

# PanHellenic Scholarship Recipients Bring Pride and Honor as 2014 Brightest Scholars



Which close to 500 supporters in attendance, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation (PHSF) recognized the outstanding academic accomplishments of 40 exceptional Greek American undergraduates at the 2014 Gala held in the International Ballroom of the Hilton Chicago on Saturday, June 14, 2014. A total of \$250,000 in scholarship awards were presented to recipients from across the country, attending such prestigious universities as Stanford, Dartmouth, MIT, Johns Hopkins and the University of Chicago.

"This year's recipients brought pride and honor to the Greek American Community as have all of our scholarship recipients," said **Chris P. Tomaras**, Founder and Chairman of the PHSF. "When we began the mission of promoting education through scholarships, cultural enrichment programs and leadership building, I never imagined that we would have awarded a total of \$2 million to 264 outstanding undergraduates. All of our recipients have demonstrated remarkable academic excellence. We are very proud of their accomplishments," continued Mr. Tomaras.

**Pete Zervakis**, reporter for the ABC television affiliate, WKOW in Madison, Wisconsin, was Master of Ceremonies. A 2008 Pan-Hellenic scholarship recipient himself, Pete shared his personal story of how a PanHellenic Scholarship Award changed his life. For Pete, it was a full circle moment that inspired all of the recipients in attendance.

Executive Director of the Foundation, Yanni Valsamas, thanked Mr. Tomaras in his remarks for his untiring efforts by saying: "Mr. Tomaras, your commitment to educating youth has led you to make the kinds of personal sacrifices and fiscal contributions one would expect in a great leader." Following his remarks, Mr. Valsamas began the Awards Ceremony by calling to the stage each of the 2014 recipients. Presenting the awards were Mr. Tomaras and Dr. George Alexopoulos, Chairman of the Foundation's Academic Committee. One by one the proud recipients received their certificate and award, pausing for photographs by family and friends.

Thanking the Foundation on behalf of this year's recipients was **Dimitrios Nikitopoulos**, a freshman at Johns Hopkins University pursuing a degree in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Robotics. "We share the pride of a rich heritage...We share the pride of a culture that stresses the importance of hard work, conviction, and love of family. This is a culture of values and principles practiced by our parents and grandparents and conveyed to us by them through our upbringing." He concluded his remarks by expressing that each of the students share in the pride and honor of being a PanHellenic Scholar.

The Foundations' 2014 Paradigm Award was bestowed on James D. Speros, Executive Vice President and Chief Creative Officer of Fidelity Investments. Mr. Speros delivered a powerful speech with advice to the scholarship recipients urging them to be proud of their name and carry it responsibly, with honor and respect, while always applying in their daily lives the values of Hellenism and Orthodoxy. "I am honored and privileged to be the 2014 Paradigm Award recipient. It is a testament to the Hellenic values my parents instilled in me and the results of the many sacrifices they made to ensure I receive a college education and a chance to succeed in life," said James Speros.

A number of Church and Community leaders attended the event that included His Eminence Metropolitan lakovos of Chicago, the Hon. Consul General of Greece in Chicago Ioanna Efthymiadou, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Hon. Judge Paul Lillios, the Hon. Judge James Booras, the Hon. Judge Louis Apostol, the Provost of Deree College, Dr. Thimios Zaharopoulos, and several educational and business personalities and members of the press.

"I am truly grateful to our donors, guests, Mr. James Speros and our recipients who made the 2014 Awards Ceremony and Gala not only a successful fundraiser, but an enjoyable, uplifting evening," said Chris Tomaras. Continued on page 3....

# The 2014/15 Application is Here!

Could you or someone you know use \$10,000 toward a higher education?

Please visit www.panhellenicscholarships.org to download the application or call 312-357-6432.

Application deadline is January 31, 2015.



## A Message from Our Chairman

Live, Learn, Lead

Foundation to ensure that our Greek American Youth had the means to pursue a higher education, inspiring them to do better and become significant achievers in American society. The Foundation was based on the pursuit and preservation of Hellenic values, knowledge and excellence—a mission we still hold dear and true today—*as we have awarded over \$2 million to 264 Greek American undergraduates.* This is no small feat, and one that would not have been possible without the efforts of our board, staff, and countless supporters over the years who also believe in our mission and our goal of *Building a better America through Education & Hellenism*.

Over the years we have grown as an organization, expanding our reach as a national institution and creating opportunities for our Youth through unique cultural experiences and leadership programs. We have sent 34 students for their very first time to Greece—a promise that became a reality in 2012 through **Hellenic Birthright**. We have created networking opportunities through our **PanHellenic Honors Society**, and fostered within each of our scholarship recipients the desire to *live*, *learn* and *lead*.

As supporters of this worthy endeavor, you made the difference and contributed to our success—and the success of hundreds of college students. The familiar proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" comes to mind, because the work of raising a child cannot be done alone; but rather, an entire community must participate to guarantee success. I thank you all for participating, and I express to you my heartfelt gratitude.

I look toward the future with excitement as we work on new programs and partnerships, and hope you will continue to take this journey with us as a friend and supporter of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. Your contributions have offered life-changing opportunities, and together, we will continue to do so.

With Gratitude, Chris P. Tomaras



## Meet the Master of Ceremonies

Q&A with Pete Zervakis

PHSF: What did it feel like standing at the podium overlooking the audience at the Awards Ceremony? Was it a full circle moment?

**PZ:** It was absolutely surreal. In the months before the gala, I watched DVDs of some of the previous emcees, like Dean Richards, Lou Canellis, John Metaxas and many of those who have had the privilege of emceeing this event. It was amazing to think I would now be mentioned and recognized at the same level with them. It was quite emotional looking down at this year's recipients and remembering my own walk across the stage to receive my scholarship. That was six years ago, but being back at the gala brought back many wonderful memories from that night.

## PHSF: How did your PanHellenic Scholarship change the course of your career, or life?

PZ: As I spoke about at the gala, receiving a scholarship allowed me to meet Mr. John Metaxas, who emceed the 2008 event, and his kindness and confidence in me helped me land my first internship at WCBS-TV in New York. Internships are critical to finding a full time job, and I feel that internship put me on the right track to eventually getting hired as a reporter. Had I not received a PanHellenic Scholarship, I don't think I ever would have met Mr. Metaxas, and my career might have developed totally differently.

## PHSF: In one word, what advice would you give to college students today? Why is this important?

**PZ:** Connect. Whether it's connecting with other scholarship recipients, connecting with professors, or connecting with people in the industry you hope to work in, you can never know too many people. Ask for career advice, develop friendships and make connections so that when opportunities arise you'll hear about them and have plenty of people that can serve as references for you. You're not looking for a handout, but you're looking for people that can help you get your foot in the door of whatever industry you hope to work in.

Pete Zervakis is a 2008 PanHellenic Scholarship recipient who now works as a reporter at WKOW-TV, the ABC affiliated television station in Madison, Wisconsin. Before entering the world of broadcast news, Pete graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with highest honors. His reporting has been honored by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association as well as the State Bar of Wisconsin.



## 2014 Paradigm Award Recipient Encourages PanHellenic Scholars to Bring Pride & Honor to their Name

he PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation was proud to honor **James D. Speros** as its 2014 Paradigm Award recipient. The Paradigm Award is presented to a distinguished Greek American whose career and accomplishments are a testimony to the Foundation's mission and who serves as an example for our scholarship recipients to follow.

Mr. Speros exemplifies the meaning of *paradigma*, and learned the importance of *bringing pride and honor to one's name* from his parents, who emigrated from Greece to the United States before the Great Depression in the 1920s. His ancestral roots hail from the islands of Rhodes and Crete. Born in New York City, Mr. Speros graduated magna cum laude from Baruch College with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Marketing. He also holds an Advanced Management Certificate from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

James Speros currently serves as Fidelity Investments Executive Vice President and Chief Creative Officer. In this role, he leads all creative development and corporate sponsoring activities for more

than 30 businesses and organizations, and is considered one of the top thought leaders in marketing and advertising. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Ad Council, as Board Chairman of BPA International and Chairman of the Board of the Association of National Advertisers. James Speros is the recipient of numerous industry awards and has been inducted into the prestigious American Advertising Federation–Advertising Hall of Achievement.

As a Greek Orthodox Christian, his faith is paramount in his life. He has served as a member of the Archdiocesan Council, provided consultative guidance on the Archdiocese's Communications Committee, and is a full member of Leadership 100 and an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Order of Saint Andrew.

James D. Speros has lived by his core belief of bringing pride and honor to his name. He embodies the true meaning of the Paradigm Award, representing how the principles of his Hellenic upbringing provided him with the seeds to succeed.

## **Continued from cover**

"Pride and Honor were at the core of this event as we are very proud of the significant accomplishments our PanHellenic Scholars have made and will continue to make as life-long achievers. We honor them and wish them success and happiness as they pursue their career goals. Our goal is to continue to expand our mission. Let us make the investment in the talents of our young people, so that we may continue our great legacy of education and the pursuit of excellence," encouraged Mr. Tomaras.

With the conclusion of the Awards Ceremony, guests enjoyed delicious appetizers and dinner, with musical entertainment by award winning singer **Babis Tsertos** who came from Greece exclusively for this event and offered his performance pro-bono. Mr. Tsertos was accompanied by his son Yiannis Tsertos on the piano along with Chicago's own Hellenic 5 orchestra and vocalist Eftihia Papageorgiou.

The Foundation expresses a special thanks to all of the donors who took part in the **Chairman's Challenge** initiative. Among them, the **Premier Benefactors** who each provided a \$10,000 scholarship. We are deeply indebted to everyone for their donation whether large or small. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of Greek American college students who will become life-long significant achievers.



## A Message from our Executive Director

Thank you for Becoming our Philanthropic Partner

n behalf of the Foundation, I want to thank each of you for helping us meet our goal of providing scholarship awards to deserving students, and for helping us reach an even bigger goal worth celebrating: *our triumph in raising* \$2 million dollars in scholarship funds since the founding of this great institution.

These grants have enabled young Greek men and women to overcome financial limitations and transform personal aspirations into success stories. By recognizing the potential of youth in the public eye and exposing them to new experiences, our Foundation certifies them as vital to our Community, prepares them to become global citizens, and inspires others to do the same.

2014 is a big year because it marks a milestone year for our Foundation. Our success could not have been possible without your support. Mr. Tomaras' initiative, the **Chairman's Challenge**—in which he asked you to pledge \$1,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000 and then doubled the value of your contributions with matching funds—inspires many of us to want to do the same. His altruism has successfully enlisted a number of strong believers that responded and became meaningful benefactors of our cause.

We thank each of you for contributing to this milestone, and for recognizing that all anniversaries and missions are made possible by believing in our common goal.

Thank you, Yanni Valsamas

# 2014 AWARDS CEREMONY gala







































All photos from the 2014 Awards Gala are available online in the photos section of our website.

























# New Partnership Announced with

The American College of Greece



The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is proud to announce an exclusive study abroad scholarship to all of its past and present award recipients from the prestigious American College of Greece (DEREE-ACG), designed specifically for the Foundation.

This special partnership was first announced at the Foundation's Awards Ceremony and Gala on Saturday, June 14, 2014. "We are happy to cooperate with the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation as we recognize its valuable service to the community. In this spirit, we offer to each past and present recipient a scholarship of value, as we believe these students have the wherewithal to capitalize on this opportunity that will provide them with a significant educational and cultural experience at our fine institution" said the Provost of DEREE-ACG, Dr. Thimios Zaharopoulos.

The Study Abroad experience has become a global educational trend which millions of students from around the globe partake in each year. What better way to enrich the lives of young scholars than with an opportunity to study in the land of their ancestors, while earning college credit transferable to their home institution. Each \$3,000 scholarship is good for a portion of one academic term of study at DEREE-ACG for each recipient.

If you are a past PanHellenic Scholarship Award Recipient and would like to participate in this exclusive initiative, please call 312-357-6432 or email info@panhellenicscholarships.org.

# Save-the-Date

Our next Awards Ceremony & Gala will take place on

# SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2015

at the Hilton Chicago where we will again award \$250,000 to outstanding Greek American undergraduates.

We hope to see you there!



## Scholar Spotlight Alexandra Plattos

Alexandra Plattos is a 2010 PanHellenic Scholarship recipient who received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Illinois at Chicago, before receiving her Master of Music in Vocal Performance degree from North Park University. This past July, Alexandra performed the role of Frasquita in the Midwest Institute of Opera's production of *Carmen*. She is

a soprano who most recently won the grand prize for the Senior Division at the Joliet Symphony Orchestra's (JSO) Concerto Competition and will be performing with the JSO next May. Outside of performing, Alexandra actively supports music education while teaching private lessons in both voice and piano. **Congratulations Alexandra**!

"After receiving the generous PanHellenic Scholarship four years ago, this summer was the first time that I have been able to help with the Awards Ceremony and Gala. The whole Foundation welcomed me back with open arms—they were excited to have me, and I was excited to be there. As a recipient of this award, we have the opportunity to become part of a network that encourages education, community, and growth. Its support reaches far beyond the initial award and continues with us as we make our way through life. Thank you, Mr. Tomaras and the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation for your enthusiasm and continued support."

# $i \Sigma N S M$ Stavros Niarchos Foundation 4-Year Scholarship Program Concludes

In 2010, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation was awarded two four-year scholarships from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation totaling \$80,000—Mina Zissopoulos of New York and Andreas Kalantzis of Illinois were the recipients of these life-changing scholarships. As the end of this grant period recently came to a close, we are happy to report that both students graduated college with a high GPA this past May. Grateful for the financial support they received, they now look toward a bright future. Συγχαρητήρια και εις ανώτερα!



"The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Four-Year Scholarship is a blessing, or what can only be described as " $\epsilon v \lambda o \gamma (\alpha$ ." This scholarship has given both my mother and me peace of mind; a single mom with three children, she works full-time, but still struggles to make ends meet. The cost of living is high, and college is expensive, but this generous award has given me the opportunity to focus on my studies without worrying about how I could

afford to attend NYU. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been selected by the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation as a recipient of this award. With this support, I gained the confidence to successfully complete the rigorous pre-med track at NYU, and I am now one step closer to achieving my dream of becoming a doctor."

-Mina Zissopoulos, New York University '14



"Going to college today can be quite costly between the rates of tuition, prices of books, and not to mention the cost of living. This scholarship has allowed me to pursue my dreams and attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and I know that without it my dreams would not have been fulfilled because I would not have been able to afford the rates of the university. The \$40,000 scholarship has meant the world to me and I am

forever grateful for the opportunities that it has provided. It has always been my dream and the dream of my parents to see a child attend a prestigious university, and with the assistance of this scholarship, both of our dreams have become a reality. I am so blessed and humbled to have been chosen as a recipient and I hope that when I am a Healthcare Administrator I will be able to give back to others who are in need of financial assistance. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and support."

-Andy Kalantzis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign '14

# 2014 PanHellenic Award Recipients

Steve Eustratios Alexander III - Georgia Institute of Technology Maria Anastasia Arianas - University of Illinois at Chicago Aristos Athanasiou Athens - Stanford University Nicholas Chingas - Saint Joseph's University Marie Steven Christophell - DePaul University Costa Dimitrios Christopoulos - Massachusetts Institute of Technology Timothy Christopher Daly - Pennsylvania State University Peter Michail Danos - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Talia Lasandra Davis - Arizona State University Christopher Steven-James Deloglos - Virginia Commonwealth University Anastasia Fitzpatrick - Utica College Jennifer Andrea Fokas - Northwestern University Sophia Joy Gianou - University of Wisconsin – Whitewater Julia Mary Horiates - East Carolina University Jason Keith Ioannides - Virginia Tech Christina G. Karahalios - DePaul University George John Kartsounis - Virginia Tech Katherine Valerie Katsivalis - University of Illinois at Chicago Christina Khouri - Illinois Wesleyan University Katherine Demi Kokkinias - University of Wisconsin – Madison Jason Kourkouvis - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Malamo Koutsogiannis - CUNY Hunter College Margarita Sanchez Montgomery - Dartmouth College Dimitrios George Nikitopoulos - Johns Hopkins University Dimitrios Pagonakis - Massachusetts Institute of Technology Evangelia Maria Pagones - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Christina Maria Palis - University of Rochester Patrice Victoria Pirpiris - Loyola University – Chicago Katerina Finny Powers - Michigan State University Alexander George Przeslawski - Dartmouth College Kathy Golfo Rodogiannis - Trinity College Vasilis Vournous Sitaras - New York University Nicholas John Sotos - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Samuel Patrick Sullivan - The University of Chicago Katerina Christina Svigos - New York University Thomas Stavros Topalis - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Dimitris S. Tselepatiotis - University of Illinois at Chicago Sofia Eleni Vatougios - Saint Xavier University William George Vergados - University of Illinois at Chicago Victor Angelos Zaharopoulos - University of Kansas

Visit our website to read more about our 2014 Scholarship Award Recipients.



"I am especially proud to have received this prestigious scholarship from a Foundation that cares so deeply about the success of each and every award recipient. I look forward to making the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation proud through my own future scholarly successes and hope to one day assist in touching the life of a Hellenic student in the way that this Foundation has assisted so many other Hellenic undergraduate students."

-Maria Arianas, University of Illinois at Chicago



"It is such an honor to have been selected as one of the recipients and I am very grateful for this support. The financial assistance you provided will be of great help to me in paying my educational expenses, and it will allow me to concentrate more on my studies."

-Julia Horiates, East Carolina University



"It is truly an honor and a high privilege to be included in the circle of greatness that is the PanHellenic Honors Society, and to be recognized by so many outstanding Greek American scholars and professionals. It is the duty of all Hellenes to pass our rich and unique heritage to future generations so that it can be perpetuated in the years to come."

-Nicholas Chingas, Saint Joseph's University



"By awarding me the PanHellenic Scholarship, I am able to concentrate on what is important for me, education. Your financial generosity has allowed me to be one step closer to my goal and has inspired me to help others by giving back to the community."

-Katerina Powers, Michigan State University



"I would like to convey my sincerest appreciation to the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation for taking the time and putting forth the care to award these funds to those who are the most deserving and may benefit the greatest—and thank you to the supporters of the Foundation for providing the generous funds needed to distribute these scholarship. Each one of [us] is humbled by your kindness and are committed to ensuring that these awards not only continue our education, but propel us to reach even higher goals."

-Dimitrios Nikitopoulos, Johns Hopkins University

# Your Meaningful Support Continues to Provide Life-Changing Opportunities

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation expresses its gratitude to all our faithful donors. A special thank you to those who took part in the **Chairman's Challenge** initiative, which provided the opportunity to double the value of each donor's contribution over \$1,000. Your generosity enables the Foundation to provide meaningful scholarships and unique educational programs to exceptional Greek American undergraduates.

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