

GreekNews

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AGAPW



Greek American Woman of the Year: Nancy Papaioannou

New York
By Vicki James Yiannias

Not one, but two women were honored at the Association of Greek American Professional Women's (AGAPW) celebration of Women's History Month at a joyful reception in the Library of The Metropolitan Club in Manhattan on March 8: one who has made it to the top, and the other just beginning her journey.

At the top: AGAPW's 2016 Greek American Woman of the Year, Nancy Papaioannou. The first woman president of Atlantic Bank, President of the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce, and a positive, unifying force in the Greek American community, is a woman to emulate, and in her honor, Madeleine Ball, a student on her way up, was awarded AGAPW's Excellence Tuition Scholarship. Dr. Miranda Kofinas presented the award to Ms. Ball.

Ball is the 6th recipient of the award, which this year was three thousand dollars. A senior undergraduate with a double major in Hellenic Studies and Journalism at New York University, Ball has reported on the

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EU tries with "one shot" to "kill" both Cyprus & Greece



Chinese contemporary artist, Ai Weiwei (R) protects himself and others from the rain, as Nour Al Khizam (2-L) from the city Deirez Zor, Syria, plays the piano during a performing at a refugee camp, at the border of Greece and FYROM, near Idomeni, 12 March 2016. EPA/YANNIS KOLESIDIS



Tusk visits Nicosia to push Anastasiades to unfreeze chapters of EU - Turkey accession talks. Deal with Turkey on refugees/migrants maybe impossible

Athens

Chances for a successful EU summit on March 17-18 that would finalize an agreement, under its terms Ankara would take back all illegal migrants currently stranded in Greece. Under a controversial draft deal reached this week, Turkey would take back all migrants landing in Greece in

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GREEK INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS IN NY

AstoriaNY.-

Senator Mike Gianaris, Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas, Councilmember Costa Constantinides and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz hosted a celebration of Greek Independence Day at the Stathakion Center in Astoria. The Queens Elected Officials took to marking the occasion with a ceremony, recognizing Greek heritage and culture, and honoring local community leaders.

Honorees of the event included Petros Galatoulas, President of the Federation of Hellenic Societies, Anna and Stamatis Bililis, Owners of Stamatis Restaurant, Harry Xidias of City View Pharmacy and Niko and Vicky Voulkoudis from the Christos Voulkoudis Guardian Angel Foundation.

Senator Gianaris said, "I am proud to celebrate another Greek Independence Day. There is no better place than here in Astoria, the heart of Greek-American culture, to re-



Photo: Dimitrios Panagos

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EDITORIAL

Supporting the recovery of Greece

Athens.
ANA-MPA

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) stands ready to support Greek businesses using both with its own funds and financing from third parties, while working with the authorities on policy reform, EBRD President Sir Suma Chakrabarti said in an exclusive article submitted to the ANA-MPA on Thursday. Noting that the country faces huge challenges, he also pointed to what he called many promising signs.

"Greece has many good and solid companies. The entrepreneurial spirit has not been crushed by long years of recession and is ready to bounce back. The appetite and need for investment are huge.

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AGAPW's Greek American Woman of the Year: Nancy Papaioannou

From last page

Greek economic crisis and covered Prime Minister Tsipras' meeting with Mayor de Blasio in November 2015. She hopes to continue working and reporting on issues pertinent to the Greek Community. Undeniably a great start for a potential future Woman of the Year.

Correction. Back to the beginning: not one, but two women and... one man were honored with AGAPW awards on the evening of March 8. The popular Honorable Consul General of Greece, Ambassador Georgios Iliopoulos, soon to leave the U.S. for his next posting, in Sarajevo, was presented by with AGAPW's Recognition Award by Dr. Aphrodite Désirée Navab.

"Ambassador Iliopoulos is a great statesman and best friend of the Greek American community, together with his dear and gracious wife, Anthoussa, has enriched our lives greatly," said Master of Ceremonies, Aphrodite Skeadas,

Navab praised Ambassador Iliopoulos, his wife Anthoussa, and their children, Elias and Spyros, saying, "I must emphasize how engaging and inspiring they were in this community. Ambassador Iliopoulos has said that the Consul General is at once a public servant and a representative of the Greek government. But Greece entered volatile times during his tenure, politically and economically. It attested to the strength of his character that he remained a stable, professional, fair, consistent, reliable, and dedicated Consul General. With this award we want to thank you for your exceptional support and leadership, your generosity and your bracing spirit have left an indelible mark on New York. As your term ends here and soon you will take up your position as Ambassador of Greece to Bosnia and Herzegovina, we want you to remember our gratitude and affection."

Thanking AGAPW, Ambassador Iliopoulos said that he was "truly humbled" by the award, and later in his remarks said to great applause that he was not sure he deserved the recognition he had just received, as his wife Anthoussa deserved most of the praise. Being a diplomat is not "going around with a glass of champagne; it's hard work, he said. "We have to uproot our families--our children and our wives...or husbands, who have to give up their aspirations for a professional career. And you all know, since you are a professional women's association, how important a career for a woman is now. So I'm grateful to Anthoussa for giving up her career to help mine."

Saying that his four years here were "definitely busy", he went on to describe their arrival in New York in January 2012, in the midst of the crisis, and the Consulate itself was in a crisis due to cuts in personnel and available funds. "We had to watch the Consulate shrinking in these terms, but increasing in terms of demands.

We had to find ways to bring these things together, trying to use technology when we could afford it and if it was feasible. I think we managed rather well, based on our luck in having great employees. We had people that were able to take on the extra workload that this created." There was little to be done about the cuts in funds, said Iliopoulos, "but we managed, with the help of the ομογένεια, its sponsorships, and so on. I think we did well; I hope you won't disagree with me," he said humorously.

Ambassador Iliopoulos continue with a thought about the Greek American community. "If I'm allowed to say one thing, it will be the following: I always compared the ομογένεια, the Greek diaspora in New York, to a Greek city--not a very small one, mind you--a rather large one by Greek standards. Everybody is here. Every walk of life, every profession, every character, anything you want, you find it in New York, and the Con-



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sulate covers the tri-states plus Pennsylvania, so it's enriched by a variety of people. "I have to say one thing, though: what we need as an ομογένεια is to be able to influence the society we live in is to take this next extra step." While the ομογένεια are well organized, with valuable organizations and institutions, the ομογένεια has so far not managed to influence, substantially, the society we are in, that we work in. According to the science, our influence is in terms of education and, of course, wealth. The members of the ομογένεια have to be convinced to do something more than what they do now, he said, "My very simple is to convince everybody to register as voters. I was shocked to see that very few Greeks in New York are registered as voters. I'm sorry, it's a fact of life; because we live in the society that we do live in, you cannot expect to have influence with politicians if you don't vote."

In closing, he congratulated the scholarship recipient, saying "I hope it will make a difference for you."

Aphrodite Skeadas, Master of Ceremonies, introduced AGAPW's founder and president, Olga Alexakos, "a mighty, impressive, and gifted woman", who together with AGAPW's board of directors chose to honor "a striking, prominent, and accomplished woman, Ms. Nancy Papaioannou, President of Atlantic Bank. Dr. Kofinas brought Ms. Papaioannou to the podium.

"I'm so happy tonight for this recognition, that as I said before, I don't really deserve," said Papaioannou, "We have so many women here that diligently do their job, do their duties, and deserve real recognition. In particular, I would like to congratulate the founder of this organization, Olga Alexakos, who has been inspired to create this beautiful work that really serves to bring Greek American women together here. I can say that my past has shaped my business career and my life, as well. And if I try to make something positive, this is my determination to be a participant in the Greek American community, especially now that I'm the president of Atlantic Bank and the Chamber.

Both are historical organizations, and their life coincides with our community's life. I have worked hard for the position I am holding. Nothing comes easy in life. I, myself, had to face numerous problems and obstacles to both my personal and professional life. So far, I have experiences so many valuable things that I take with me, but the ones that have struck me the most are to say yes to any challenges and opportunities that I come across, to always trust my instincts, be myself, and never forget my background, to respect people and recognize teamwork, to find ways to give back to my community, my country and my people, and to not forget that where there is a will; there is a way."



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Citing her progress from her first job with the National Bank of Greece and coming to New York at a time when the world was a different place, she carried out her wish to be the extended family of her clients and for the people who worked for her. "I wish for this organization to grow, and over the years to encourage more women to reach their goals and prove that women can really make it. Women are more than 50% of the population; they control trillions of dollars in global consumer spending, and they have considerable control over sustainable economic growth today around the world. And those who take the opportunity to recognize the role of those men who understand the value of women in the world and know to appreciate our input in our community"

Nancy Papaioannou, a graduate of the prestigious Arsakeio School, in Psychiko, Athens, has a BA degree in Accounting and Business Management from Marymount Manhat-

tan College and has done graduate work for her MBA at St. Johns University.

Contributions and support to AGAPW's Excellence Tuition Scholarship award, now an anticipated, signature event are welcome. The Excellence Tuition Scholarship award is an important step toward the organization's mission to promote educational and career opportunities for Greek American women.

Among the guests: Former Ambassador of Cyprus to the USA Andreas Jacovides; Ambassador Catherine Boura, Representative of Greece to the UN; Ambassador Georgios Iliopoulos and Mrs. Anthoussa Diakopoulou Iliopoulos; High Commissioner of Cyprus Vasilis Philippou and Mrs. Anthi Philippou; Ambassador Nancy Vraila Deputy Representative of Greece to the UN; Consul Manos Koubarakis; Accountant General of Cyprus, Mrs. Rea Georgiou; Mrs. Penelope Tsilas, recipient of AGAPW's 2012 Woman of the Year Award; Judge Harriet Pavles George.