



# PANHELLENIC AFFAIRS

*Building a better America through Education & Hellenism*

OCTOBER 2016

## PanHellenic Gala Honoring Founder Chris P. Tomaras is an Incredible Success



On Saturday, June 18, 2016, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation held its annual Awards Ceremony and Gala at the Ritz-Carlton in Chicago, Illinois. Over 500 guests attended the sold-out event to celebrate the 2016 Scholarship Recipients, who received over \$250,000 in awards in recognition of their academic achievements. The gala was held in memory of the organization's beloved Founder, the late Chris P. Tomaras. Guests began the evening with cocktails, followed by the awards ceremony, dinner, and dancing to Greek music.

The Foundation has awarded scholarships to exceptional college students of Hellenic descent since 2002 and is one of the leading scholarship award institutions in the United States. With its signature scholarship program, the Foundation aims to help deserving young students complete their college education and pursue their academic and career aspirations. The Foundation annually grants \$250,000 in awards: twenty (20) \$10,000 scholarships to academically-exceptional students with financial need, and twenty (20) \$2,500 scholarships, which are awarded solely based on academic merit. As of June 2016, the Foundation has awarded \$2.5 million to 366 undergraduates.

This year's Mistress of Ceremonies, Kiki Vale, a well-known figure in Chicago radio, with over twenty-five years of experience in broadcasting and media. Vale spent many years on-air as a news and traffic reporter and host of her own radio program, and won several Omni Awards for her voiceover work. Recently, Vale has turned her attention to motivational speaking and writing. She encourages others with her "Kefi Credo," her guidelines for living an energetic and fulfilling life. Vale brought her energy and enthusiasm to the stage at the Awards Ceremony and Gala, and spoke about how she has been able to "harness the positive and powerful values of Hellenism" in her own life.

After Vale's welcome and introduction, Tom Sotos, Secretary of the Foundation, spoke about the gala's theme, "Preserving the Legacy." The theme honored Founder Chris P. Tomaras, who passed away on October 14, 2015. Sotos directly addressed this year's scholarship recipients and their role in preserving Mr. Tomaras' extraordinary legacy. He said, "...As you finish your college education, start your careers, and become leaders in the world, remember that you are this great man's living legacy. It is through you, our students, that Mr. Tomaras' legacy will truly be preserved for years to come."

Following Sotos' introduction, the audience watched a brief film about Mr. Tomaras' remarkable life.

Executive Director of the Foundation, Yanni Valsamas, opened the Awards Ceremony by congratulating the scholarship recipients and the generous donors who made the event a success. He spoke about Mr. Tomaras as his mentor and close friend, as well as Mr. Tomaras' dedication to helping deserving students complete their college education. Valsamas also assured the audience of the Foundation's commitment to preserving Mr. Tomaras' legacy, and stated "Our Foundation is alive and well, and we will continue the success our Founder achieved, and excel in our mission to promote education and Hellenism in America."

During the ceremony, Valsamas introduced each of the scholarship recipients and they were presented with their awards. This year's recipients, some of the "best and brightest" Greek American college students in the nation, attended elite schools across the country, including Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, Northwestern, the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown, the Manhattan School of Music, the University of Michigan, the University of Texas, and the University of Illinois.

*Continued on next page...*

## SAVE THE DATE

2017 AWARDS CEREMONY  
AND GALA

SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017  
THE HILTON CHICAGO



## Chris P. Tomaras

*Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Inspiring Leader, True Hellene*

Chris P. Tomaras will be remembered for his love of Hellenism, entrepreneurial ingenuity, profound faith and boundless generosity. Born in Piraeus, Greece, Tomaras moved to America as a young man in 1957. His determination and perseverance led to a career as a successful businessman as owner of Kronos Foods and Tomaras Investments.

Tomaras' passion for education led him to establish the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation in 1998. He was a firm believer in the importance of earning a college degree, and he founded this institution so that Greek American undergraduates would have the financial resources they needed to complete their education. His vision and generosity have ensured that hundreds of exceptional students have received the financial need and recognition they deserve.

In addition to the Foundation, Tomaras was a devoted Greek Orthodox Christian and was a benefactor of many institutions and churches, including the National Hellenic Museum and the Saint Iakovos Retreat Center of the Metropolis of Chicago. He was an active member of Leadership 100 and a dedicated Archon of the Order of Saint Andrew of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Tomaras also served as leader of a number of civic, community and business organizations. He held the position of Vice President of the World Council of Hellenes in the Americas (SAE), and also served as President of the PanMessenian Federation of USA and Canada. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Anatolia College and the founding member of the American Foundation of Hellenic Studies at Georgia State University. Tomaras also received countless awards, such as the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and an Honorary Doctor of Humanities from Hellenic College - Holy Cross School of Theology.

Chris P. Tomaras will be remembered as a remarkable businessman and infinitely generous philanthropist. Above all, he will always be celebrated and honored for his dedication to helping the most deserving Greek American undergraduates earn a college education.

### *PanHellenic Gala ...continued from previous page*

They studied various academic disciplines, including engineering, mathematics, chemistry, business, education, economics, communications, music, and the arts. During the ceremony, parents, friends, and guests cheered for the recipients as they were recognized for their accomplishments. Upon receiving their scholarship awards, the students were also inducted into the Foundation's prestigious PanHellenic Honor Society.

Each year, the Foundation also presents the Paradigm Award to a distinguished Greek American. The Paradigm Award honors this person's outstanding accomplishments and dedication to exhibiting Hellenic values and principles in their life. This year's Paradigm Award honoree, John S. Koudounis, is an exemplary Greek American and an outstanding role model for the Foundation's scholarship award recipients.

John S. Koudounis is a successful finance executive who was recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of Calamos Investments. He was previously the President and CEO for Mizuho Securities USA Inc., a subsidiary of the Japanese holding company Mizuho Financial Group. Koudounis was the youngest CEO on Wall Street when he was at the helm of Mizuho. He is a regular commentator for television and financial news programs including Fox Business, CNBC, CNN, Bloomberg Television, and others. Koudounis grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and attended Brown University.

During his acceptance speech, Koudounis spoke about how his Greek background helped motivate and guide him to success in finance. He also encouraged scholarship recipients to stay dedicated to their academic and career endeavors, to believe in themselves, and stay focused on their dreams. "You will face uncertainty and moments of self-doubt," Koudounis said, "There will be times when you will wonder which road to take. Whatever you choose, my advice to you is never lose sight of your own star. Trust your instincts in life, and be self-motivated. This is how you can preserve the legacy you have been given."

The Foundation's newly-appointed Chairman, Robert A. Buhler, closed the presentation with his remarks. Mr. Buhler shared his optimism for the Foundation's future, and profusely thanked the Foundation's many dedicated supporters who have consistently helped realize Mr. Tomaras' dream and preserve his legacy. Buhler stated, "Chris' friendship, directly or indirectly, with everyone in this room, still lives. You are all here tonight caring for the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation and helping to maintain Chris' dream... You have made this evening about the future, and growth."

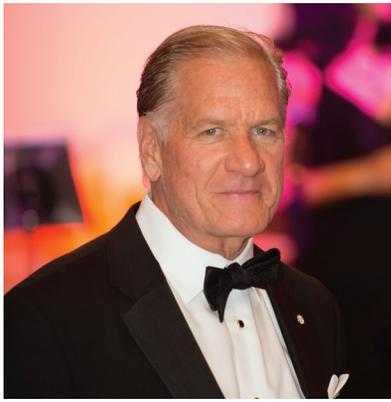
During his remarks, Mr. Buhler outlined the Board's initiatives for the Foundation's future and encouraged guests to continue to support the Foundation's mission to honor Mr. Tomaras' memory. He said, "Each and every one of you is signaling to the community, signaling to Hellenes, signaling to universities, and corporations, that the Chris Tomaras dream is being realized. And though it is difficult and emotional not having Chris with us, without him, his PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation has become a part of us.... all of us."

After the presentation, guests enjoyed a delicious dinner and dancing, and three individuals won the Grand Raffle cash prizes. Congratulations to Ernest Stavropoulos, who won the \$1,000 prize; Soterios Frentzas, winner of \$5,000; and Georgia Litsos, who won the grand prize of \$10,000!

Chairman Robert A. Buhler, the Board of Directors, Academic Committee, and Board of Advisors, along with Executive Director Yanni Valsamas, once again congratulate the 2016 Scholarship Award Recipients, and express deep appreciation to the guests and donors who made this year's Awards Ceremony and Gala a great success.

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***For more information about the Foundation  
and to view photographs of the event  
visit [www.panhellenicsf.org](http://www.panhellenicsf.org).***



## A Message from Our Chairman

*"Preserving the Legacy"*

This year has been one of great emotion, change, and transition for the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. Yet, throughout the year, the Foundation continued to carry out its mission: to provide outstanding Greek American students the means to pursue higher education. This effort culminated with our SOLD-OUT gala on June 18, 2016, highlighting the legacy of our Founder, Chris Tomaras. As a result of this gala, and since our inception, the Foundation has awarded \$2.5 million in scholarships to 366 exceptional undergraduates of Hellenic descent.

This would not have been possible without our generous partners and donors. On behalf of the Foundation, I express our deepest appreciation for your belief in our mission, and for your contributions and support, particularly this year. Thank you, most sincerely.

The future of the Foundation is bright, as we continue to grow. As highlighted at the 2016 Gala, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation will be developing four areas of focus, to further our Foundation's strength, as follows:

- **Connecting Scholars with meaningful internships and jobs**
- **Engaging our Alumni through the new Junior Board**
- **Developing Regional Board Representatives**
- **Co-branding and partnering with other organizations who are dedicated to promoting Education and Hellenism**

Together with your support, the Board and staff of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation will strive to exceed our beloved Founder's dream. We will continue to honor the best and brightest Greek-American students across the country. These are the exceptional young people who will truly carry the torch for all of us, and preserve Mr. Tomaras' remarkable legacy for years to come.

**Robert A. Buhler**

From Our Recipients...



"Socrates wrote that 'education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel' - an analogy that I believe perfectly links to the work and philanthropy your organization performs...To represent education is representative of the Hellenic mentality of constant innovation, advancement, and progress that I hope to perpetuate as a Greek American student."

**Andrea Tsatalis**, *University of Toledo*



"I know I am not only speaking for myself, but for all of the scholarship recipients when I say that the aid provided by the Foundation has had a significant positive impact on me. In the future, it is our duty as Greek Americans to return the favor and aid the next generation of Greek students on their quest for academic success."

**Joseph George Ades**, *George Washington University*



"This scholarship has truly made a huge difference in my life. Words simply cannot express my sincere gratitude. You are a role model to all of society, and I hope to be a philanthropist just like you. I hope to one day make a difference in another scholar's life, just like you have made with mine."

**Demonsthenis Katsaros**, *University of Rhode Island*



"To have been granted the PanHellenic Scholarship is an honor that will forever resonate with me for multiple reasons: it has strengthened my ties to my Greek roots, introduced me to a plethora of incredible people who are deeply proud of their heritage, and provided a basis upon which I can begin building a future career with my culture in both mind and spirit."

**Vasiliki Savvides**, *Macaulay Honors College at Baruch College*

# 2016 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Joseph George Ades - *George Washington University*  
Danae Argyropoulou - *Georgia Tech*  
Marianna Katerina Babioulakis - *Florida International University*  
Thomas Dean Bravos - *Illinois Wesleyan University*  
Maria Brouard - *Harvard College*  
Christianos Alexander George Burlotos - *University of Notre Dame*  
Julia Stella Jane Constantelos - *Tufts University*  
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Theodora P. Frangakis - *George Washington University*  
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Efthimios Gianitsos - *University of Texas at Austin*  
Maria Hartas - *University of Illinois at Chicago*  
Jason Christopher Housianitis - *Old Dominion University*  
Alaina Renee Kafkes - *Northwestern University*  
Eugenia Ioannou Kakadiaris - *Rice University*  
Elena M. Karavassilis - *CUNY Queens College*  
Sophia Efrosini Karnegis - *University of Florida*  
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Gregory Gabriel Pandelis - *University of Michigan - Ann Arbor*  
Anastasia Perreault - *Babson College*  
Maria Petropoulos - *Adelphi University*  
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Vasiliki Irene Savvides - *Macaulay Honors College at Baruch College*  
Anastasia Christianna Selberis - *University of California - Berkeley*  
Irene Anastasia Snyder - *Elizabethtown College*  
John Anastasios Stavropoulos - *Northern Illinois University*  
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Kelly Theodorakis - *The College of Staten Island*  
Andrea Elisa Tsatalis - *University of Toledo*  
John Peter Tsatalis - *University of Miami*  
Polixeni Andriana Tziouvaras - *Manhattan School of Music*  
Theodore Vasiliadis - *Temple University*  
Basil Samuel Vetas - *University of Utah*  
Robert Thomas Zipp - *Swarthmore College*  
Maria Eleni Zollo - *The New School - Mannes School of Music*







## 2016 Paradigm Honoree John S. Koudounis

*Inspired by His Heritage to Pursue Greatness*

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation was proud to honor John S. Koudounis, CEO of Calamos Investments with this year's Paradigm Award. In a Q&A session, Koudounis had much to say about what it meant to receive this honor, his career, and his Greek heritage.

**What were your thoughts when you were informed that the PanHellenic wanted to honor you with the esteemed Paradigm Award this year?**

I was very humbled, happy and surprised. The mission of the organization means a lot to me personally, as I was the first male in my family to attend college.

**What was your biggest take-away from your evening as the Paradigm Award Honoree at the Foundation's annual gala?**

What makes our Hellenic community so strong is the way that the generations come together, with one generation passing the baton to the next. At the gala, my mother was there with some of her friends who have known me since I was a little kid, and I have known some of the scholarship honorees since they were kids. Who knows ... one day, I might be sitting in the audience watching one of this year's scholarship recipients receive a Paradigm Award!

**How have your Greek heritage and college education influenced your life and career?**

My Greek heritage has shaped every aspect of my life. My family traces its roots to Sparta, and my parents always stressed the importance of family, community, hard work and perseverance. Like so many of their generation, my parents may not have had a great deal of material wealth, but they were committed to the American Dream—working hard to give their children a shot at a better future. From as far back as I can remember, they were pushing me to make the most of every opportunity, which is what led me to set my sights on going to Brown University. Going to Brown opened up a world of new opportunities for me.

**What is your advice to students in college now?**

Trust your instincts and then give it your all! As I discussed in my acceptance speech, there were points in my life where I wasn't sure which road to take. One of those moments came after I graduated from college. My father had recently passed away and I had to decide whether to come back to Chicago or pursue career opportunities on the East Coast. I missed my family very much, but a voice inside me was telling me that the best way I could provide for my family was by going to Wall Street. By following that course, I became the youngest CEO on Wall Street.

**How can young Greek-Americans best apply the values of their Hellenic upbringing in their everyday lives to help them be successful in the future?**

The Greek-American experience changes from generation to generation. The stories about coming to America with \$5 are becoming more distant. But everyone faces adversity and moments of self-doubt. Let your Greek heritage inspire you to pursue great things—to work hard and follow your star.

**Is there anyone in particular that you look up to or who has been a mentor to you?**

My father was one of my most important role models. He always put family first. At times, that meant working two jobs so that his kids could get a shot at a better future, including college. The example he set for me during his life guides me to this very day.

**Do you have any exciting plans for the future that you would like to share?**

After many years on Wall Street, I'm excited to be working in Chicago again. Earlier this year, I took on the role of CEO at Calamos Investments—the global asset manager founded by John P. Calamos, Sr. He's a Paradigm Award winner himself! I'm looking forward to working alongside him to bring Calamos Investments into its next phase of growth.



## A Message from Our Executive Director

*The Beginning of a New Chapter for the Foundation*

I would first like to thank all of our friends and supporters for their continued commitment to the remarkable work Mr. Tomaras started through the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. Your generosity is a testament to how much Mr. Tomaras was loved and admired. It is moving to see how dedicated the Greek American community is to carrying on his dream for the Foundation.

Sometimes, when a person like Mr. Tomaras passes, people think that it signifies an ending. But for us, it is really just the beginning. Although we are deeply saddened and mourn the loss of our dear friend, Mr. Tomaras' passing has marked the opening of a new chapter in the life of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. We will continue to excel in our mission to promote education and Hellenism in America, and we will work to realize and surpass the dream our late Founder had for this institution. The Foundation is looking forward to a busy and promising year ahead. I am excited for the Foundation's future and everything that we can accomplish together.

**Yanni Valsamas**

# Thank You to Our Donors for Their Meaningful Support

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### Spotlight Scholar: Demitra Giannaras

Demitra is a 2007 scholarship award recipient who received dual bachelor degrees in Business Administration and Science from Loyola University Chicago. After graduation, she worked as the Research and Database Manager at an Executive Search firm, where she helped the firm revitalize their search process and strategy and reduce outreach costs by 80%. Demitra is currently a Business Systems Analyst Associate for Northwestern University in the Kellogg School of Management, Office of Advancement. She helps senior managers make data driven decisions in order to reach an ambitious \$350M fundraising goal to fund scholarships, professorships, chairs, and the creation of new academic programs.

Demitra said, "Both the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation and Mr. Tomaras' mentorship and encouragement have had such a profound impact on my life. To every person that has supported the PHSF over the years: you have my sincere gratitude. This Foundation is a symbol of the strength and generosity of our community, and our commitment to educating the next generation. Your support matters a great deal to us, and will always be remembered."



### Spotlight Scholar: Evanthia Arianas

Evanthia graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with Honors and Distinction in 2014 with dual Bachelor degrees in Psychology and Biological Sciences. While she attended UIC, she conducted research on maternal-infant interactions and behavior. This year, Evanthia published a manuscript on this research, and placed second in the Midwest area at the Midwest Nursing Research Society Conference in March.

Evanthia is currently a Graduate Research Assistant conducting research on HIV/AIDS in Malawi, Africa. She is also working towards a Masters of Science in Nursing at the UIC. While she is in school, Evanthia works in the post-anesthesia care unit at the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System. She hopes to ultimately earn her Doctor of Nurse Practitioner (DNP) degree, and work with critical care and intensive care patients.

Evanthia says, "The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation has made a lasting impact on my life by not only helping me in my educational endeavors, but further connecting me with my Hellenic roots and encouraging me to build lasting relationships. I will forever be grateful to the Foundation and look forward to helping many students, just as the Foundation has helped me."

## The 2016/17 Application is Now Available!

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is elated to announce that the 2016/17 scholarship application is now available! This year, the Foundation will once again distribute \$250,000 in scholarship awards.

To be eligible to apply for a scholarship, applicants must: be US citizens or US permanent residents; be of Hellenic descent; be a full-time undergraduate student at an accredited 4-year university in Fall 2016; and have a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA.

The Foundation will accept applications through January 31, 2017. The scholarship application and the qualification criteria, requirements, and guidelines are available at [www.panhellenicsf.org](http://www.panhellenicsf.org).

If you are an undergraduate of Hellenic descent, we encourage you to apply for the scholarship awards!

For any questions or inquiries, please email [aclayman@panhellenicsf.org](mailto:aclayman@panhellenicsf.org) or call our office at (312) 357-6432.