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National Hellenic Museum Gala 2017: Stories of Our Journey

An Evening of Music, Dancing, and Festivities to Benefit the National Hellenic Museum

The National Hellenic Museum (NHM) hosted its spectacular 2017 Gala on Saturday, May 13th in the Aon Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier. This year's Gala, themed "Stories of Our Journey", celebrated the diverse stories of the Greek American experience -- the history that NHM collects, preserves, and shares every day of the year. Under a dome of twinkling lights, and surrounded by the magnificent Chicago skyline, over 650 Greek Americans gathered with their friends and family to celebrate their heritage and give to the Museum in the spirit of philanthropy.

Greek American Chicago sportscaster Lou Canellis served as Master of Ceremonies and began the evening by sharing how he had been inspired by his Greek heritage. After the invocation by His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos and Reverend Father Chrysanthos, Governor Bruce Rauner paid tribute to the contributions of Greek Americans to culture and society. NHM Board Chairman John P. Calamos, Sr. and NHM President Dr. Laura Calamos then spoke about how the Museum inspires and educates many generations of Americans through the NHM's exhibits, classes, and programs. This year's event also featured both silent and live auctions to benefit the NHM and its educational mission. After dinner, Elli Kokkinou and Christos Menidiatis brought the crowd to their feet as the gala audience danced into the night Όλοι μαζί (All together).

The evening focused on heartfelt stories, with two particular Greek American journeys honored this year:

the late Dr. Mary Dochios Kamberos, a Life Trustee of the National Hellenic Museum, and Mr. Konstantin Raptis, whose contribution was recently added to the Frank S. Kamberos Oral History Project at the Museum.

Dr. Dochios Kamberos' nephew, Nick Vlachos addressed the audience and shared his aunt's remarkable journey that took her from being the daughter of Greek immigrant homesteaders in Idaho to becoming a pioneering pediatrician who served as the chief medical officer for Cook County Juvenile Detention Services. He reiterated his aunt's commitment to NHM as a place where stories like hers are shared with the next generation. Next, a video presentation showcased young students at the National Hellenic Museum School sharing Mr. Konstantin Raptis' oral history, highlighting the value of lifelong learning for every generation.

NHM President Calamos asked the audience what they remembered of their grandparents, and what they wished they had asked before they were gone. "At the National Hellenic Museum, we remember – and we help others remember," said NHM President Calamos. "Our mothers and fathers overcame so much – adversity, discrimination, poverty. They fought in difficult wars on our behalf. They showed us by example how to get involved and how give back to the community. Museums are places where memories are collected. The National Hellenic Museum is a real physical center for the collection of our histories as Greek Americans, now three, four, and five generations strong."

Hearing journeys like those of Dr. Dochios Kamberos' and Mr. Raptis' had a profound impact on many in attendance. Preserving and sharing these memories is the purpose of the National Hellenic Museum. Support for the Museum is made possible through the NHM Gala, an annual event that is becoming the most prominent gathering of Greek Americans each year. The National Hellenic Museum thanks all attendees, sponsors and donors for their generous contributions and continued support.



With sincere emotion, Konstantin Raptis raises his paddle to support the Museum after seeing his own story recited by Greek American children learning from his oral history

Photo Credit: John Gress 2017



*Support for the NHM at Gala 2017 was so strong bidders needed two paddles
Photo Credit: John Gress 2017*



*National Hellenic Museum Trustee Aristotle P. Halikias enjoys dancing with family and friends at NHM Gala 2017
Photo Credit: John Gress 2017*



*Greek musician Elli Kokkinou serenades the NHM Gala 2017 crowd
Photo Credit: Elios Photography 2017*



*Master of Ceremonies Lou Canellis shares his own story as a Greek American at the NHM Gala 2017
Photo Credit: Elios Photography 2017*



*NHM Gala 2017 attendees continue the night of philanthropy and festivities on the dance floor
Photo Credit: John Gress 2017*



*Greek singer Christos Menidiatis brings the NHM Gala 2017 crowd to their feet
Photo Credit: John Gress 2017*

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The [National Hellenic Museum](http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org) (NHM) collects, preserves, and shares Greek American heritage and the Hellenic legacy. With a growing and rich depository of over 20,000 artifacts, the Museum highlights the contributions of Greeks and Greek-Americans to the American mosaic and inspires curiosity about visitors' own family journeys through cultural expression, oral history and experiential education. Located in Chicago's Greektown, the Museum provides lifelong learning for the whole community through classes, exhibitions and programs that spark inquiry and discussion about the broader issues in our lives.

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

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