

Rep. Niki Tsongas Is Committed To Serving

Wife of Late Sen. Paul Tsongas Talks About Issues and Memories

By Evan C. Lambrou
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK – “While I’m not Greek by heritage, I like to say I’m Greek by osmosis, having lived with my husband and his family, and in the Greek American community in Lowell for so many years,” Congresswoman Niki Tsongas (D-Massachusetts) told the National Herald.

Rep. Tsongas was first elected to Massachusetts’ 5th Congressional District during a special election in 2007. She was re-elected unopposed this past November, and continues to occupy the same seat once held by her husband, the late Paul Tsongas, before he went onto to become a U.S. Senator and eventually make a bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1992.

Senator Tsongas died on January 18, 1997 due to complications from non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. He was just 55 years of age.

In an interview with the Herald, Mrs. Tsongas, the first woman elected to serve in Massachusetts’ Congressional delegation in almost three decades, cited her husband’s commitment to public service as a key factor in her decision to run for Congress ten years after he passed away, counting a life in public service among the best ways to lead one’s life, and said she and her husband were both inspired by the political spirit of John F. Kennedy as young adults.

She also noted how closely her life with her husband was connected to her Congressional seat, and talked about how they met, adding that it was his great intelligence and sense of humor which drew her to him.

“I’ve always felt that a life of public service is one of the best ways to lead your life. I think that was borne from my father’s tenure in the Air Force. Both my parents were committed to serving our country, albeit in a very different way. They did it quietly and enjoyed it, and felt it was a valuable experience. The presidency of John F. Kennedy itself also drew many young people to politics as a way of public service, and the many years I shared with my husband when he was in public life – all of those things combined never allowed me to change my view about the great value of public service,” she said.

“When this seat opened up, it was not something I ever planned on or anticipated trying for, but when Marty Meehan resigned to become chancellor of the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, there were a couple of things I felt we truly need-

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HLA Holds Annual Gala In New York

By Demetris Tsakas
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK – The Hellenic Lawyers Association held its twentieth annual dinner dance gala on Friday evening, November 21 at The Pierre Hotel in Manhattan, N.Y. The new President of HLA Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri was sworn-in that evening and took over the administration of the association together with her newly elected colleagues. Judge Michael A. Chagares of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit was also honored that evening, together with George A. Tsougarakis, who received the HLA’s Attorney of the Year Award. Finally, the HLA handed out its merit-based annual scholarship awards to deserving Greek American law students attending law

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Volunteers of the St. Demetrios parish in Jamaica, Queens prepare to serve the annual Thanksgiving feast to the community’s senior citizens on Monday afternoon, November 24, 2008. The Jamaica Center for the aged is among the highest rated in New York.

Cyprus Accuses Turkey of Provocations

NICOSIA (AP) – Cyprus accused Turkey this past Tuesday of naval “provocations” over the island republic’s offshore oil-and-gas exploration bid.

Cypriot officials said that, on two separate occasions this month, a Turkish warship approached a pair of chartered Norwegian survey ships off southern Cyprus and ordered them to leave the area.

Republic of Cyprus President Demetris Christofias said his government is lodging formal protests with the United Nations and the European Union.

“We will defend our Republic’s

sovereign rights with determination,” Christofias said shortly before a new round of peace talks with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat.

Christofias and Talat restarted reunification talks in September after a four-year stalemate between the two sides during the presidency of Tassos Papadopoulos. U.N. Envoy Alexander Downer has said the new talks will continue well into 2009.

Cyprus has been divided between a Greek Cypriot south – whose government is recognized internationally – and a Turkish-oc-

cupied north – a breakaway state which only Ankara recognizes – since 1974, when Turkey invaded to exploit a failed Athens-backed coup of supporters of union with Greece.

Cyprus began searching for oil and gas off southern Cyprus several years ago. The island has signed agreements with Lebanon and Egypt to mark the undersea boundaries for oil exploration. Cyprus also wants to auction drilling rights.

Greek Cypriots have not tried to explore the waters off northern Cyprus, which are controlled by

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Lucas and Penelope Tsilas Honored

By Demetris Tsakas
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK – The Ladies Philoptochos Benevolent Society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of Holy Trinity in Manhattan held its annual Chrysanthemum Ball on Friday, November 21. This year’s honorees were The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation – whose New York office is currently in its tenth year of operation – and Mrs. Penelope Tsilas, who was recognized for her contribution to the Philoptochos’ philanthropic service.

The Archdiocesan Cathedral Philoptochos President Catherine Moutoussis spoke about her organization’s charitable work, noting that it was among the nation’s oldest women’s groups. The Philoptochos has been aiding the Church in its benevolent work for over a century, providing support to non-profit institutions, the less fortunate, orphans, the ill, and everyone who is genuinely in need.

Ms. Moutoussis spoke in detail about the work being done by the Onassis Foundation, highlighting the large exhibitions and related cultural events it has put together, in addition to the informative and educational programs it provides. She also hailed Ambassador Lucas Tsilas the Executive Director of the Onassis Foundation’s New York office, for his leadership and service.

Ms. Moutoussis went on to introduce the evening’s other honoree, Mrs. Penelope Tsilas – Ambassador Tsilas’ wife – pointing out that she was not being honored because she is the spouse of the Onassis Foundation’s Executive Director, but in recognition for her personal contribution to the Archdiocesan Cathedral Philoptochos and her philanthropic work.

During his acceptance speech, the Onassis Foundation’s Executive Director Ambassador Tsilas noted that he is accepting the award on behalf of the Foundation’s Chairman Anthony Papademetriou, and said that the success of the Founda-

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From left: Mrs. Penelope Tsilas is honored by co-chair of the event Eleni Karatzas, and Ambassador Lucas Tsilas, executive director of the Onassis Cultural Center, is honored by Archdiocesan Cathedral Philoptochos President Catherine Moutoussis at the Chrysanthemum Ball in New York on November 21.

Judge Tsoucalas, a Force on the Bench

By Mark Frangos
Special to The National Herald

NEW YORK – Walking into the chambers of Senior Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas of the United States Court of International Trade, the first thing one notices is the small religious shrine behind him. Photos of Greek Orthodox priests churches and icons fill the desk. On another wall of his chambers is a shrine to the United States, including a New York Yankees baseball, and photos of U.S. Presidents and other judges.

Judge Tsoucalas is a man with characteristics from both his Greek and American backgrounds. His fiery demeanor and love of telling stories, even at 82 years old, is definitely from his Greek side, while his American upbringing gave him his no nonsense attitude.

When asked if he was sure certain parts of this article could be quoted, Judge Tsoucalas replied, “Sure. I don’t care what people say.”

But this is also a man who works tirelessly for the Greek American community. His work in immigration law helped keep many Greeks from being deported. In his 40 years as a judge he has had many Greek American law clerks and he has been president of the Hellenic Lawyers Association, the Greek Orthodox Church of Evangelismos, St. John’s Theologos Society and the Parthenon Foundation.

He is best known for presiding over the trial of notorious serial killer David Berkowitz, also known as the “Son of Sam,” who terrorized New York City in 1977. After he pleaded guilty, Judge Tsoucalas and two other judges sentenced him to the maximum term of 25 years to life imprisonment for each of his six murders. Judge Tsoucalas made sure that the terms were to run consecutively, so there would be no possibility of parole.

EARLY YEARS

Nicholas Tsoucalas was born on August 24, 1926 and lived at 148th

Volunteers in Mass. Deliver 1,050 Smiles to Needy on Thanksgiving

By Theodore Kalmoukos
Special to The National Herald

BOSTON – Nicholas Manolis and his family passed out 1,050 smiles to less fortunate people of all ages in order to enjoy a very humane, rich and joyous Thanksgiving meal.

For the 15th consecutive year, Nick Manolis, owner of the Dracut House of Pizza & Seafood Restaurant in Dracut, Massachusetts donated 1,050 festive baskets to needy fellow human beings who have been stricken by hard times, illness, loneliness, and advanced age.

Having at his side his wife, Voula, his two sons Eftymios, a pharmacy student at Northeastern University of Boston and Elias, a business administration student at Middlesex College in Andover, Massachusetts, his close friend John Zaralides of Lowell and a huge army of men and women volunteers prepared and distributed 1,050 baskets with all the necessary items needed for a complete Thanksgiving dinner: turkey, bread, rice, potatoes, stuffing, carrots, cranberries, coffee, cake, two liters of Coca-Cola and other items.

Two big trucks loaded with food items were parked outside of Mr. Manolis’ store from where the deliveries were done under the supervision of Mr. Manolis who starts the preparation process from September.

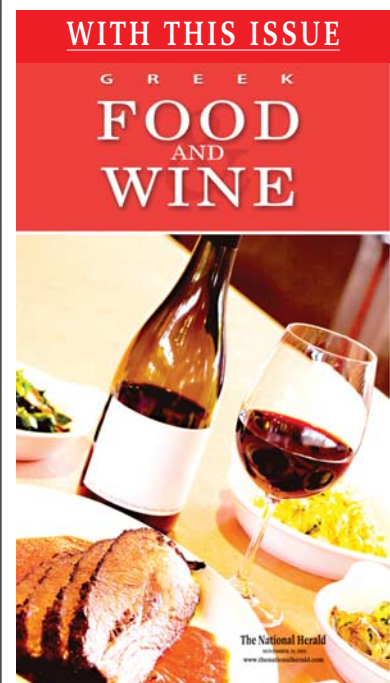
Everything started 15 years ago with 30 turkeys that Mr. and Mrs. Manolis cooked and delivered to the needy because the recipients did not have ovens to cook them.

“We never imagined that we would be in today’s position to deliver 1,050 portions. We were saying in the beginning we are going to reach 50 then 100 and that will be it, but we reached 200, then 300, then 500. Last year we had 788 and this year 1,050.” More than 50 families of Greek descent are among those who received the baskets, but nobody knows who they are. “Confidentiality is strictly observed,” Mr. Manolis said. Nobody knows the names and the agencies except for only one highly confidential per-

son, Mrs. Voula Manolis. “She does not even show me the names,” Mr. Manolis said.

Mr. Manolis has named this project of love and philanthropy “Project Helping Hands” and it has its roots deeply in his heart. This is how it started, “When we first immigrated to the U.S. in 1966 from Grevena with my parents, we went to New Mexico where there were no good job opportunities. I was 7 years old and I was going to school without knowing English at all. The first day that I went to school I saw the other kids at lunch time going to the cafeteria and filling up their trays with food to eat. I also took a tray and put on a lot of food because I was hungry but they stopped me and they told me that I had to pay 25 cents, but I did not have any money and they did not allow me to eat. In the afternoon the same thing was repeated with ice cream. The attendants at the cafeteria did not allow me to have a little ice cream because I did not have 10 cents to pay. At that very moment I swore to myself and said I

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Aussie Hellenic Studies Center Closing

By Stavros T. Stavridis
Special to The National Herald

MELBOURNE – The National Center for Hellenic Studies and Research (NCHSR) also known by its Greek acronym as (EKEME) will cease operations in about 6 weeks. Latrobe University of Australia made a decision to close it down and replace it with another Hellenic Center. This article is a brief exposé of the history of NCHSR/EKEME and the review committee’s findings and recommendations to Latrobe University.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NCHSR/EKEME

This Center was founded in 1997 by the Latrobe University Council through the generosity of benefactor Dr. Zissis Dardalis and the commitment and support of the then University’s Vice Chancellor Professor M. J. Osborne. Professor Anastasios M. Tamis held the position as Executive Director for 11 years from 1997-2008. Professor Tim Brown, Acting Vice Chancellor (Research), took over the daily operation of the Center and in August, Dr. Michalis S. Michael, who also works at the Center for Dialogue, was appointed Acting Director of NCHSR till the end of 2008. A Board of Management oversees all the activities of EKEME through its director. The President of the Hellenic Republic, Carolos Papoulias, is the current patron of NCHSR. Other patrons were Kostas Stephanopoulos, former President of the Hellenic Republic, Glafkos Clerides, former President of the Republic of Cyprus and former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. Also, there is the Society of Friends of NCHSR located in various capital cities of Australia and in Greece.

The major benefactors Dr. Zissis Dardalis, the owner of Marathon Food Industries, along with Greek and Cypriot Governments, contributed large sums of money towards NCHSR over the years. Other donors and sponsors included the Alpha Bank of Greece, the Bank

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Hellenic Lawyers Association Honors Tsougarakis as 2008 Attorney of the Year

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schools all throughout New York. The Consul of Greece in New York Ms. Sophia Veve and New York State Assemblyman Michael Gianaris were on hand for the event, and were joined by federal and state court judges, local politicians, prosecutors, and prominent lawyers.

Outgoing HLA President John Saketos addressed the audience and spoke about the successes of the previous two years, citing the lectures, educational events and networking opportunities that were offered to educate and entertain the Greek American and legal communities.

Mr. Saketos also spoke about the scholarship awards the HLA presents each year, and credited this initiative for helping to spread interest about the HLA among young people. He pointed to new HLA President Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri as an example, noting that she was a scholarship recipient fifteen years ago, and through her involvement in the organization, she has gone on to become President of the Association today.

State Assemblyman Michael Gianaris congratulated the HLA on its ever-growing list of accomplishments during his speech, and singled out the guest of honor and scholarship recipients for their achievements.

Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas, who first established the HLA through his own initiative and led it for many years as President, also greeted the audience and swore-in the new President. Judge Tsoucalas complemented Mrs. Stathatos-Fulgieri, calling her both a good lawyer and an individual worthy of leading the HLA.

During her first address as President, Mrs. Stathatos-Fulgieri looked back on the HLA's history



and told the audience that it held its first dinner dance in Queens, NY twenty years ago with approximately 100 hundred guests in attendance. She pointed out that although that number seems small today, it was impressive for an organization first starting off back then, and noted that twenty years later the HLA's dinner dance gala is taking place in one of Manhattan's finest hotels and the number of attendees has tripled. Tonight this room was filled with titans – the first and foremost being Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas," she added.

Mrs. Stathatos-Fulgieri told the audience that she was the recipient of a merit scholarship award fifteen years ago, and praised the HLA for its contribution and concern for the

next generation of lawyers and legal scholars. Meanwhile, she expressed her hope that the HLA will continue to remain as relevant and helpful for law students in the future as it did for her fifteen years ago. She also pointed out that the HLA now has its own website www.hlanet.org, and invited members to not only visit the site but to help contribute to its growth and development.

The HLA's new President then proceeded to introduce the evening's guests of honor, Judge Michael Chagares and attorney George Tsougarakis.

Federal Judge Michael Chagares is a second-generation Greek American, who has the distinction of holding the highest position that a

Greek American has ever had in the U.S. justice system. Judge Chagares hailed the efforts of the HLA and spoke about the preservation of Hellenic heritage. He also paid tribute to his home parish of St. Nicholas in Wyckoff, New Jersey, where he was raised and nurtured with the Greek Christian ideals.

In addition, Judge Chagares spoke about the role of ancient and modern Greece, and focused on the virtues of a good judge, which were outlined in great detail by the great Athenian philosopher Socrates.

"It is a special honor for me to be recognized by an active organization such as this one, which has offered a wide-ranging contribution to society and the Greek-American Community in particular," Judge



LEFT: George Tsougarakis accepts the "2008 Attorney of the Year" award from the Hellenic Lawyers Association at the Pierre Hotel on Friday, November 21. ABOVE: From left: Former HLA President John Saketos, George Tsougarakis, HLA President Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri, Michael Tsagarakis and Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas.

Chagares told The National Herald.

George Tsougarakis, who was named the HLA's 2008 Attorney of the Year said in his acceptance speech that "no other ethnic community has accomplished as much in so many different fields and professions as the Greek American Community." He also noted that "my parents, along with all Greek immigrants, were and continue to be true heroes, because although they worked the most difficult jobs, they nevertheless invested more in their children's education than any other ethnic group."

Mr. Tsougarakis thanked his parents and wife Eve Poniros - also an attorney - as well as his two children Kyra, 12 and Anthony 10, for their love and support. The new

board of the HLA is comprised of the following officers: Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri, President, Elena Paraskevas-Thadani, 1st Vice President, Christopher G. Kulakis, 2nd Vice President, Chrsanthy N. Zappantis, Corresponding Secretary, Leonidas Fampritis, Recording Secretary, and Maria C. Miles, Treasurer. The HLA board of director is led by Chairperson Kate D. Christoforatos and Co-Chairperson Maria Barous Hartofilis. Members include Tony Andriotis, Bill Gianaris, Michael J. Hartofilis, Kerry Katsorhis, Nick Katsoris, Peter Lagonikos, Peter Metis, Ekaterina Pipas, George Poulos, Evridiki Poupouridis, John G. Saketos, Michael Serres and Spiros Tsimbinos.

Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas, Still Going Strong After 40 Years on the Bench

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Kalliope, Michael, Theodora, Nicholas and Athena.

He entered the U.S. Navy in 1944 and served until 1946 as a radio operator on board APD and transport vessels in the European Theater of War as well as the Caribbean and North Atlantic.

"We sank a German submarine," he said. "Our ship got orders to transfer the whole crew to a coast guard transport as passengers. We went up the North Sea and we took over the luxury liner Europa and converted it into a troop transporter."

When he returned from the war he went to Kent State University and finished in less than three years.

In 1949, after graduation, he went to Greece for the first time to visit his uncle. He used the trip as a way to visit his parents' place of birth, Nisyros. He was almost taken in to the Greek army. He used his craftiness to avoid being unfairly drafted by stating that his father held a Turkish passport when he first left Greece and both his parents had Italian parents after they returned to the U.S. after World War I (The Dodecanese were annexed by Italy during the war).

He received his L.L.B. from New York Law School in 1951 and attended New York University Law School for graduate courses in Immigration Law and Federal Practice and Procedure.

He reentered the Navy during the Korean Conflict in 1951 and served on the aircraft carrier, USS Wasp, until December 1952.

He then was offered a commission as a legal officer and turned it down, but when two sailors on his ship were arrested, the judge agreed to assist in their defense.

"I helped represent them and we won the case," Judge Tsoucalas said. "I felt good when I helped them out so then I decided maybe I will practice law."

Today, Judge Tsoucalas says, "It is my love of the law that keeps me on the bench. I could make a hell of a lot more money on the outside."

Of course, Judge Tsoucalas has seen many changes through the past 50 years.

"The biggest change is that sentencing now requires judges to fol-



Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas gained fame after sentencing the "Son of Sam" killer David Berkowitz to six consecutive life terms in prison.

low mandatory guidelines," Judge Tsoucalas explained in an interview with the New York Law School. "Maybe before some judges were too harsh and some were too lenient, but mandatory guidelines remove a lot of a judge's leeway. Sometimes a person just happens to be there when a crime is committed but that person gets the same sentence. I am a very stiff sentencer when it comes to heinous crimes, but sometimes the facts are such that the crime may not be that heinous. I can give a lesser sentence but it still has to be in the guidelines. Sentencing guidelines are something that I think should be advisory not mandatory."

He was admitted to the New York Bar in April 1953. He specialized in immigration and admiralty law and was appointed Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1955 to 1959. In 1959, he was appointed supervisor of the 1960 census for the 17th and 18th congressional districts.

On April 10, 1968, he became a judge for the first time as he was appointed judge of the Criminal Court of the City of New York. From 1975 to 1982, he served as the Acting Supreme Court Justice of Kings and Queens Counties, and finally,

on September 9, 1985, President Ronald Reagan appointed him as Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade.

After 40 years as a judge, he is not looking to stop anytime soon. "I'm not retiring at all," Judge Tsoucalas said. "I have a life sentence. I took senior status which is like retirement. I work when I want to work."

His former law clerks never forget the role Judge Tsoucalas played in their lives and they created a scholarship in his name at New York Law School. "It's a hell of a feeling having the kids that you yelled at to do what you want them to do appreciate you," he said.

In addition to his prestigious political and legal work, Judge Tsoucalas has been very active in his church and community. He is the former president of the board of directors of the Greek Orthodox Church of Evangelismos, and a member of the St. John's Theologos Society. He was a member of the executive committee of the Republican Party of New York County.

Judge Tsoucalas married to Catherine Tsoucalas and has two daughters, Stephanie and Georgia. He has five grandchildren.

ON ISSUES Judge Tsoucalas is not afraid to

speak his mind on any topic.

Commenting about the United States' decision to leave Greece out of the Visa Waiver Program, Judge Tsoucalas pointed the finger of blame across the Atlantic.

"It's their own fault," he said of Greece. "Every time things happen, they seem to be anti-American even though I know they're not. I don't know why in heaven's name they do what they do. I'll give an example. In 1954, Greece started condemning the United States for not helping them out in their renewed conflict with Turkey. So I asked the Consul General, 'If you are a Senator in the United States, the Turks have a prominent American lawyer and invites you to Turkey all expenses paid where they put you up in the best places, why doesn't Greece get a high profile person and pay them to lobby?' His response was, 'We don't do things like that.' So don't complain! Who would a Senator choose to help? The guys who treat you well or the ones that blow their stack at you every time you do something."

Judge Tsoucalas does not believe that Greece denying F.Y.R.O.M. entry to NATO played a role in the decision.

"I don't think that has anything to do with it," he said. "That's an excuse as far as I'm concerned."

Judge Tsoucalas also spoke about President-elect Barack Obama's win in the general elections.

"I didn't want him to win, but I'm holding back on what I think until I see what he does," he said. "I don't like what he said he wanted to do. When he says that he wants to redistribute the wealth, that is a socialist and communist view. As far as I am concerned, if a person goes out and earns money, he should be able to keep it. If people are lazy, don't want to work and want others to support them, instead of going out and getting a job, it's their own fault. If they're dis-

abled that's a different story. If a person can't work, you help them out."

Judge Tsoucalas also weighed in on President-elect Obama possibly needing to name new Supreme Court Justices.

"I hope that he's smart enough to name some people that are neither liberal or conservative," he said.

Asked hypothetically if he would take the job if he was offered he said, "He wouldn't take me because I'm too old, but hypothetically of course I'd take it. Anybody who says no is crazy."

Judge Tsoucalas also didn't mince words about the news media's role in the financial crisis.

"The news media is the one that caused all this," he said. "When things were going a little bad, they scared the people and made it look worse than it really is. The people

then go to banks and stock market and pull out all their money. I don't think it would be as bad as it is if it weren't for the media. It happened with Washington Mutual. At first they were having problems because of the mortgages. The media started reported that they were going under. People immediately started pulling their money out. There were lines out the door.

Judge Tsoucalas is very proud of the success of the Greek American community, though he warns about the dangers of success.

"The Greek American community is doing terrific and we ought to be proud," he said. "We have Greek Americans that never went to school who make millions. It goes to some of their heads and they get in trouble like [Adelphia founder John] Rigas. He was a nice man, but his children got him in trouble because they were spoiled brats."



Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas celebrated 40 years as a judge in 2008. He is not retiring anytime soon saying that his job is a "life sentence."

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