

# MODERN GREEK STUDIES FOUNDATION



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD SPRING 2016

### Dear Board Members and Friends:

It was a pleasure to meet many of you at the Annual Meeting of the Modern Greek Studies Foundation held on Saturday, January 30, 2016. I want to reach out to all Board members to introduce myself and to give a report on our plans for the upcoming year.

As you may know, I was elected as President of the Foundation after serving on its Executive Committee for the past two years. I am honored to hold this position and am committed to the work of the Foundation and the Center for Modern Greek Studies at San Francisco State University.



Modern Greek Studies Foundation Scholarship Committee presents the Peter Zouras award to Pari Athanassiou at the January 2016 Board Meeting. From left: Past President John Tsingos, Pari Athanassiou, Pat Laggis, Tikita Kopolos, Professor Thanasis Maskaleris, George Konstantopoulos, and Andrew Banis.

### Personal background



Kanios Family Magna, Utah 1928

On a personal level, I am second generation Greek-American, born and raised in San Francisco, a graduate of Lincoln High School and of San Francisco State University (B.A., magna cum laude, 1976). My paternal grandparents settled in Utah in the 1920s where my grandfather, Panayiotis Kanios, originally from Rizes (Arcadia), Greece, worked in the Bingham Canyon Copper mine while my grandmother farmed a small plot. My maternal grandfather, Christos Mardakis, along with his brother Anastasios (from a small town near Galaxidi), owned and operated the Home Cab Company, a small taxi company located at Bush and Franklin Streets in San Francisco, during the 1940s through the 1960s. My maternal grandmother, Polyteme (from Patras), worked as a seamstress and a homemaker.

I earned my law degree from New College School of Law in San Francisco in 1980 and was admitted to practice that same year. I soon entered the legal

education field, serving as Dean for ten years at New College, from 1985 to 1996. I currently serve as Associate Dean and Professor of Law at John F. Kennedy College of Law in Pleasant Hill, where I have developed a course on the Trial of Socrates. Studying ancient Athenian democracy and the trial of Socrates has been the highlight of my academic career.

### **Changes in Leadership of the Center for Modern Greek Studies:**



Many of you know that Professor Martha Klironomos is no longer serving as Director of the Center for Modern Greek Studies. In July of 2015, Interim Dean Daniel Bernardi, following an institutional review of the Center, decided to make a change in this position. [This was not a decision of the Modern Greek Studies Foundation as we have no legal authority over faculty decisions of the University.] Fortunately, Professor Klironomos continues as a full-time, tenured faculty member at SF State where we hope she continues to teach courses and advise students in the field of Modern Greek Studies. She is an outstanding scholar and teacher who contributed greatly to the Center for close to twenty years.

The University has appointed Professor David Decosta Leitao, Chair of the Classics Department, and Assistant Professor Alexandra Pappas, also from Classics, as interim directors of the Center. We have been impressed with their work and their positive contributions and hope that Classics students may find interest in declaring a Minor in Modern Greek Studies

now that there is a direct connection with professors in that department.

### **CURRENT EVENTS**



**THE ELIOS SOCIETY**  
*A Company of Friends for Hellenic Heritage*

#### **Elios Charitable Foundation**

**Grant:** Thanks to a generous grant from the Elios Charitable Foundation, San Francisco State and the Center for Modern Greek Studies has been fortunate to have Visiting Professor Kostantinos Kalantzis from Athens on campus during the Spring 2016 Semester to teach two courses and lead a lecture series on topics of interest to the local Hellenic American community.

Professor Kalantzis studied History and Archaeology at the University of Crete and Visual Anthropology at the Universities of Oxford and London (PhD). Since 2008 he has worked as an ethnographic researcher in two projects that involve archaeological excavations in Cycladic and mainland Greece. He has also directed the ethnographic film 'Dowsing the Past: Materialities of Civil War Memories' (2014) which was recently shown on campus. We have been fortunate to have Professor Kalantzis with us to share his scholarly insights and astute observations.



Professor Kalantzis delivers a talk on the anthropological implications and social dynamics arising from the current Greek debt crisis.

**Kisses for the Children:** The Center recently hosted film director Vassilis Loules for a screening and discussion of his powerful documentary “**Kisses for the Children**” which recounts the efforts of Greek Christian families to save the lives of five Greek Jewish children during the Nazi occupation. After the screening of this exceptional film, several guests were able to share their own childhood stories of living in Nazi occupied Greece. In addition, Visiting Professor Kostantinos Kalantzis was present to provide a thoughtful critique and appreciation for the work of Mr. Loules.

The film was shown at the George and Tula Christopher Center at Holy Trinity Church in San Francisco.



“Kisses for the Children” documentary film.



Film director Vassilis Loules leads a post-screening discussion of his film “Kisses to the Children”. A number of those attending were children in Greece during the Nazi occupation and shared their stories.

## GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR

### A. Promote Greater Community Awareness of the Work of the Center For Modern Greek Studies and the Foundation.

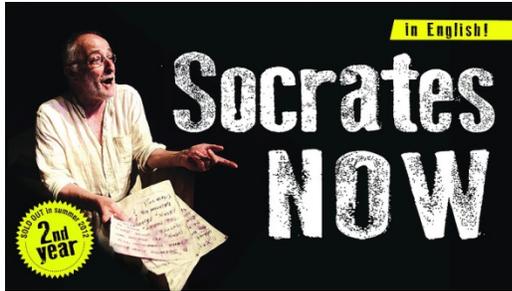
The Center for Modern Greek Studies should not be a well-kept secret. We need to make sure that the Bay Area Greek community and others with an appreciation of Greek culture are aware of the positive work of the Center. This is an area where we believe there is substantial room for improvement.

Although the academic work of the Center is central to its mission, the work of the Center and the Foundation needs to occur within and beyond the halls of academia. To this end, the Foundation is actively supporting the following events:

**SF Greek Film Festival:** This is the Foundation’s flagship production. To promote greater Bay Area awareness of this important cultural event, we are holding a **Spring Film Festival “Kick-Off” Party** on Saturday evening, May 14, 2016, from 6:30-11:30pm at the Domenico Winery in San Carlos. Enjoy wine, mezedes, and live Greek music. This will be a precursor to the full festival to be held October 15-22, 2016, at the Delancey Street Screening Room on the Embarcadero in San Francisco. (Yes, we are moving the Festival to October this year.) Please attend and bring your friends.



We all appreciate the amazing work and dedication of our Board members Kleon Skourtis, Katerina Mavourdi-Steck, and Maria Nicolacakis in their direction and leadership of the Festival.



**Theatro Ellinko:** The Foundation is in discussion with Theatro Elliniko of New York and Athens to present several productions in San Francisco in November of 2016. The director of the theater, Yiannis Simonides, is excited to join us for a week of theater and special gatherings. We may see presentations of the works of acclaimed Greek poet Constantine Cavafy, the memoirs of General Makriyannis, and a compelling monologue based on Plato's Apology in "**Socrates Now**".

We expect to co-sponsor these productions with San Francisco State University, the local Hellenic Law Society, and John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill. We have secured the week of October 31-November 7, 2016, for these exciting presentations. We will share more details as the event nears.

**Greek Wine Tasting Benefit:**

We are also looking to host a Greek Wine Tasting benefit early next year. Greek wine is gaining increased popularity and such an event can serve as a vibrant social gathering that brings more attention from a broader audience to the work of the Foundation and the Center (along with promoting quality Greek wine). We anticipate partnering with **Craft Wines** of Alameda, California, in hosting the event.



**B. Greater Collaboration with consulates, churches, and other Hellenic organizations.**

We will seek greater cooperation and collaboration with our local consulates, churches and other Hellenic organizations where we can provide mutual support for our activities.



Board member Dimitri Carapanos and son with Consul General Dimitrios Xenetellis at recent Greek Independence Day celebration at office of San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee.

For example, I recently attended a celebration at Holy Cross Greek School in Belmont, at the invitation of Board member Kleon Skourtis, who serves as Assistant Director of the school. Hundreds of parents were present to enjoy presentations of Greek songs and poems by their young children. With their interest in preserving the Greek language, these families may become avid supporters of our work. And when the time comes for their children to attend college, they should know about the special offerings available at the Center for Modern Greek Studies at San Francisco State University.



Director Theodora Kounalakis introduces the students from the Holy Cross Greek School in Belmont.

### **C. Strengthen the Operation and Financial Standing of the Center and the Foundation.**

The Foundation is over thirty years old. Its founding document, drafted in 1983, needs updating and revision. Our legal counsel, Peter Lagarias, is preparing a draft of a new agreement to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and presented to the University. If we reach a satisfactory tentative agreement with the University, we will present it to the full Board for approval.

We are fortunate that Ambassador Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis has joined the Executive Committee to assist in this process. Given that her father was the primary donor that established the Foundation in 1983, we can be confident that any new agreement will serve the interests of the Foundation and will meet the donor's wishes.

Finally, we are planning to renew efforts to engage in a thoughtful fundraising plan to enhance the endowment fund which generates the income needed to run the Center. If the Center is to have the financial ability to provide a quality program well into the future, we will need to raise additional funds to meet future expenses. We are pleased that Alex Papalexopoulos has agreed to chair our fundraising committee to develop a thoughtful, long term plan. He has already met with development officers at San Francisco State University to begin collaboration on such an important effort.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions, concerns, or ideas. I welcome the opportunity to meet as many of you as possible and to do my best to strengthen the Center and the Foundation.

Chris Gus Kanios  
President  
[ckanios@jfk.edu](mailto:ckanios@jfk.edu)  
415-420-1916

### **Executive Committee Members:**

George Marcus,  
*Chair of the Board*

Professor Thanasis Maskaleris  
*Founding Director, Center for Modern Greek Studies*

Kleon Skourtis  
First Vice-President

Dimitri Carapanos  
Second Vice-President

Dr. Alexandros Kokkinidis  
Treasurer

Angelos Sakkis  
Asst. Treasurer

Lili Samaras  
Recording Secretary

Dr. Tatiana Drakaki  
Corresponding Secretary

Peter Lagarias, Esq.  
Legal Counsel

Patricia Aleck

Diana Antonakos

Dimitri Charalambous

George Fonti

Cleo Lekas

Eftychia Kokkinidis

George Konstantopoulos

Alexandra Kostoulas

Eleni T. Kounalakis

Markos Kounalakis

Nick Panopoulos, Ph.D.

Alex Papalexopoulos, Ph.D.

Yiannis Samaras

John Tsingos (immediate past President)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **May 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-11:30pm:**

SF Greek Film Festival "Kick-Off" Party  
Domenico's Winery  
1697 Industrial Road  
San Carlos, CA

### **TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE:** Contact

Katerina Mavroudi-Steck at  
[katerina.steck@gmail.com](mailto:katerina.steck@gmail.com)

### **October 15-22:**

SF Greek Film Festival  
Delancey Street Screening Room  
600 The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA

### **October 31-Nov 6:**

Theatro Elliniko  
with Yiannis Simonides  
"Socrates Now" and other  
theatrical productions  
(various Bay Area locations)



**MODERN GREEK STUDIES FOUNDATION**  
**P.O. BOX 14815**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94114-0815**