

38 Eminent Educators Establish Circle of Hellenic Academics in Boston

By Theodore Kalmoukos

BOSTON, MA – An association of eminent university professors under the name "The Circle of Hellenic Academics in Boston" was established for the first time in Boston. The effort was spearheaded by Professors Christos Georgakis, Alexander Mitsialis, Philip Serafim, and Gregory Stephanopoulos.

The groundwork for this effort started in April by the four organizers, and by December the pool of interested persons had expanded to 38 eminent members of the Greek academic community, who now represent the Founding Members of The Circle.

This Assembly is the culmination of those efforts to bring together, in a positive and forward-looking spirit, the substantial potential represented by academics with direct or indirect ties to Hellenism. In the first general assembly, on January 25 at Maliotis Cultural Center, the participants included the following:

Nikolaos Madias, MD. Chair of the Department of Medicine, St. Elizabeth's Medical Center; TUSM Academic Dean at SEMC; Maurice S. Segal, MD, Professor of Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine.

Haralambos Gavras, MD. Chief, Section of Hypertension & Professor of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine, and President of the Council of the University of Patras, Greece.

Vassilis Zannis, PhD. Chief, Section of Molecular Genetics & Professor of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine, and Professor of Medicine, University of Crete, Greece.

Christos Georgakis, PhD. Director, Systems Research Institute and Professor, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, Gordon Senior Faculty Fellow of Systems Engineering, Tufts University.

Nicholas Athanassiou, PhD. Academic Director of Bachelor of Science in International Business, Group Coordinator of International Business & Strategy and Associate Professor, School of Business, Northeastern University.

Philip Serafim, PhD. Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Northeastern University and President, Board of Directors, Maliotis Cultural Cen-



ABOVE: The foundational gathering of the Circle of Hellenic Academics in Boston, at their first meeting at the Maliotis Cultural Center in Brookline, MA. **RIGHT:** Newly-elected president of the Circle of Hellenic Academics in Boston, Christos Georgakis, speaks to the group about the organization's mission.

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Stella Kourembanas, MD. Chief, Division of Newborn Medicine BCH, Academic Head of Neonatology, & the Clement A. Smith Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

George Velmahos, MD, PhD. Chief, Division of Trauma, Emergency Surgery & Surgical Critical Care, Massachusetts General Hospital & the John F. Burke Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School.

Irene Gavras, MD. Professor of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine.

S. Alex Mitsialis, PhD. Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School.

Evangeline H. Stefanakis, EdD. Associate Professor & Faculty Fellow with Provost, Boston University School of Education.

Elisabeth H. Prodromou, PhD. Associate Visiting Professor, Program in Negotiation & Conflict Resolution, The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Maria Chatzidaki-Livanis, PhD. Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School.

Christos Zahopoulos, PhD. Executive Director, Center for STEM Education, Associate Professor, College of Engineering &

Dept. of Education, Northeastern University.

Alexandros K. Kyrou, PhD. Professor of History at Salem State University.

Grigorios Livanis, PhD. Assistant Professor of International Business and Strategy, School of Business, Northeastern University.

Michael Caramanis, PhD. Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Division of Systems Engineering, College of Engineering, Boston University.

Ioannis Livanis, PhD. Lecturer in Political Science, International Affairs Program, Northeastern University.

Nikos Passas, PhD. Co-Director, Institute for Security and Public Policy and Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northeastern University.

Othon Iliopoulos, MD. Clinical Director, Von-Hippel Lindau Disease, Familial Renal Cell Cancer Program and Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School.

Triantaphyllos R. Akylas, PhD. Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Nicholas Askounes-Ashford,

Circle as they were originally shaped by the organizers. A general discussion further honed the organizational details and the Mission of the Circle and the Bylaws were subsequently voted on by the Assembly.

The Mission of The Circle of Hellenic Academics in Boston includes the following:

1. Gathering of its members around social and, most importantly, intellectual events so that they become better acquainted in ways that are informative, intellectually rewarding, and socially enjoyable.

2. Facilitation and advancement of discussion and understanding of current interest issues by organizing lectures and/or panel discussions.

3. Networking with Hellenic graduate and undergraduate students in North America,

President; Maria Chatzidaki-Livanis, Secretary; Triantaphyllos Akylas, Treasurer; Alex Mitsialis, Media & Communications; and Members: Othon Iliopoulos, Nikos Passas, Evangeline Stefanakis, and Christos Zahopoulos.

Georgakis told TNH that "the idea was born early last year and mostly because I happened to need the help of a colleague in Harvard, because I was responsible to evaluate research proposals of Greek chemical engineers. I needed an evaluation and they suggested a person who responded and returned the evaluation within a week-end. Afterwards I said why don't we know each other? Later, in a social function given by Alex Mitsialis, where Philip Serafim and Greg Stephanopoulos were present, I mentioned that we should do something, and everyone said kick-start this and move forward. We presented the idea to a group of 11, and then we presented it to a larger group or about 50, and most said it was a good idea, and that's how we got started."

He also said that "everyone is enthusiastic" and explained that "participation is not restricted to academics who live in Boston or in New England, but clearly the base of organization will be in Boston. Besides, I do not think there is another city that harbors such a large number of prominent and distinguished educators and scientists."

Georgakis said that "the next step is to incorporate the organization in the state of Massachusetts and, in addition, to apply to the IRS for Non-Profit Organization status." Upon the completion of required legal steps, invitations to join the effort will be extended to qualifying and potentially interested persons within the Greek-American community.

The annual dues for Members will be \$250 per year. Georgakis stated that "Members may be Academics who were born in Greece or the United States, but also non-Greeks who have professional association with Hellenic issues" and added "but membership is limited to those with Higher Education Affiliation, and is not extended to all scientists, lawyers, doctors etc., because we want to keep the organization Academic."

Greece or the Diaspora, and provide advice, help, and mentoring.

4. Establishing and managing scholarships to recognize excellence in graduate and undergraduate students with ties to Hellenism who aspire to challenging careers, and organize fundraising tasks for this purpose.

5. Interact, as appropriately, with institutions and organizations with Hellenic interests.

Elections were subsequently held and the following Board of Directors was elected by the Assembly: Christos Georgakis, President; Philip Serafim, Vice-



PhD. Professor of Technology and Policy, School of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Consul General of Greece, Mrs. Iphigenia Kanara, participated in the event as an observer, and her encouraging and uplifting remarks were enthusiastically received by the participants. Also present was Mr. Dimitris Ioannidis, Esq., of Roach, Ioannidis & Megaloudis, LLC, who has been nobly offering his services pro bono as Legal Counsel to The Circle.

Christos Georgakis presented the history of the initiative, the Mission and the Bylaws of The

Concerns Loom about Architect of St. Nicholas Church at Ground Zero

By Theodore Kalmoukos

NEW YORK – Santiago Calatrava, the prominent architect selected to design the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church at Ground Zero, has a record replete with problematic projects and designs and legal problems, TNH has learned.

De Zeen Magazine's January 2 article, "Newer Story Older Story, Valencia to sue Calatrava over Falling Masonry at City of Arts and Sciences," stated among other things that "Calatrava is facing legal action from his home city of Valencia [Spain] because parts of the opera house roof at his City of Arts and Sciences complex are falling off just eight years after completion."

"Sections of the mosaic roof of the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia opera house at the Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias de Valencia came away in high winds, forcing authorities to cancel performances and close the building to the public."

"Regional government spokesman Maximo Buch announced that Valencia would sue Calatrava and his architectural firm for the cost of repairs, and said that the building will remain closed until it can be made safe again."

The article also stated that "the opera house is one of seven buildings that comprise the City of Arts and Sciences complex, opened in October 2005 and constructed on reclaimed land in the city's former port. The white concrete opera house features a feather-like roof sailing over two outer shells that curl round the sides. These are clad in a layer of ceramic mosaic tiles or 'trencadis,' which first showed signs of ageing a year ago when wrinkles appeared in the smooth white surface and is now coming away in chunks."

"Calatrava has been heavily criticized for the cost of the City of Arts and Sciences complex and was accused of 'bleeding Valencia dry' over alleged fees of €100 million for the showpiece cultural centre, despite it coming in four times over budget at over €1 billion."

"The starchitect is no stranger to legal disputes over his buildings and had to pay €3.3 million to settle a dispute last June after a conference centre he designed in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo suffered structural collapse."

"Another problem that Calatrava had was in Spain as well. The owners of the Ysios winery in Spain have launched legal action demanding he pays €2 million so they can appoint a new team of architects and engineers to fix the building's leaky roof, following repeatedly failed attempts by Calatrava's builders to solve the problem."



Architect Santiago Calatrava's design of the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church at Ground Zero, due to open in 2016.

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"Also the bridge in Bilbao proved to be problematic as well. This footbridge to the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao has caused controversy, with the city having to pay compensation to dozens of pedestrians who slipped on the glass surface in wet weather, while Calatrava is also being taken to court due to his footbridge over the Grand Canal in Venice coming in three times over budget and requiring what the city sees as excessive repairs."

The Architectural Record in a December 11, 2007 article titled "Judge Rules Against Calatrava in Bilbao Suit" wrote that "a civil judge in Bilbao, Spain, has ruled against Santiago Calatrava in his suit challenging Arata Isozaki's addition to his 1997 footbridge over the Nervión River. The addition was built without Calatrava's knowledge and opened last February. In the first test of Spain's Law of Intellectual Property applying it to a work of en-

gineering, Calatrava sued the City of Bilbao, which owns the bridge, and the two local contractors that built the addition, demanding that the extension be demolished and that he be awarded \$365,000 in damages—

or \$4.3 million if it was not removed."

The New York Times in the September 24 article "A Star Architect Leaves Some Clients Fuming, Santiago Calatrava Collects Critics as Well as Fans" wrote that "in Bilbao, Spain, a Calatrava footbridge paved with glass tiles now has a dark carpet because so many pedestrians slipped and fell."

"The station [has been] under construction this summer. It is opening far behind schedule at double the original cost. But these days, even as Mr. Calatrava's eye-catching PATH station creeps toward completion in Lower Manhattan, he is often cast as a villain here in Valencia. One local politician runs a website called Calatravateclacla, which loosely translates as, 'Calatrava bleeds you dry.'"

"Originally budgeted at 300 million euros (about \$405 million), the riverbed complex, called the City of Arts and Sciences — the world's largest collection of Mr. Calatrava's work, which includes a performance hall, a bridge, a planetarium, an opera house, a science museum, a covered walkway and acres of reflecting pools — has cost nearly three times that much, money the region never had."

"Ignacio Blanco, the member of the provincial Parliament who started the website, has un-

leashed a flood of information about the complex during the past year, concluding that Valencia still owes 700 million euros (about \$944 million) on it."

"Mr. Calatrava was paid approximately 94 million euros (about \$127 million) for his work. How could that be, Mr. Blanco asks, when the opera house included 150 seats with obstructed views? Or when the science museum was initially built without fire escapes or elevators for the disabled?"

Recently, some essential questions have arisen in the Church

and the Greek-American community circles regarding the assignment of the designs of the new St. Nicholas Church to Calatrava. Who from the Greek-Orthodox Archdiocese and with what criteria selected Calatrava to design the St. Nicholas Church, and why wasn't a Greek-Orthodox architect chosen instead? Does the Archdiocese know about the problems that Calatrava has had? Has Calatrava designed any other Greek-Orthodox church?

The new St. Nicholas Church is expected to open its doors in early 2016.

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