

41st Anniversary AHI Awards Dinner Shines Spotlight on Hellenism

TNH Staff

NEW YORK – The honorees at the 41st Anniversary Hellenic Heritage Achievement and National Public Service Awards Dinner of the American Hellenic Institute on March 5 have distinguished themselves in the worlds of finance, construction and service to the community but what they had in common was a passion for Hellenism and a dedication to excellence.

Every year AHI, the Greek-American think tank and public policy center founded by Eugene T. Rossides 41 years ago fills the ballroom of the Capital Hilton when it shines a spotlight on some of community's most accomplished members and contributors to Hellenism.

This year's honorees included Peter J. Pappas, Sr., Nicolas Bornozis, Basil Mossaidis, and Rena Papapostolou.

AHI's 2015 achievements and 2016 plans were spotlighted by its President Nicholas Larigakis, and greetings and congratulations to the honorees were offered by Dr. Spiros Spireas, the President of the AHI Foundation.

AHI Legal Counsel Nicholas Karambelas introduced Emcee Larry Michael who moved the program with grace and humor from the invocation offered by Fr. Steven Zorzos, Dean of St. Sophia Cathedral, through its culmination in dancing driven by music provided by the band Apollonia.

Pappas and his company P.J. Mechanical are the trusted providers of heating and air conditioning to many of the buildings on the Manhattan skyline and has donated the HVAC for the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox National Shrine at Ground Zero.

"Few of the iconic buildings in New York do not have his trademark," said Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney by video.

He praised fellow Cyprian Rossides for founding AHI and leading the fight for justice for Cyprus.

He again shifted the spotlight from himself when he urged the young people in the audience to seize the opportunities America presents them after sharing the improbable story of his rise from humbles origins.

Bornozis is the President and CEO of Capital Link, a leader in investor relations for the shipping industry and other companies and the founder of the annual Invest in Greece Forum which helps drive investors to Greece.

Those lauding Bornozis by video included former Greek Prime Ministers George Papan-dreou and Antonis Samaras,



1. Left to right: AHI President Nicholas Larigakis, honoree Nicolas Bornozis, Founder and President of Capital Link, and AHIF President Dr. Spiros Spireas at the AHI awards dinner. 2. AHI President Nicholas Larigakis, honoree Basil Mossaidis, Executive Director of the Order of AHEPA, and AHIF President Dr. Spiros Spireas at the AHI awards dinner. 3. AHI President Nicholas Larigakis,

honoree Rena Papapostolou, co-founder of Return to Origins organization, and AHIF President Dr. Spiros Spireas at the AHI awards dinner. 4. AHI President Nicholas Larigakis, honoree Peter J. Pappas, Sr., philanthropists and founder of P.J. Mechanical, and AHIF President Dr. Spiros Spireas at the AHI awards dinner.

John Calamos, and Arianna Huffington.

Video comments about how Bornozis and his sister Olga Bornozis complement each other were echoed by many guests familiar with their dedication and professionalism.

Like most people in the public relations business, Bornozis said he preferred being behind the scenes. He noted AHI figured out that the way to get him to agree to be an honoree was to go through his sister.

He concluded by saying "we have had the opportunity to thrive and contribute back to American society and we have to contribute to Greece...right

now Greece needs all of us."

Mossaidis, Executive Director of the Order of AHEPA, has since childhood been a devoted member of the fraternal organization dedicated to mutual support, the promotion and defense of Hellenism and education, and the well-being of Greek-Americans, especially through the thousands of senior citizens housing units it has created across the country, and perhaps most impressively, by distributing \$1.8 million in scholarships each year.

John Galanis and Philip Frangos, current and past Supreme Presidents, respectively, praised Mossaidis for his

dedication and his ability to strike the right balance in providing support from its Washington, DC headquarters to the organization's different groups, regions and chapters in America, and now around the world.

"I'm very humbled," Mossaidis said. "I'm not accustomed to this...For me it's a very special honor to be here with my peers...this is what Hellenism is about to me...we are one big family."

Papapostolou charmed the guests and touched them with the praise and thanks she offered for her late husband Harilaos Papapostolou, past protopsalti at St. Sophia Cathedral.

With him she established the Return to Origins Greek cultural and education program that has helped thousands of young people get in touch with their roots, enriching their lives and turning them into ambassadors and teachers of Hellenism.

The tribute video included statements by Fr. Zorzos and Greece's former Ambassador to the US Loucas Tsilas, who called Papapostolou "among my most appreciated friends."

Among the dignitaries were retired Senator Paul Sarbanes, Congressman John Sarbanes, and Congressman Chris Van Hollen, US Senator from Hawaii Mazi Hirono, and Greece's Am-

bassador to the US Christos Panagopoulos.

"These award dinners are amazing because you discover these people whom you didn't appreciate how critical they are to the vibrancy of our community, but you here these testimonials and you understand why we are such a strong community," Congressman Sarbanes told TNH.

He was also impressed with the humility displayed by the honorees that is rooted in their upbringing. "Hellenism has many intrinsic values, but I think number one is that commitment to family and community," he added.

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