



A GREEK-AMERICAN TRIBUTE
TO
PIONEER WOMEN
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

THE AMERICAN HELLENIC FOUNDATION OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

WELCOMES YOU TO A GALA

HONORING WOMEN FOR THEIR LIFELONG CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE PROMOTION OF HELLENISM IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Sunday, October 9th, 2011

South Hills Crowne Plaza Ballroom

Pittsburgh





Aliki Andrews

Georgia Antinopoulos

Stella Athanasiou

Mary Doreza

Koula Pantzoulas

Athena Sarris

Maria Stamoolis

Irene Strintzis

Mary Vasilakis

Dr. Yolanda Avram Willis





Tonight's event
honors Greek-American Women
who promoted Hellenic culture
by their lifelong service to their communities,
through their businesses,
philanthropic and educational organizations,
and therefore created a positive image
of Greeks and Greece
in
the greater Western Pennsylvania region.





PROGRAM

Master of Ceremonies
Mrs. Joanna Darakos

Welcoming Remarks

A word about the AHFWP

A Greek-American Tribute to Women Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania

Video

Awards

Prayer

Dinner

**A Musical Tribute to Greek-American Women Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania
Ms. Alexandra Loutsion (song) and James Lesniak (piano)**

Ending Comments

Dessert, coffee/tea





A Musical Tribute to Greek-American Women Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania
Ms. Alexandra Loutsion (Soprano) and James Lesniak (piano)

*Xipnise pe
Kato sto agio Sithero
Pios asiskisan ke mena
O nantzelos eise matia mou
Yiaroumbi!*

- Maurice Ravel from *Five Greek Songs*



D'Oreste d'AJace

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart from *Idomeneo*

Vissi d'Arte

- Giacomo Puccini from *Tosca*

Tacea la notte placida/Di tale amor

- Giuseppe Verdi from *Il Trovatore*





A Musical Tribute to Greek-American Women Pioneers of Western Pennsylvania
Ms. Alexandra Loutsion (Soprano) and James Lesniak (piano)
Featuring
Works of Maria Callas
&
Classical Greek Songs

About Alexandra Loutsion, Soprano; <http://alexandraloutsion.com/>

Hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as a “promising young soprano”, Alexandra Loutsion is gaining notice for her vocal versatility and passionate performances. She is currently a Resident Artist with the Pittsburgh Opera, having performed both Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and a “powerful and projecting” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*) Armida in a new production of Handel’s *Rinaldo* in the 2010-2011 season. Other recent operatic highlights include Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* Family Performance, Frasquita in *Carmen* and Melissa in *Amadigi di Gaula* Family Performance with Central City Opera, as well as the west coast premiere of Wagner’s *Das Liebesverbot* with USC Thornton Opera. In October 2009, she had the honor of singing for His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Athenagoras Human Rights Award Weekend Celebration in New York City. Recent awards include Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Los Angeles District winner, the John Moriarty Award from Central City Opera, Shosnana Foundation Richard F. Gold Career Grant, and Aspen Music Festival New Horizon Fellowship. She will begin her second year as a Resident Artist with the Pittsburgh Opera singing Annina in *La Traviata*, as well as Mother and Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* for the 2011-2012 season. She will also make her debut with Opera on the James as Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly*, Boston Court Performing Arts Center as Euridice in Ricky Ian Gordon’s *Orpheus and Euridice*, and with the Erie Philharmonic as the soprano soloist in Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. Ms. Loutsion holds music degrees from the University of Southern California and Ithaca College.



About James Lesniak, Associate Coach/Pianist, Pittsburgh Opera

A native of Kenosha, Wisconsin, James Lesniak joined the Pittsburgh Opera music staff in the 2006-2007 season. He received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees at Indiana University, where he studied with pianists Menahem Pressler, Karen Shaw and Evelyne Brancart. While completing his degrees, he served on the music staff for Mississippi State University and the Indiana University Opera Theatre. Further studies included an apprenticeship with the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera for two seasons, where he was given his operatic debut in the non-singing/piano playing role of Lazinski in *Fedora* at the Kennedy Center, accompanying Placido Domingo in the opera. In addition, James has served on the coaching staff of Brevard Music Center, Glimmerglass Opera, Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center and the National Symphony. For the summer months, James returns to the music staff of the prestigious Santa Fe Opera.





For the many years promoting Greece
to Western PA
through song and dance

Stella Athanasiou, Mary Doreza, and Koula Pantzoulas





Stella Athanasiou

Born to Pete and Fofa Frankos. Her parents and her Aunt Alexandra were courageous immigrants who left their homeland to come to a strange new world. They left behind much of their valued possessions but brought with them their heritage - Greek Culture and Orthodox Christianity. Stella derives from a large family and lived within a community of Greek families. They attended church and public school together, as well as Greek School from 4:00 - 7:00 pm every day together. They also socialized together. Stella's house, from the time of her birth was constantly filled with music. Her father played the clarinet and formed the first authentic Greek band in Pittsburgh. He played from the early 1900s until 1955. With no TV in the house, no movies, Stella's family and relatives gathered at each others' homes, put a record on the old Victrola and danced!

Stella loves all things Greek. Her special fondness for dance led her to passionately teach others to not only a high technical proficiency but in a manner that inspired and transmitted the pure joy of Greek music. She began teaching at Holy Trinity, formerly at North Side, with a small group - John, Pete and Bill Nychis, Nick Loomis, Irene and Fanny Karavolos, Mary Kilantonis and Elaine Lardas. She then went on to teach at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Holy Cross in Mt-Lebanon, Allegheny Community College, the YMCA and even privately.

Three generations of her students have gone on to teach others. They have performed at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival in which Stella was personally involved for over 25 years. They have also performed on TV, at colleges, country clubs and countless other venues in the TriState Area. Not only are they still perpetuating the Greek heritage, they are spreading the joy of our music and culture to all our fellow Americans.

Stella has also given countless cooking lessons and demonstrations of Greek traditional cuisine. She also taught Greek to many American adults in Pittsburgh. Keeping alive the heritage of her mother and her aunt, she was involved in the Holy Trinity Philoptochos from the time of her teenage years and she also served as its President for many years. She has served the Greek Orthodox Diocese (now Metropolis) of Pittsburgh for close to fifty years - ten of them as President of the Philoptochos Board. Presently, she is the President of the Senior Members, leading the group in many activities since 1990.

Her son Harry, who began practicing with his friends at age 15 at her home, still plays in a Greek music band 38 years later. Her daughter Angela sang in the Holy Trinity Choir. Harry and her lovely daughter in law are just as dedicated to the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek community at large through selfless volunteer work, heading committees and festivals. Her two grandsons, George and Andrew are studying at Holy Cross Seminary of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. In fact, George has graduated with a Masters of Divinity and is working on his Masters of Theology. Andrew is just beginning to work on his Masters of Divinity. It is her fervent prayer that somehow she has had some "impact" on their lives - and that they will go on to impact others in a positive and beneficial way.

Stella still remembers one event that will forever remain imprinted in her soul. She never quite grasped the "whole picture" of how many years and how many students came and went through her dance initiatives until Father Serviou, at an impromptu presentation to her during one of St. Nicholas' Food Festivals, asked anyone who she had taught to stand. Almost everyone in the hall stood.

To this day, she continues to tirelessly teach; now to the "tots" of Holy Trinity as well as conversational Greek to adults. She truly believes that wherever their lives may lead them, they are the "future ambassadors" of the beautiful Greek Heritage.





Mary Doreza

Mary has been blessed to work with Greek-Americans through the Ladies Philoptochos Society, the senior citizens group of YASOU, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh Council, and other Greek-Orthodox Church-related organizations.

However, for the last 30 years, most of her volunteer time has been dedicated to being the director of the "Grecian Odyssey Dancers of Ypapanti". Through this experience, she has also been able to reach out to Americans in the greater community.

In May of 1981, it was the Ypapanti Piloptochos' turn to represent Greek-Americans at the 25th Annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival at Civic Arena. As Program Chairman, she assembled 13 boys and 13 girls - some from sister churches - and one who was a non-Greek friend of an Ypapanti Dancer, to perform one show. Thanks to John Powers and his Greek Cultural Center in Forest Hills, she used his space to practice. Three months later, another group who was using the Center, asked her to have the group perform for them. Sixteen of the original 26 responded to the call, and from that point, decided to be a regular dance

troupe.

Since then, more than 270 Grecian Odyssey Dancers of YPapanti have performed before 1030 audiences in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, Florida, and New York, plus on three performance tours of Greece. The group is capable of performing 25 dances of various regions of Greece and proudly wears costumes representing specific areas of Greece.

As a retired French teacher, the Grecian Odyssey Dancers, have provided Mary with an opportunity to continue in her field of education. Although she does not personally teach the Greek folk dances, she arranges for proper instruction and tries to give the background of the dances to the young people. She also tries to develop for them a positive experience of working together as representatives of their heritage and faith.

Over the years, Mary's group has been fortunate to have Dancers from seven of the Pittsburgh area Greek Orthodox Churches, as well as seven Dancers who are not of Greek descent. Nine marriages have resulted from the group, and many have chosen other Dancers as "koumbaroi". It has been very rewarding for Mary to see the bonding of friendships within the group, and the willingness of young Greek-Americans from the entire Pittsburgh area, to work together.

Of course, by participating in Greek Folk Dance Festivals within the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, as well as in Florida, the Dancers have shared an appreciation of the Hellenic heritage with many others. Mary never misses an opportunity to share her Greek heritage with audiences at regional festivals and other performances, by explaining the geography, history and characteristics of the regions of Greece that are represented.

Through frequent performances at multi-ethnic programs, the Grecian Odyssey Dancers develop a sincere appreciation and pride of Greek heritage, their own and for those that are not of Greek descent-the one they have come to lovingly adopt.

For this, Mary is grateful, and she thanks the Grecian Odyssey Dancers for enriching her life.





Koula Pantzoulas

Koula has touched Greeks and non-Greeks alike, not only in Western PA, but also from as far away as Greece, through excellence in Greek dance, especially as she aims to bring the lesser-known and the most technically-demanding dances of her homeland to America. Koula has been dancing from when she was young. She learned to dance with the best teachers of Greece, including the renowned "Dora Stratou Dance Group" from the "Ellinidon" Lycaeum. Her tireless love for the art and the detail of the most demanding forms compels her, to this day, to participate in dance workshops in various parts of Greece during the summer months.

Koula has taught Greek Dance in the Western PA area since 1979 when she began teaching in a Greek Church in Beaver County in 1979 to little children and then to older kids. She also taught at St-Nicholas Cathedral in Oakland. Koula continues to teach not only Greeks, but Americans of all ages and nationalities. Her students range in age from young to old. They consist of those with simple curiosity to students, to young professionals and dedicated artists.

Koula emphasizes the importance of moving past the usual, and showing the rare and the most historically-accurate and authentic. Through dance, she aims at teaching the customs of the local people who lay behind it sensitizing her students about the colorful mosaicism and the shades of Greek culture. A

rich and bold culture deeply rooted in ancient Greek history. Perhaps the oldest expressions of Greek dance culture can be found in the customs of the pre-Lenten period (referred to as the Greek "Mardi Gras"). Koula's research on the topic and its exhibition in Western PA challenged Greek-Americans as well as non-Greeks to consider Greek dances beyond the common themes supporting local festivities. Her group's outreach to Americans was in the form of her group, "The Olympic Dancers". The group participated in many events, from local to as far away as Greece, and received accolades for their mastery of technically-challenging forms. For 26 years, the "Olympic Dancers" have been participating in the Greek Independence Day parade in New York City. They have been welcomed and received accolades from personalities as diverse as Greek state officials and diplomatic representatives to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, most recently in the form of an honorary proclamation.

In 1993, The Olympic Dancers were formally invited to Greece to represent the USA Greek Diaspora. Their performances took them across Greece, from the mainland to the islands.

The group's dedication and proficiency compelled the beloved Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh to sponsor them and their work under the name "Homeric Dancers" and then through the honor of "The Olympic Dancers of the Diocese of Pittsburgh", in paternal love and in recognition of their excellence and devotion to the Diocese (now Metropolis) of Pittsburgh.

The most authentic and oldest dance forms require the most authentic and oldest costumes. Koula has devoted significant time and effort personally sewing and rendering those costumes to the finest detail.

Koula's outreach extends to hospitality, especially during the festive seasonal holidays, where Koula's home, to this day, opens to the Greek students in Western PA institutes of learning. Through a Greek atmosphere, her aim is to strengthen the love of Greece among those already acculturated and to initiate the philhellenes to the rich culture.

Koula believes passionately in excellence though authenticity. The support and love of her family have provided her with the strength to carry on her service of promoting Greece through dance. Her sons Dimitri and Spiro, today proudly carry on the excellence passed on to them.

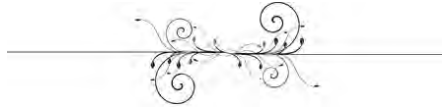




For the many years promoting Greece
to Western PA
through the media

Aliki Andrews





Aliko Andrews

She was born in Samos. Her story began in 1960 when she met her husband Mike and married him that same year. They came to America even though Aliko's grasp of English was fledgling. They have two boys, George and Kimon who attended Greek School. Aliko's passion for Greek and Hellenism compelled her to teach 3 times a week at Holy Cross Greek School for 17 years and then for 3 years at All Saints Greek School in Canonsburg. Her passion was to have all children learn the Greek language, the traditions and the culture of Greece.

For Aliko however, this was not enough. She wanted to offer more to the Greek community of Pittsburgh. One day, Jimmy Paul (Psihoulis) of the Greek Radio program called her and asked if she would like to continue his program as he was going to relocate to Florida. After consulting with her good friend, Gloria Mandros, she agreed. Gloria would speak in English and Aliko in Greek. Sadly, due to commitments, Gloria departed the program. Aliko's husband Mike was recruited to fill the void.

For 36 years now, Aliko and Mike have kept alive the Greek Radio Program which is listened to not only by Greeks but by many Americans in our region. Through the program, Greek community events were prominently projected to our area. Particularly popular were the news from Greece, at a time before satellite TV or the internet were even available. The Voice of Orthodoxy also provided inspiration to Greek and non-Greek Orthodox Christians in our region.

Aliko also brought Greek movies from New York to different theaters in the Pittsburgh area, such as Ambridge, Dormont, and others. The halls were filled to capacity in those years with Greeks and non-Greek movie lovers who came to see the legends Aliko Vougiouklaki, Thanassis Veggos and many others.

Aliko also organized many trips to different parts of the USA, with participants from Aliquippa, Monessen and Pittsburgh. She also organized cruises and air trips to Europe and Hawaii.

Aliko continues to participate in entities that project Hellenism locally and globally. First appointed in 1995, she continues to serve as one of the regional representatives of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (S.A.E.) and also sits on its governing council. She has served the Greek American Progressive Association (G.A.P.A.) for many years and was the President of the Pittsburgh Chapter (Socrates-Daphne) for 15 years. She is also a member of the Greek Nationality Room support committee and continues to serve the Philoptochos of Holy Cross (Mt-Lebanon) for more than 40 years now.

Aliko's joy, her 3 grandchildren, Nicholas John, John Michael and Yasmina Maria, motivate her even further to support and encourage the study of the Greek language, culture and Orthodox Christianity.





For the many years promoting Greece
to Western PA
through Greek language education

Maria Stamoolis, Irene Strintzis





Maria Stamoolis

Maria became involved with the Greek School at St. Nicholas after eighteen years of teaching in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. She has been the Principal of St. Nicholas Cathedral Greek School since 1993 and the Coordinator of Greek Education for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh since 1998.

As a child of Greek immigrants, Maria's involvement in the Greek community of Pittsburgh and her love for the Orthodox faith was inspired by her parents early on. It is this love for the Orthodox faith which continues to nourish her desire to spread the treasures of this Holy Greek language to others.

Some of Maria's activities have included compiling the resource booklet "Learning Greek, a Vocabulary Builder" and the pamphlet "Greek for Caregivers," which aids non-Greek speaking caregivers. She has instituted St. Nicholas as a proficiency testing center for the "Ellinomatheias Exam" from Greece, and established Point Park University as a testing center for the Comprehensive Exam for Modern Greek for Regents Credit with Dr. Dimitris Kraniou. Maria brought the Odysseas Project, an online systematic Greek language tutor of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Canada's Simon Fraser University, to the Metropolis. Maria also organized the Armonia Children's Chorus.

Maria has been blessed to serve our Lord through Greek Education with the support of her family. Working with many talented and hardworking educators and parents, it has been rewarding to see students with and without Greek roots adopt and promote Hellenism and Orthodoxy through the study of the Greek language.





Irene Strintzis

Irene has been actively involved in the promotion and expression of Hellenic culture and ideals since she arrived in the United States in the early seventies. She started by teaching at the St. Nicholas Greek School, and has been a Professor of Modern Greek Language at the University of Pittsburgh for over 25 years. Over the course of her teaching career, Irene has touched the lives of hundreds of students. These students develop an appreciation for the intricacy and beauty of the Greek language, and are often inspired to visit Greece and learn more about the language and the Greek history.

Her interest in Hellenism and its relevance to the modern world has continued outside of the classroom. She has participated (often behind the scenes) in several Greek-American cultural groups, and has authored several plays and skits which were used by the St. Nicholas Greek School.





For the many years
promoting the good name of Greek-Americans
through community
and
philanthropy

Athena Sarris, Georgia Antinopoulos, Mary Vasilakis





Athena Sarris

Mrs. Sarris is as integral to the human fabric of Western Pennsylvania as she is to the mosaic that makes up the beautiful Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ inside All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Canonsburg. Together with her husband, the late Archon Frank Sarris of blessed memory, she embarked on a life of love, service, and success. Athena and Frank are blessed with two children, as well as grand and great grand children. Their home is always filled with friends and relatives sharing in their love and earthly blessings. Theirs is a story worth repeating over and over again for many generations.

She and her husband together moved deep into the conscience of the good people of Western PA through works of unselfish charity and acts of anonymous expressions of love which helped young and old alike. Her parish, All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Canonsburg was and continues to be the recipient of her filial embrace with contributions known and unknown that help make life at All Saints that much more special.

Their outreach to Americans of Western Pennsylvania is eponymous and anonymous. Frank and Athena were instrumental for the realization of the new two story 30,000 square foot Canonsburg Library, an investment in education and formation of the youth of their community. Without Frank and Athena, the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC would not have the Frank and Athena Sarris Clinical Endowment and the Frank Sarris Outpatient Clinic, helping provide the best and most compassionate pre- and postsurgical care to transplant patients as well as critical research to realise simpler solutions to transplantation. Frank and Athena have also contributed to the University of Pittsburgh Library Fund, the Department of Athletics, and the Panther Club Athletic Scholarship Fund.

Frank and Athena's generosity and outreach extends to the Washington Area Humane Society, Animal Friends, Canonsburg Hospital, Washington Hospital, the Washington County Food Bank and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

The Greek Orthodox Diocese (now Metropolis) of Pittsburgh and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America have also been blessed with the love and generosity of Frank and Athena, helping their ministries of institutions and social outreach programs.

It was Athena, who encouraged her husband to quit his job as a forklift operator in their early years to pursue candy making full time. She worked as a secretary and kept the family afloat while the business grew. For 33 years, the Sarris family lived in an apartment above their candy store, returning the profits back into the business. Today, Sarris Candies is a household name in America.

With the passing of her husband, Athena faces a new challenge in her life. As she had all her life, she will rise to the top and continue her husband's legacy while bringing comfort and joy to her loved ones and those less fortunate.





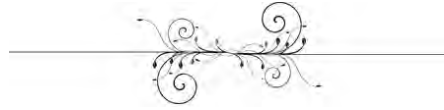
Georgia Kontelis Antinopoulos

Georgia was 31 years old when she began teaching Sunday School. This year marks 55 years of service as a Sunday School teacher. She also taught Greek School for 15 years in which she is now an assistant. Her Ladies' Philoptohos, of the Holy Trinity Church of Ambridge, Pennsylvania became an integral part of her life beginning 60 years ago. She has served on the National Philoptohos Board for 12 years; 12 years on the Diocese (now Metropolis) of Pittsburgh Philoptohos Board in which she is still active. She has also worked for approximately 15 years with a program called "Outreach", which distributes food to the needy at the Methodist Church in her hometown (Sewickley). She also participates in cooking meals, along with her sister Ladies' Philoptochos, at United Presbyterian Church in her town, where they also collect and distribute clothing for the needy.

Her commitment to philanthropic service also includes a gratifying experience of love, started 20 years ago, when she began welcoming patients from Greece at the airport and facilitating their care in medical institutes of Western Pennsylvania. She acted as an intermediary between Greek medical centers and local ones.

She continues to serve as President of her Philoptohos Chapter (Ambridge, PA) and will continue to dedicate the rest of her life in God's service.





Mary Vasilakis

Mary Vasilakis was born in Pittsburgh shortly after her parents George and Catherine Vasilakis emigrated from Crete. In 1938, Mary and her siblings Nancy and John, lived in Crete, experiencing life on the island, until the outbreak of World War II when they returned to the United States and Pittsburgh.

Although Mary was career-oriented, being among the first women to achieve management status at the Westinghouse Electric Corporation, she never lost sight of her Cretan roots. In 1948, the President of the Pancretan Association of America (PAA) asked her to put together a program of activities for the youth attending the Pittsburgh convention. That group evolved to become the Pancretan Youth of America and Mary was their representative at the 1953 excursion to Crete for the dedication of the Venizelion Sanatorium.

Throughout her life, Mary has served the PAA, a cornerstone of the Greek-American community, fostering philanthropy, educational programs, scholarships and cultural events. Locally, she held many offices including President of the Pittsburgh Chapter. At the national level, she was General Secretary of the Association, Scholarship Chair, Women's Executive Director, Trustee and Chairman of the Pancretan Endowment Fund (PEF) for the Universities of Crete. She is currently Trustee Emerita of the PEF which sponsors summer programs for American students at the Universities of Crete, funds exchange programs for American and Greek medical students and projects such as the University of Crete Press, the first of its kind in Greece and southern Europe.

In her local community, Mary served on the Stowe Township council and was for many years Judge of Elections for her Squirrel Hill District. She was appointed by Governor Shapp to the Allegheny County Board of Assistance and was a member of the Pennsylvania delegation to the first White House Conference on Libraries and Information Centers. After her retirement from Westinghouse, she volunteered at Inroads Pittsburgh and most recently at UPMC providing assistance to families from Greece.

Mary also held a number of offices while serving on the Greek Room Committee at the University of Pittsburgh, and, in the early days of the Maids of Athena, was President and District Governor of that organization. She has been a life-long member of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.





For the many years promoting
the humanitarian soul and spirit
of Greece and Greeks
to Western PA and beyond

Dr. Yolanda Avram Willis





Dr. Yolanda Avram Willis

Dr. Willis speaks of righteous Greek rescuers of Jews from personal experience. Her family lived in Larisa, where her father was the President of the Jewish Community, until Germany attacked in the April of 1941. They were then hidden by Greek Orthodox people in Crete and in several places in Athens. After the war she attended the American College in Hellenikon, near Athens, then came to the U.S. to study Chemistry on a Fulbright Scholarship, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and after three years, including a year in Greece, she graduated with honors. She earned an M.A. degree in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, and a Masters and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Since 1992 she embarked on an oral history project interviewing Greek survivors and rescuers of the little known Holocaust in Greece. Dr. Willis lectures nationally and is an active member of the Holocaust Commission, the board of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. She has taught Holocaust courses at Carnegie Mellon University's Academy for Lifelong Learning and has served as a volunteer interviewer for Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

In the fall of 1996 Dr. Willis facilitated the production of a documentary film on rescue in Greece, "It Was Nothing It Was Everything." Later she project managed another documentary on liberation from a subcamp of Mauthausen, "The Door is Open, You Can Go." In 1997 she was privileged to accompany His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople on his visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum where she made a short presentation about her rescuers in Athens who became fugitives for having harbored her family. In 1999 she was invited to be one of the Keynote speakers during the installation of Nobel Laureate Eli Wiesel as Humanitarian of the Year by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Mr. Wiesel was genuinely moved by her remarks. Dr. Willis received a standing ovation by the more than 1000 invited guests.

She has written a forthcoming book *A Hidden Child in Greece: Rescue During the Holocaust*. Several of her stories have been included in *Flares of Memory: Childhood Stories Written by Holocaust Survivors*, published in 1998 by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, United Jewish Federation, and later brought forth by Oxford University Press in a shorter hardback edition in 271. Her chapter on "Rescue in Volos" was included in the American Hellenic Institute Foundation's book "Greece's Pivotal Role in World War II and its Importance to the U.S. Today". Her stories of Rescue of Jews in Greece have appeared in every issue of the literary journal of "Signatures", published by Carnegie Mellon University's, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

In 1996 she was a panelist in a symposium organized by the Pancretan Association in Washington, DC. At the same convention, on the occasion of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Crete, she was one of three keynoters, along with the President of Drexel University, and the author of two best selling books on the invasion and occupation of Crete. In 1997 she was the Scholar in Residence in Richmond Virginia, when the Greek Orthodox Cathedral and the largest conservative Jewish synagogue in town hosted three of her lectures attended by three generations of their joint congregations.

Dr. Willis is a Speaker at the Boston Public Library, and Duquesne University. She has been teaching teachers how to teach the Holocaust for over ten years at the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh She has spoken in Silver Spring, MD, at the ICC in Washington, DC, at the Virginia Holocaust Museum, and at countless schools, churches and synagogues, including the Cathedrals in Pittsburgh, Richmond and, on the occasion of OXI Day, in Philadelphia.

"Among the many interviews I have conducted for the Virginia Holocaust museum, this one left her more drained than any other. In simple words, she told her powerful, chilling story of a childhood in hiding, as Julia. Then, many years later, as Yolanda Willis, she returned with her family to have them meet those "flickers of light in that vastness of evil called in Greek "The Persecution" - Inge W. Horowitz, Docent and Interviewer, Virginia Holocaust Museum

Author and clinician, Sorelle Baker, MSW, wrote: "This brilliant book is a luminous, unforgettable tale of bravery in the face of persecution. It permits the reader to feel with its author the horror of her childhood memories of surviving the Nazi policy of Jewish "extermination" in Greece by assuming false identities and struggling for subsistence during the war. It also tells the stories of other survivors as well as giving the reader a sense of the history of the Jews in Greece. It offers a unique look at a little-known piece of Holocaust history."



ABOUT THE AMERICAN HELLENIC FOUNDATION OF
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA, A 501(c)3 NON-PROFIT ENTITY

www.pahellenicfoundation.org

The mission of the American-Hellenic Foundation of Western Pennsylvania (AHFWP) is to foster greater understanding of the culture, history, language and arts of Greece, past and present, by providing funds for scholarships, research and education in established or seed programs that address these aims, in worthy institutions of higher learning in Western Pennsylvania and by sponsoring academic and cultural programs and events linking the two great nations of America and Greece.

The centerpiece and conduit of activities which will enable the mission of the Foundation will be a Hellenic Cultural Center and Heritage Museum to be located in the center of Western Pennsylvania's quadrant of its major institutes of higher learning such as the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon University.

This Center will serve as a meeting place of students, visitors and all individuals interested in learning all about the Greek experience in, and contribution to Western Pennsylvania and will serve as a central resource to connect all interested individuals with every aspect of modern and historical Greece.

During its first years, the Foundation has sponsored and supported the following events:

"The Bacchae", A Theatrical Production of Leonidas Loizides (Greece), 2008

The Contribution of Greek-Americans to Western PA: An Exhibit, 2008

"The Greeks of Western Pennsylvania Celebrating our Heritage and Contribution" , DVD and online documentary, 2008

"The Community Humanitarian Award - Deacon Evripides Christulides", 2009

"Plato's Academy", Greek Film Soiree as part of the Carnegie-Mellon University International Film Festival, 2010

"Nenikikamen", making the 2011 Pittsburgh Marathon an event themed along the lines of "2500 Years since the first Marathon" in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Marathon Organization

"The Pheidippides Award", an annual award given to a deserving individual in the context of the Pittsburgh Marathon, 2011

Future events include:

- Carnegie-Mellon University International Film Festival (Greek Soiree) - 2012
- The Greek Vineyards - A Festival of Up and Coming Greek Wines - 2012
- Distinguished Speakers Series - 2012
- Greek Film Nights - 2012





THE FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE VOLUNTEER ORGANIZERS FOR THIS EVENT:

Steve Andrews, Nikos Andrianos, Rebecca Bertos, Deacon Fr. Evipides Christulides, Marion Constantinides-Bennett, Nick Giannoukakis, Joanna Darakos (Master-of-Ceremonies), Joanne Melacrinis, Venetia Vlastos-Moreno (Chair), Irene Strintzis-Guminski

Special thanks to Alexandra Loutsion and James Lesniak

Our Greek-American Community Partners

American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), Pittsburgh Chapter
Greek American Progressive Association (GAPA), Pittsburgh Chapter
Pan-Rhodian Association
Pan-Icarian Association
Pancretan Association
Pan-Karpathian Educational and Progressive Association

A sincere thank you to everyone tonight for coming to, and participating in this special event

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