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**New Citizens take their Oath of Allegiance to the United States
at the National Hellenic Museum**

CHICAGO, IL – 49 new United States citizens swore their Oath of Allegiance during a Naturalization Ceremony at the National Hellenic Museum on Thursday, October 15. The ceremony was held in the Dr. Mary Dochios Kamberos Special Events Hall of the Museum with a gathering afterward in the John P. Calamos, Sr. Great Hall among the sculptures, paintings, and carvings of actor and artist Anthony Quinn.

It was the first time that the National Hellenic Museum, working in conjunction with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), hosted the ceremony and the first time ever that the ceremony was held at a museum.

The program included the role call of nationalities, the reciting of the pledge of allegiance, a video message from President Obama, a keynote address by the National Hellenic Museum's Chairman of the Board of Trustees John P. Calamos, Sr., patriotic music, and a presentation of certificates.

The Administration of the Oath of Allegiance was presided over by the Honorable Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Illinois. New citizens then celebrated their accomplishment with their invited guests during a reception following the ceremony.

"The Naturalization Ceremony was very moving," said Connie Mourtouपालas, the Museum's President of Cultural Affairs and co-coordinator of the ceremony. "It reminded us of all the wonderful things that we take for granted."

The National Hellenic Museum initially contacted the USCIS in order to host the naturalization ceremony. The museum's core exhibition, "Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America," highlights the stories, successes, and hardships of immigrants from Greece.

"The immigrant experience is universal. People from all cultures and backgrounds can relate to the story in our exhibition, which celebrates the contributions of Greek Americans to the American mosaic," said Elizabeth Martin, Executive Director of the National Hellenic Museum.

In addition, the Museum's current exhibition, "Transcending Boundaries: The Art of Anthony Quinn," pays tribute to the legendary actor and artist Anthony Quinn, who brought to life one of the greatest and most life-affirming literary characters of our time, Zorba the Greek. Quinn was born 100 years ago in Mexico to a Mexican mother and a half-Irish father who fought with Pancho Villa in the Mexican Revolution. After immigrating to the US, he never solely identified with one ethnicity, and, as an actor, went on to play characters from many backgrounds.

"I'm Anthony Quinn: son, brother, migrant farmer, student, lover, actor, husband, father, sculptor, painter, arrogant bastard. I am Mexican, Irish, Indian, American, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Chinese, Eskimo, Muslim. . . . Above all though, I am an artist. This was my beginning and it will be my end."

The naturalization ceremony included a message from keynote speaker and Museum Chairman of the Board of Trustees, John P. Calamos, Sr., who offered words of encouragement and hope to the new citizens. "As the son of immigrants myself, I am grateful to my own father and to my mother's parents, who had the courage to leave their own families and come to the United States. Without their hard work and determination, my life and my children's life would not be what it is."

The Museum, which celebrates the great contributions of immigrants to this country, hopes to host the ceremony again.

"I encourage you to preserve and celebrate your heritage, to preserve your history, and pass it on to your children," said Calamos.

Photo 1: The new citizens stand proudly in front of the Museum's Anthony Quinn exhibition.



Photo 2:
The Honorable Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Illinois and the National Hellenic Museum's Chairman of the Board of Trustees John P. Calamos, Sr.



Photo 3:
New citizens take the Oath of Allegiance



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Located in Chicago's Greektown, the sleek 40,000-square-foot National Hellenic Museum at 333. S. Halsted St. is both contemporary and timeless, connecting all generations—past, present and future—to the rich heritage of Greek history, culture, art and the Greek American experience. The National Hellenic Museum, previously known as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center, has been fulfilling this mission since 1983.

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org> or call 312-655-1234.

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