

At Random

By  
Louis Geo. Atsaves



Fr. Emmanuel N. Vergis dies

In the spring of 1970, my father was serving as parish council president of St. Demetrios Church in Chicago. My parents had made the Church an important part of our lives, and at the time, I served as an altar boy, attended Greek School and Sunday School, was a member of GOYA, played basketball, and was both a Cub Scout and Boy Scout through various Church activities.

That year, the newly-assigned priest of the community and his presbytera were invited to our home for dinner. I remember being bored and disinterested during the dinner. During the pleasantries, the priest turned to me and said, "Young man, my advice is simple but to the point. Determine what is right, then go for it!"

Well over 20 years later, I was serving as vice-president of the parish council. Elections for new officers were imminent. During that time I was approached by that same priest. "Remember what I once told you when we first met?" he asked. My mind initially drew a blank. He had a bemused look on his face. "Don't forget. Determine what is right, then go for it."

The reminder struck home. I was a little bewildered at the time, but I never forgot that reminder. How many others had he given that advice to? And how on earth did he remember? And what exactly did he mean? What exactly did he want me to do?

Fr. Emmanuel N. Vergis fell asleep in the arms of his Lord and Savior on Jan. 30.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, All authority is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." St. Matthew: 28:18-20.

Many hear the call, but only a privileged few have responded. Fr. Vergis answered the call by enrolling at the Holy Cross School of Theology. The year 1947 proved to be a most important one in his life. Following his graduation that June, he married Miss Sultana Mackel at their family parish of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Boston in September. In October, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop Athenagoras Cavadas of Boston at the Cathedral. Two weeks later at the same Cathedral, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Athenagoras.

In November of 1947, Fr. Vergis was assigned to serve the Annunciation

# A closer look at the C.P. Cavafy Professorship and the Modern Greek Studies Program at the University of Michigan

By THEO G. ZACHARATOS

"Modern Greek Studies includes answers to questions of identity, modernity, continuing, hegemony, politics, diaspora, geography, ethics, and historical understanding of modern Greece in a broader setting of the Hellenic tradition which constitutes an incomparable cross-cultural field of learning and investigation."

This is the mission statement of the intensive and extensive work to which Professors Vassilios Lambropoulos and Artemis Leontis have devoted their effort at the University of Michigan, to establish and develop a center of learning of the modern Greek culture. Working together and under the umbrella of the department of classical studies of the University of Michigan, they have structured an interesting program in modern Greek studies as an interdisciplinary examination of Greek literature, history, thought and culture from antiquity to the present, as well as the influences of that civilization on other histories and cultures throughout the centuries.

Looking at this broad definition in more specific terms, its components constitute the complete program at the University of Michigan and include teaching, research, relevant cultural events, and acquisition of books and manuscripts on Greek society, history and the arts. The program carries the name of Constantine P. Cavafy (1863-1933), a Greek poet of the diaspora, born in Constantinople and raised in London, before he started writing his poems in Alexandria, Egypt, a city which now proudly identifies with his name. His work and eminence is evident in his diachronic interest in Hellenism and his diasporic fate. At the University of Michigan, his name recognizes that members of the Greek diaspora in the United States established the

chair through their tireless efforts and generous contributions. In 1997, a campaign was launched by the Foundation of Modern Greek Studies to raise \$750,000 in three years, matching the resources that the university had put in place for Modern Greek.

What followed was a response by hundreds of small and large donors in the Midwestern states, which enabled the foundation to meet its goal by fall of 2001, when this new chair at the University of Michigan was officially named.

In a meeting with the Foundation of Modern Greek Studies, Dr. Lee Bollinger, president of the University of Michigan, congratulated them for their successful campaign and said, "Thanks to the generosity of Greek Americans, Michigan will now be able to have a distinguished faculty covering the entire history of Hellenism, from antiquity to the present. Your efforts are a model of effective collaboration between community leaders and the university."

Presently, the Department of Modern Greece has a constituency of approximately 200 students who take courses in Modern Greek at various levels, including courses on the culture of modern Greece between antiquity and modernity, Greek American culture, comparative literature and travels to Greece. The program is presently offering a sufficient number of courses to enable students to take Modern Greek as a minor. Plans are already in place for the program to offer a bachelor's level undergraduate degree with a master's planned for the next five years. Other plans include a direction towards the development of a Modern Greek Center of learning and cultural experiences.

Head of this department is Professor Vassilios Lambropoulos (Ph.D. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece 1980), C.P. Cavafy Professor of Modern Greek, Classical Studies



Professors Vassilios Lambropoulos and Artemis Leontis have devoted their effort at the University of Michigan, to establish and develop a center of learning of the modern Greek culture.

Department and the Program in Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. Dr. Lambropoulos served with distinction as professor of Modern Greek at Ohio State University before his appointment in 1999 at the University of Michigan.

Co-ordinator of the Program is Professor Artemis Leontis (Ph.D. Ohio State University), adjunct associate professor of Modern Greek in the Classical Studies Department of the University of Michigan, who also served in the faculty of Greek and Latin at Ohio State University prior to her appointment at the University of Michigan in 1999.

Dr. Lambropoulos emphasizes the Greek influence on the thinking of the leaders of future generations who will graduate from the University of Michigan. Actually, said Dr. Lambropoulos, the connection between the University of Michigan and Greece goes back to 1817 when it was founded by Judge Augustus Woodward, a Hellenist learned jurist who named the University using the Greek word: "Panaepistimiad of Michigan" (the Greek word for University) which was later changed to "University of Michigan."

Dr. Lambropoulos and Dr. Leontis spend a considerable amount

of time and energy to stage interesting cultural events on campus relevant to Modern Greece. The number of events is also growing from nine in 2000 to 19 in 2001.

Starting this year, Dr. Lambropoulos, says there will be three simultaneous major exhibitions on campus dedicated to Cavafy's work. Many of his poems translated into English and original manuscripts, books and photos from the years he lived and worked in Alexandria, Egypt, will be exhibited to showcase this significant cultural station in the history of Greece.

Other events currently under development include a trip to Athens, Istanbul and Alexandria, following the footsteps of Cavafy or "Cavafy's World" as Dr. Lambropoulos calls it; a 12-day itinerary including a cruise between Greece and Turkey and several Greek Islands.

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