionally, think about books. No matter how quickly and efficiently technology progresses, books will always be published, and there will always be enthusiasts who appreciate them.”

Mr. Picopoulos says he takes photos spontaneously if he happens to encounter something beautiful during his daily life. If it’s an extraordinary moment, he’ll pull out his mobile phone from his pocket and capture it. However, when he plans a trip, he intentionally brings along his analog film camera.

“My other son lives in England and sends me photos of my granddaughters on my phone. I always print them out, twice. Once for my own album, and once for him, so he can create his own album with his children. It’s wonderful to be able to open the album at any moment and see not only the past of your own children, but also your own. Considering the hundreds of thousands of files stored on our phones today, how easy would it be to achieve this?”



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Happy New Year!

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