

Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia Awards Eleftheria Medal to Archon Commander Dr. Limberakis



On April 6, 2024, the Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and the Greater Delaware Valley presented its Eleftheria Medal to Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, Archon Megas Aktouarios, National Commander of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Eleftheria Medal is given annually in honor of an individual who was perpetuated Hellenism.

The presentation of the Medal to Dr. Limberakis was part of the 2024 Greek Independence Celebrations of the Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and the Greater Delaware Valley, which began with the Flag Raising Ceremony at Philadelphia's City Hall on Friday, April 5. The elite military unit of Greece, the Evzones (the Presidential Guard), whose duties include guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Presidential Mansion, were present.

The Medal was presented to Dr. Limberakis on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at the Eleftheria Medal and Dignitaries Dinner. Archon Mike Emanuel, Washington Chief Correspondent of FoxNews channel, served as Master of Ceremonies. At that time, Archon Philip N. Christopher was proclaimed the Greek Independence Day Parade Grand Marshall. His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey and Her

Excellency Ekaterini Nassika, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States were in attendance.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Limberakis stated: "It is my great honor to accept the Eleftheria Medal tonight. I do so on behalf of every Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the United States, as each and every Archon works tirelessly for the protection and freedom of our Holy Mother Church of Constantinople. Consequently, receiving a medal of liberty is particularly gratifying for me as National Commander of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It constitutes a recognition from the Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and the Greater Delaware Valley of our efforts in defense of the Sacred Center of our Holy Faith. And your recognition is most gratefully received."

Dr. Limberakis also noted that "the Greek immigrants to this land carried with them the DNA of the pioneers of freedom and democracy. Of Pericles and the Archons of ancient Athens, who included Solon, Themistocles, and Aristides the Just. Of Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor, who established his great city, Constantinople, as the new capital of the Empire. Of the Emperor Justinian, whose far-seeing legal code served as a profound inspiration for John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. It was through such towering figures and so many more that *ελευθερία* came to this land."

He added: "In 1821, the Greeks declared "Ελευθερία ή Θάνατος!" (Liberty or death!). This is strongly reminiscent of Patrick Henry's famous statement, "Give me liberty or give me death," which in 1776 had become a rallying cry of the American revolutionaries. Greek Americans for two centuries now have carried on in this illustrious tradition. Indeed, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate today are dedicated to protecting and defending the holy center of our Greek Orthodox Faith, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople."

Dr. Limberakis also spoke of the ongoing plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, saying: "It is a supreme irony: with tremendous vision and breathtaking courage, His All-Holiness stood against extraordinary pressure from the Moscow Patriarchate and its proxies, and granted freedom to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine with his Tomos of Autocephaly in January 2019. Yet even as he grants freedom to others, His All-Holiness is unable to enjoy it himself. The restrictions that the Turkish government has placed upon the Ecumenical Patriarchate are the ongoing concern of the Archons. We strive in every arena possible to restore the freedom of our beloved and most holy Mother Church, so as to enable it to exercise its worldwide sacred mission in perpetuity, without hindrance."

Then on Sunday, April 7, the Federation presented the Philadelphia Greek Independence Day Parade, featuring Dr. Limberakis and Parade Grand Marshal Archon Philip N. Christopher, who is President of the International Coordinating Committee - Justice for Cyprus, as well as President of the Pancyprian Association of America.

The Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and the Greater Delaware Valley is the umbrella organization of over 45 Hellenic-American associations, representing thousands of individuals in the Greek community. Georgia Chletcos is the President of the Organization. Archon John Vasiliou and Judge Harry Karapalides were the co-chairs of the Parade.

The Federation consists of member church communities, organizations, and societies each striving to promote the prosperity of Hellenic Ideals.

The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is a devoted group of passionate leaders, relentlessly focused on protecting religious freedom for everyone and ensuring the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate - the historical spiritual center of the world's 300+ million Orthodox Christians.

See all photos [here](#).

Photos: S. Lambrou