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# AHEPA Immediate PSP Horiates Awarded First Ever Defender of Hellenism Award




PHILADELPHIA – On November 20, members of the AHEPA family and their friends came from around the world to historic Philadelphia to honor one of their own, immediate Past Supreme President (PSP) George Horiates. Ahepans, Daughters of Penelope (DOP), Maids of Athena (MOA), and Sons of Pericles (SOP) from all over the U.S. and abroad attended the event which took place at the renowned Franklin Institute with its iconic rotunda and statue of Benjamin Franklin.

Philadelphia was indeed the center of Hellenism as the PSP utilized the opportunity to raise funds for AHEPA's greater works for its future generations, raising well over $100,000 as chapters and individuals donated to the cause.

The reception was held in the heart and electricity sections of the Franklin Institute, then the crowd was seated in the decidedly Hellenic Institute rotunda, itself an homage to the philhellenic sentiments of the great Ben Franklin, a founding father of the United States and perhaps Philadelphia's greatest ambassador. Hellenic blue

lit the rotunda as the centerpiece, the dramatic 20-foot tall marble statue of Franklin, the United States Congress' official memorial to this philhellene, was lit up in white and dimmed in yellow as the program began.

The National Anthems of the United States and Greece were performed by Kaliope Karapalides. His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia not only provided the invocation, but spoke of AHEPA as the leading organization for Greeks in the diaspora worldwide, noting it is not by accident that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and AHEPA both will be celebrating their centennials in the following year. Master of Ceremonies Demetrios Rozanitis noted the significance of the City of Brotherly Love and paid tribute to the recently and dearly departed Nicholas Karabots, a major contributor to the Institute with its Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion to his left.

Heartfelt remarks were made by AHEPA Camden Chapter's president Cosmas Diamantis and the chair of the event, Stathis Karadonis. Karadonis spoke glowingly of AHEPA as the true leading voice of Hellenism, noting how others follow AHEPA's lead, particularly under the leadership of Horiates, and we must continue to be ever vigilant in Hellenic causes. Last year's counterpart to the honoree came from Calgary, Canada. DOP Past Grand President Celia Kachmarski spoke about the issues faced by the family during COVID lockdowns.

The AHEPA Board of Trustees Chair and himself a past president, Nicholas Karacostas noted that "in addition to his church and Icarian society, we are fortunate George has lent his passion and talents to AHEPA."

This year's DOP Grand President Kathy Bizoukas also provided her remarks, thanking Horiates and AHEPA for their passion not only in advocating for Hellenic causes, but in understanding the crucial role of women as world leaders and in the DOP.

Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulos thanked AHEPA under the leadership of the honoree for its efforts and also spoke of her time and special bonds with the local community in Philadelphia. Ambassador of Cyprus to the United States Marios Lyssiotis also spoke of the assistance AHEPA provided under Horiates' leadership, and continues to provide on our issues. Consul General of Greece in New York Konstantinos Koutras noted the work ethic of Horiates and also how amazing AHEPA as well as the Philadelphia community has been over the years in support of causes with Horiates at the helm.

A video message was played from U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross, a member

of AHEPA Chapter 69 representing the first Congressional District of New Jersey. He noted that AHEPA protects U.S. interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and he was proud to take an active role in that regard along with AHEPA. Lee Millas made a presentation on behalf of District 5's Past District Governors, recalling his remarks to the delegates at the Chicago convention of AHEPA over two years ago that with George "to expect the unexpected" and congratulating the honoree for a job well done.

Consul General to Panama Georgia Athanasopulos, a resident of the City and no stranger to AHEPA, invited the attendees to the next day's festivities for Panama Day, noting that Greece and Panama are the only two countries sharing a bicentennial this year. She then turned to Horiates and Supreme President Jimmy Kokotas and pledged her assistance to the reconstituting of the AHEPA Chapter of Panama to a rousing ovation. Cathy Pandeladis, Supreme President of the Pan Icarian Brotherhood of America, presented a check for $10,000 from its foundation to AHEPA, earkmarked for the Canadair Maintenance vehicles under the wildfire relief program. She noted that all societies should consider supporting AHEPA as "AHEPA insures the cause of Greece is the cause for all of us."

A fitting tribute by members of the SOP and MOA Supreme Lodges moved the honoree. MOA Grand President Maria Ana Pantelous said that Horiates was their role model for years and called him "merakli mou." The SOP Supreme Lodge led by Dino Giallourakis introduced Horiates, a staunch supporter of the Sons, as a lifetime SOP member with a special pin for the occasion.

Then, AHEPA Supreme President Kokotas on behalf of all of the members, bestowed AHEPA's first ever Defender of Hellenism Award to Horiates to a rousing ovation, pointing out AHEPA's continuing obligation to defend Hellenism. The Supreme President reiterated Horiates' insistence that AHEPA continue to be influential with world leaders on defending Hellenism as the leader of track 2 diplomacy.

Horiates quoted Ben Franklin: "Our cause is the cause of all mankind… we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own." He then thanked the Supreme President and all the speakers, attendees, family and sponsors and concluded with a crowd-pleasing Eagles football team cheer.










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