

THE HELLENIC

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Co-Editors:

Kiki Glikerdas • Ginny Kramvis • Tula Christopoulos



Spring 2005

October Fundraiser: Apology of Socrates

*Court is in session as "The Apology of Socrates" is heard at
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey*



On October 10th, the court of ancient Athens came to life once again, in a riveting, one-man performance of Plato's classic *The Apology of Socrates*, featuring Emmy award-winner Yannis Simonides, a former chairman of the NYU Drama Department. The founder of the Greek theatre of New York

and current director of Hellenic Public Radio, COSMOS FM, relishes the thought of portraying the ancient Greek philosopher and gadfly: "In this character, I recognize myself at every turn - my strengths, my frailties, my failures - so anytime I pick up the script or utter a line it fairly makes my hair stand on end."

Loukas Skipitaris, founder and current artistic director of Theatron, a New York based Greek-American performing arts center, is the director. And adding a touch of Hollywood to the set will be legendary costume designer Theoni V. Aldredge. A three-time Tony recipient and winner of an Academy Award for her designs in 1974's *The Great Gatsby*, Ms. Aldredge brings enormous talents and a world-renowned reputation to the production.

Plato's *The Apology of Socrates* reenacts Socrates' defense in the Athenian court. Both Simonides and Skipitaris are clearly overjoyed to be able to bring to life a performance so near and dear to their hearts. Yet both would be quick to point out that the term *Apology* should not be taken literally. Indeed, Socrates' is not an apology in the contemporary sense, but rather a defense before the officials of Athens, who viewed him as an agitator and threat to Athenian society and his rebuttals to a guilty verdict and sentence of death. Now on trial for his life, Socrates stands rebellious, even incriminating himself and making his famous pronouncement that "the unexamined life is not worth living."

This dynamic treatment transports the viewer from our contemporary world to ancient times, and in doing so reaffirms the relevance of Socrates' thinking for today's society. Many agree that in *The Apology Socrates* expounds upon themes that are very much relevant today - and director Skipitaris wholeheartedly agrees: "The nature of *The Apology* is such that the 'now' is always. This is the strength and the beauty of the piece. It's timeless, and just as pertinent today as it was in the past - and will continue to be in

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Faculty News



David Carr, Vice President
for Academic Affairs

David L. Carr has served as Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey since 1998. Previously, he had served as Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Prior to joining Stockton College, Dr. Carr was Assistant Dean in the College of Social Sciences at St. Cloud State University and Chair of Social Sciences and Humanities at the SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome.

Dr. Carr has served as principal investigator on grants funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Fulbright Group Projects Abroad Program. He has written and made professional presentations on the teaching of professional ethics,

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the future." Asked about the resilience of The Apology and its unusually strong appeal, Simonides, in his characteristically passionate tone, replies: "You don't get any closer to what humanity considers to be the truth about life and death than The Apology. It's about joy, and ethics, and courage, and sticking to what you believe in and being willing to pay the price for it."

A wonderful evening was had by everyone at the annual October fundraiser. Food, music, a photography exhibition, and a riveting play were all part of the evening's offerings.

Guests enjoyed Greek mezedes as they greeted friends while Ta Trizonia, a fellowship of amateur musicians, entertained the crowd with their music. The group came together as a result of their mutual love and respect for Greek music, in particular the Rebetica. Their music at the event even inspired some guests to dance.

Donna Lombardos Andrews' exhibit of her photographs was outstanding. She was introduced to this medium by her father, an amateur photographer, while traveling through Greece and Europe in 1973. Her professional career began in 1995 and she has received several high-level national awards.

Dr. David Carr praised the Friends of Hellenic Studies and the AFGLC. He thanked all sponsors who have so generously given to the program. Dr Fred Mench recognized the AFGLC benefactors for the endowed named professorships in the following "core" areas of Hellenic Studies:

- The Peter and Stella Yiannos Professorship in Greek Language and Literature.
- The Constantine and Georgiean Georgiou Professorship in Greek History, the candidate for which is Dr. Tom Papademetriou.
- The AFGLC Professorship in Greek Culture, held by Professor Fred C. Mench
- The Clement and Helen Pappas Professorship in Byzantine Civilization and Religion.
- The AFGLC Professorship in Greek Philosophy (yet to be funded)

Two Scholarship recipients, Ms. Jeanette Layton, a senior History Major, and Ms. Dione Carroll, a senior Philosophy Major, also thanked the Friends for their scholarships and expounded upon the value of their Hellenic Studies.

There was an element of surprise as Dr. Demetrios Constantelos introduced Mrs. Georgia Psilopoulos, a graduate of the Richard Stockton College, and her mother, Mrs. Soteria Roumbas. On behalf of her late father, Mr James Roumbas and her mother, Mrs Psilopoulos presented Dr. David Carr with a check for \$10,000.00 for the establishment of the James and Soteria Roumbas Scholarship.

The highlight of the evening was the one man performance of the Apology of Socrates, by Yiannis Simonides. Together with his director, Loukas Skipitaris, he translated the ancient dialog into modern English, making it just as relevant today as it was 2,500 years ago. The audience gave a standing

ovation.

After the play there was a discussion moderated by Dr. Anne Pomeroy, Associate Professor of Philosophy. Mr. Simonides and Mr. Skipitaris answered questions pertaining to virtue, today's materialistic society and politics. The questions and answers were both stimulating and thought-provoking.

The dessert course, generously donated by Minos Bakery, brought a satisfying end to a wonderful evening. Yiannis Simonides mingled with the guests who warmly expressed their appreciation to him.

Special thanks to Mrs Sinthea Obelenus as mistress of ceremonies. We wish to thank Dr and Mrs Yiannos who organized a bus of 44 members from their church in Wilmington Delaware, and all those who supported us, both as sponsors and guests.

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Faculty News, continued from page 1

the integration of technology into pedagogy, assessment, and general education. He is also active in institutional accreditation activities through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools where he has served as a member of several site visitation teams, a member of the Committee on Substantive Change, and a reader for Periodic Review Reports. Dr. Carr received a B.A. and M.A. (political science) from San Diego State University and his Ph. D. from SUNY Binghamton. He is an avid fly fisherman and a nature photographer in his spare time.

News Release

Dr Demetrius Constantelos was invited by a department of the World Council of Churches in Geneva to be the keynote speaker in a conference to be held between April 30 – May 5 in Finland. He will speak on Origins of Christian Diakonia: Christian Philanthropy in Church History.

Dr Constantelos is editing the 5th volume of Archbishop Iakovos' writings. He wrote book reviews for the "Catholic Historical Revue and Speculum".

The Hellenic College Press has just issued a fourth edition of Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos's book, *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church-Faith, History and Practice*. This book should be of interest to any educated person interested in the nature and development of early Christianity in the ancient Graeco-Roman world.

Friends of the People, one of the oldest educational organizations of Greece has just published the Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos's new book, *Interrelationship Between Christianity and Hellenism*.

Thirty Years in The Rain: Vrettakos in English

By Manya Bean

I am holding in my hands a slim blue volume entitled "Thirty Years in The Rain; The Selected Poems of Nikiforos Vrettakos." The white lettering on the blue backdrop evokes something Greek. The poems are beautifully translated by Robert Zaller and Lili Bitá and were published by Somerset Hall Press, Boston: 2005. The publisher, Dean Papademetriou, is a lover of Greek letters.

The translators reported that when they met Vrettakos in person, they were impressed by his stature, his gentleness and nobility. They also indicated that they had selected and translated the poems in this volume (which span forty years of the poet's work) over their many summers spent in Greece. The travail and care with which the poems are translated is evident.

Vrettakos was born in a small village near Sparta. "Taygetos isn't a mountain", he says. "I didn't/ discover it, but found it beside me/ when I was born, It stood by. Later/ I dreamt of it as a kind of church- / as the center of the earth. / Its bells chiming, scattering/ petals over the nations". ("Stone Petals) From "Evening Confessions": [Taygetos] was the first poem/ I read as I opened my eyes, / my first friend, haloed with light. / That's why/ I renamed Taygetos the winged, the Beloved."

Vrettakos is one of the four most honored and best-loved Greek poets of the last century. Two of the four, Seferis and Elytis, received the Nobel prize for poetry and Yannis Ritsos along with the others has been widely translated. Some of their poems have been put into music by Theodorakis and others and they have been and still are sang in the streets. Last summer, the island of Paros, where I happened to be, celebrated the Greek soccer victory in Portugal by blasting this music half the night on the beaches.

For Vrettakos, the world's concreteness – flower, stone, mountain, sun, tree, sea – as well as the "word", "the ineffable light", feeling and sound are central entities of equal value. He counts these as his teachers. In "Seminar," flowers teach him the light; in the "Last Lesson," he says: "All my teachers were poor/ those I heard and those I read. / But now the wise trees teach me/ I want/ nothing else, Lord, only time/ enough to finish this school."

According to Robert Zaller in his Introduction to the book, Vrettakos' religious sensibility is "shorn of dogma or expectation for salvation; [it is] one that borrows freely from the Christian and pagan elements of Greek tradition to articulate a sense of the sacredness of being, the world as miracle.'" In "The Peace of Creation," he, once again, declares his holistic viewpoint, where there is no separation between animate and inanimate which are intimately connected and interwoven in a seamless continuum.

*The wind, sun, water, earth are woven
and silently weave
the branches of trees.*

*Dream, sorrow, light, life are woven
and silently weave
poetry within me.*

*Today, I feel something
stir precociously. This year
I will blossom before the trees.*

The poet's later work has a special appeal for me as it 's become profoundly spiritual and meditative. Vrettakos lived, like most of us, during the most violent, most murderous century in the history of humankind to date: "It's good to know, and know well,/ that the thing you are/ was hatched out of darkness" (Liberation). He lived wide awake, with his eyes open to the polarities of the world. He arrived at a mature understanding of the nature of reality and was able to inform his experience with a sense of equanimity.

Accomplished

*When I go, I'll know well
what I've left behind. On one hand,
a scatter of praise for the joy
I've felt at the world's wonders.
On the other my grief, a garland
for earth's trembling tumulus,
that heaves with its victims.*

Manya Bean

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Honorary Degree Conferred

On December 10th, The Honorary Degree Committee of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, reviewed and authorized the conferral of the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, upon Ambassador Vassilios Vitsaxis.

Greek Poetry Night with Lili Beta and Manya Bean

On Saturday, November 13, 2004 a group of people gathered at the Stockton Art Gallery to listen to Greek poetry. Manya Bean, Lili Beta and Robert Zaller read some of the best loved Greek poets mostly in translation. A few poems were read in the original Greek. Lili, Robert and Manya read some of their own work as well. The audience seemed to really take in the poetry. It was a warm and freindly gathering ending with people sharing a bit of greek food.

A few days after the reading, one of the readers received a wonderful card from a member of the audience with the following quotation from John F. Kennedy:

*"When power leads man toward arrogance,
poetry reminds him of his limitations.*

*When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry
reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence.*

*When power corrupts, poetry cleanses,
for art establishes the basic human truths*

which must serve as the touchstone of our judgement".

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Socrates

Keep this in mind the next time you either hear or are about to repeat a rumor! In ancient Greece (469 - 399 BC), Socrates was well known for his wisdom.

One day the great philosopher came upon and acquaintance who said excitedly, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of our students?" Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before telling me anything I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test." "Triple filter?" "That's right," Socrates continued "Before you talk to me about my student, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say.. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "No," the man said, "actually I just

heard about it and ..." "All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?" "No, on the contrary" "So," Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true. You may still pass the test though, because there's one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?" "No, not really." "Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?". This is the reason Socrates was a great philosopher and held in such high esteem.



Events Sponsored by the Friends of Hellenic

October 4
Jeffery Eugenides, Pulitzer prize
winning author of middlesex,
reading from his work.

October 11 - 16
Olympic Spirit Art Show
Co-sponsord with the
Galloway Cultural Art Center

December 11
Conferral of Honorary Doctorate
Ambassador Vasilios Vitsaxis,
Ph. D., Diplomat and Philosopher

Byzantine Choir Concert
To be announced

In Search of Her Hellenic Heritage: An Artist's Personal Odyssey.

As told to Tula Christopoulos



According to Donna Andrews, a photograph really does say a thousand words: "You can look at photos as the legacy of a person or event and some of them can really grip you. The expression on the faces can tell a story or help you imagine one. It's an instantaneous interaction."

Ms. Andrews is an inspired artist whose Greek father greatly influenced her decision to pursue photography, painting and sculpture and to appreciate and understand the impact that Hellenism has had on Western Civilization. Weddings are one of her specialties but eventually she would like to do more portrait work. She prefers black and white as it eliminates the distraction of color, letting the emotions show through. She attended high school in Galloway Township. Later, she studied art in Greece and obtained a Masters in Fine Arts from Boston University. Donna Andrews has won the Professional Photographers' Association state print competition for a portfolio of works including some shots of Alaska. She has also been honored with national awards for her work.

Donna has been painting since she was 6 yrs old. Her father, Demetrios (Jimmy) Lombardos, instilled in her a passion for the arts. He often took the family to museum exhibitions and explained how Greek culture had influenced the arts as we know them today. Before leaving for Greece to attend her first year of college, she gave him an oil portrait of himself which she'd worked on for a year. Once in college, though, she fell in love with and changed her major from painting to sculpture.

After college, she and her husband, Paul Andrews, moved to Alaska and had two children before moving back to South Jersey where they had two more. After the birth of her children, for as much a practical as well as a creative reason, she decided to concentrate on photography. Donna home schooled all her children during their elementary

years, something she says is common in Alaska.

Back in New Jersey, she noticed that, although everyone had modern conveniences, so many young people seemed bored and unhappy. In Alaska (where they had no electricity and lived in a tiny cabin, hiking up a mountain to take a shower), children were creative and very happy. "I wanted them to be content with the basics of life. I told them they had the rest of their lives to lavish themselves. In fact, we didn't own a TV during our first four years back in New Jersey." She explained that in Alaska, people didn't let weather get in the way of living and she wanted her kids to learn life is not always easy but you're not going to break – a lesson her father had taught her which she wanted to pass on to her children. Soon after returning to South Jersey, Donna lost both her parents; she does have a sister who lives in the area as well. Donna and her family have been here 12 years but still hope to return to Alaska someday.

Like so many Greek immigrants, her father knew hardship. Jimmy Lombardos was born on Santorini but his family moved to a village outside Piraeus after World War II. As a boy, he was sent to Egypt to dive for sponges and once ended up in Athens, lost and alone. His life taught Donna to be tough and always prepared for whatever challenges life presented to her.



He had been in the Greek navy and was one of five survivors on a ship that sunk, yet his mother was told that all on board had drowned. Returning to his village, word had it that the resistance fighters had rounded everyone up, taken them to the mountains and had them slaughtered.

With no reason to stay in Greece, he boarded a ship bound for New York, where he worked in a café for a dollar a day, saved what he could and bought a little café of his own. He later sold it and left for Philadelphia where he opened two restaurants and met his wife, Donna's mother. The family moved to South Jersey when Donna was seven. They lived on farmland owned by her mother's Polish family which was later sold to Stockton College.

In 1973, her father took the family on a three month trip through Europe. When they got to Greece, he searched for his sisters, even paying for radio ads to ask if anyone knew of his family but came up empty. When Donna left to at

tend school in Greece in 1978, he asked her to continue the search with the help of his friend, Vasili. It all seemed in vain until three days before she was to return to the US. She and Vasili went to a little town outside of Athens and told the residents they were looking for her father's sister, Margaret. Someone said she had died, but with lots of persistence, they found her!



Vasili asked her questions and the answers matched her father's stories. As soon as Donna showed Margaret his photo, the tears streamed down her face and she called him by name. Donna then asked where the other sister, Sophia, might be buried. She exclaimed, "Buried? She lives around the corner!" Iakovos, Margaret's oldest son accompanied them to Sophia's

house. Donna explained, "My dad used to talk about how Sophia's hair hung down below her knees and I would think, 'How could anyone's hair hang down that low?' All of a sudden, there she stood: Aunt Sophia, her hair now pure white, in a braid reaching below her knees! I needed no more proof. Then, I noticed lots of kids standing all around her whom I took for residents of the village. It turned out they were my 46 cousins!"

Now came the moment of truth: Donna called her father at the Absecon Diner which he owned and told him she'd found his sisters. He wanted to know where they were buried. "They're alive," she said to his disbelieving ears. He later went to Greece and saw the sisters he had not seen in 52 years. Donna says that aside from carrying out her father's wishes, it was exciting to discover a part of her heritage that she'd never known about.

Today, Donna Andrews lives in Absecon with her family in a home overlooking the bay. A statue of Aphrodite sits on her desk, gazing towards the horizon – a constant reminder of the link between the past and the future. Donna hopes to take her children to Greece someday so they may understand the importance of the journey she once took to fulfill her father's legacy.

Contact her at: donnaandrewsphotography@comcast.net or call 646-5374.

Not Even My Name

by Thea Halo

In the Pontic mountain of Turkey in Asia Minor, Greeks, with roots that went back three thousand years, lived peacefully side by side with the Turks. In 1921 Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Ataturk) ordered all Greek and Assyrian males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to be sent to military prisons and work camps. The remaining women, children and elderly were ordered to leave the country in eight months' time.

The march from northern Turkey's Black Sea region across the Anatolian plains and mountains to the Syrian border was approximately three hundred miles. During this march, approximately 360,000 people died from the lashings by Turkish guards, bad weather and being subjected to starvation and disease. The one and a half million who survived this holocaust went into permanent exile, never to be allowed to return to their homes or farms.

Mustafa had "cleansed" his new Turkey of its Christians. This murderous violation of human and civil rights was only feebly opposed by world powers. In the USA, President Warren G. Harding not only supported the Turkish genocide (because he wanted Turkey's oil and trade) but pressured the State Department and the media to suppress news reports of the truth about the genocide. A shameful silence followed lasting until the publication of *Thea Halo's Not Even My Name* (St Martin's/Picador)

Halo's book is the personal story of the tragedy that befell her family. It opens in 1989 when she and her 80 year old mother Sano traveled from New York City to Ankara to search for Sano's hometown Iondone (Ayios Antonios, originally). Sano had not been back since at the age of nine when she took part in the Aleppo death march. During the march she lost her mother and two sisters, and survived only because an Assyrian family in the south of Turkey took her in as a virtual slave. The family changed her name from Themia to Sano and later, at fifteen years of age, married her off to an Assyrian-American stranger three times her age.

Sano's personal account brings to life her Pontic childhood. An idyll shattered forever by man's inhumanity to man. The long march, her life as a household slave, her marriage and relocation to New York, where she learned English (and relearned Greek), gave birth to ten children and still survives today. She is a figure of profound feminine strength, courage and humanity, a true earth mother.

Her account of the Ionian Genocide is both, powerful, and sad, vivid and heart-rending. It pays homage to its victims and stands as a memorial to their courage and spirit as well as a reminder of the crimes committed by the Turks. It stands in stark contrast to the people whom she met on her return to Turkey, a people who are kind, hospitable and completely unaware of the massacre committed by their ancestors.

This book is a tribute to a woman who never became bitter through her trials. As she said, "Even in my darkest hours, I need only to watch a flower lift its lovely face to drink the rain, or hear my children laughing to know that life is good. Breath is God's gift. Life is our reward. The rest is up to us".

The Ionian Genocide is vividly described in the story of survival of a young girl, Themia, aged ten years, who was uprooted with her family and thousands of Pontian Greeks from their villages in the Pontic Mountains of Asia Minor and forced by the Turks on a brutal march with death the only objective.

Themia saw her whole family die of starvation, disease, assault and murder by the Turks. Abandoned in poverty and given over to a family of strangers who demanded hard labor and changed her name to Sano, she was robbed of her Pontian

Greek heritage. After a forced marriage at fifteen, she immigrated to New York and set out to overcome life's challenges and achieve her dreams of a better life.

Throughout her life's ordeal she held on to the vision of relaying the story of her people. Her memoirs, *Not Even My Name* by her daughter Thea, gives us a greater appreciation for the Pontic Greek heritage, one that was nearly destroyed during the World War I genocide by the Turks.

Let us never forget the fate of the Pontic Greeks.

We welcome reviews of this book and any other books that our readers would like to share with other members. Please contact us at: Kiki Glikerdas (Anastasako@comcast.net) Or mail to: Kiki Glikerdas

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