

NOVEMBER 5, 2016

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UNDER

40

The National Herald proudly presents its inaugural 40 Under 40 edition!

Read 40 incredible bios of young people with Hellenic heritage who have dedicated their lives to helping others and are paving the way for others to follow them.

From artists to doctors... from journalists to politicians... and every field in between... this next generation showcases the traditional Greek spirit by honoring their past and helping their future thereby exemplifying the true meaning of Greek culture in their careers.

We congratulate these rising stars and acknowledge their wonderful achievements!

Aliz Koletas



The National Herald

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40 UNDER 40: THE LIST IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Nick and Melanie Angelis, 33 AND 32

One husband-and-wife team in Florida is on a medical mission to help others as a nurse anesthesiologist and holistic health consultant, respectively. Nick and Melanie Angelis are using their Master's Degrees and wealth of medical knowledge and holistic information to help patients and clients stay safe through either surgery or alternative medicinal therapies. They are also accomplished authors in their field. Nick graduated nursing school from Youngstown State and is a magazine contributor for "ADVANCE for Nurses" and "New Physician" and the author of How to Succeed in Anesthesia School (And RN, PA, or Med School). Nick always enjoyed science and communication and the ability to communicate with patients and uses anesthesiology as a way to improve a patient's wellbeing. Melanie originally was in the education field having received her teaching degree from Southeast-



complexity of the multidisciplinary scientific field of Regenerative Medicine, where she attempts to create the building blocks of life. As a researcher in Regenerative Medicine and Artificial Organ Technology with a focus on tissue-engineered transplants for patients in need, Antoniadou also serves as the President of the European Health Parliament, a platform for eighty young professionals to brainstorm about making Europe a healthier place and to rethink the EU healthcare system. Their synergistic work between all 5 committees outlines a 'blueprint' to reignite action for efficient delivery of healthcare to EU citizens, utilizing the enormous potential of emerging health innovation. Trying to translate pieces of her research into the clinics, towards the development of a new therapeutic pathway has been a very tough but unique experience to that has made Antoniadou evolve not only as a scientist but also as a person. Translational medical research requires a wider understanding of the regulatory framework, the financial interdependencies within the entire healthcare continuum, as well as the establishment of new health policies that embrace disruptive medical innovations. She explains further, "I take baby steps in the world of science, acknowledging that failure is part of the process and hoping to make fruitful contributions in the field of regenerative medicine. Each day I take a deep dive into research trying to disentangle the complex issues associated with the development of artificial organs for transplantations." Antoniadou is from Thessaloniki and enjoys traveling with friends, skydiving, reading and exploring new things.



ern University but after researching her way to health naturally from a variety of puzzling conditions, she went back to school to help others "live a nourished life." She received her Graduate and Masters of Science in Complementary and Alternative Medicine from American College of Healthcare Sciences. She's seen children with behavioral problems and adults with serious depression and anxiety improve their physical well-being just by changing their diets and taking health supplements and it is moments like these that inspire her to keep pursuing her professional path. Melanie is the author of The Grecian Garden: A Natural Path to Wellness. Nick's parents emigrated from Rhodes as teenagers and Melanie's paternal grandparents are from Chios. They enjoy writing articles, reading books and cooking gluten free in their spare time.

Eleni Antoniadou, 28

"Where there might have been despair in the face of one patient, to see that replaced with hope is a gift beyond words." That's how Eleni Antoniadou stays optimistic in the challenges of the increased

their organization is seeing the happiness and joy that comes from giving children their wish items. "We feel empowered that we can help to make a difference in a child's life. Play is a vital part of growing up because it is not only fun, it is proven to help with normal cognitive, as well as, psychological development. We believe all children need to play and have the right to play. The hardest part is finding the places to place the money /gifts because we have to make sure we research the organization and ensure the children that need the items are the ones that will receive our donations." Several moments in particular stand out the most to them. "We delivered roller blades to an orphanage and were allowed to help them learn how to use them. We also played basketball together and just spent time with them. Another memorable moment was delivering items to an all-girls foster home and getting the chance to sit and talk and enjoy dinner with them." They also just held a special event in Baltimore to help Kivitos tou Kosmou and proudly share, "This



August we delivered 6000 dollars to Kivitos Tou Kosmo which went towards their wish list item of commercial sized washers and dryers in order to help take care of the needs of over 400 children. We are very proud of this event and hope to host another one to continue to help Greece and all the children that need it in our home country." If that's not enough to keep them busy, the siblings also have launched their first app called nudge social dating available now for download at the apple App Store where Greeks can locate other Greeks within 100 feet of their location worldwide. Also, they each are starting their own clothing line. More importantly, they are making sure to follow their passions and learning to not be afraid of trying even if they fail. They credit the important businessmen in their lives- Pappou and dad-with instilling this important work ethic in them. The Argeropoulos' family is from Sparta and Domvrena and they enjoy traveling, reading and music.

John "Akillezz" Arvanitis, 22

Philosophy meet hip hop. Poetry meet rap. Achilles meet Akillezz. Greek-American John Arvanitis who is better recognized by his stage name, Akillezz, released his debut studio length solo album Transgressionzz in May 2015. With his album's success, he became the



only independent artist in his class to chart consistently on Billboard Hot Single Sales with multiple releases, holding the greatest weekly sales gain in the US. Since then, Akillezz has collaborated with artist, Tony Yayo, from G Unit on a track titled "Circus" and most recently, released his music video "Gentleman," which accumulated a million views on YouTube in only one month's time. Originally, his viral success began in 2013 with his music video, Gravity, which garnered upwards of 2 million views on YouTube. As a result of early success, Akillezz was invited to perform at Hot 97 Summer Jam in 2014. This courtesy was extended while the New York based station was expecting the release of his first single, One Level off Transgressionzz but it would be rival station Power 105.1 which would first air his single. Quickly spreading across the US, "One Level" aired on more than 30 major radio stations. Most notably, his most popular music video, Punching Bag, features model and actress Charlotte McKinney who quickly rose to fame after her controversial Carl's Jr. commercial which aired during Super Bowl XLIX. Akillezz' earliest break was his international live performance at Akrtwiri Boutique in Athens, Greece for MTV Greece. Arvanitis' family is from Lefkada, Greece and he enjoys reading academic work and writing essays.

Elaina Athans, 33

Most people freeze under pressure. Very few go on camera to report the news. Elaina Athans is part of the very few. As a TV news reporter for WTVD in Raleigh, NC, Athans doesn't have the typical desk job- one that she wouldn't want anyway. Before reporting down south, Elaina was the lead reporter at YNN Hudson Valley about an hour north of New York City. She reported on Hurricanes Sandy and Irene and was invited to travel with World War II veterans on an Honor Flight to our nation's capital. But the most impactful was covering the Sandy Hook Elementary



School shooting massacre. "When I arrived in town that day, everyone was in shock. Memorials immediately went up in town with all the young victims' names. It was right around Christmas and it was so heart-breaking to see all these festive decorations inches away from a memorial bearing children's names. Every church in town was holding prayer services. Parents were crying everywhere you looked. You could not be there that day without being emotional attached and in shock yourself to the injustice. I imagined the horror these children went through at the school. Dozens of innocent children were massacred and terrorized for no good reason. Families had pieces of their souls ripped away. It's one thing to see a national tragedy like this on TV, but another thing to actually be there watching it unfold before your eyes. I don't think I slept well for days. I kept seeing the children's images in my mind and thinking of the fear that had happened during what was supposed to be a typical day at school." Athans' father grew up in the village of Trikala and then immigrated to the United States with his family at 16. She enjoys reading (non-fiction only, please), cooking, hiking and spending time in museums.

Maria Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis, 31

When people think of matchmaking, they may think "old world", but not with Maria Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis, CEO of Agape Match, a modern boutique matchmaking firm based in New York City. Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis is a dating industry entrepreneur whose natural inclination to connect with people and her no-nonsense attitude helped establish one of the leading and award winning matchmaking firms in the country. Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis and her staff of six, known as the "Agape Team," provide dating solutions for busy professionals who cannot (or won't) participate in "modern dating" – online sites and mobile apps. She observes that modern dating has made people "quite spoiled and unfocused" to what's really important, or "absolutely overwhelmed" by the amount of work needed to be successful. "As matchmakers, we vet character, family values, lifestyle, and communication style because that's what is important when it comes to finding a life partner. We are very popular among a vast array of backgrounds and religions, but ultimately we work with college educated professionals who value privacy and high caliber service." Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis, considered to be a leader in the dating industry as a whole, regularly consults with other dating companies on improving their user experience. Her company was awarded Best Matchmaking Agency at the 2016 US Dating Awards, where dating companies were judged on a number of factors, including approachability, professionalism, innovation, success rate, cost, customer service and reputation. Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis is also one of the co-founders of The Matchmakers Alliance, an organization that exists to help collaboration between professional matchmakers around the world, and co-hosts their yearly conference for dating professionals each year. Her most memorable client interactions involve celebrities or politicians, whose life tends to



be public, who utilize Agape Match's discrete services. "They are just trying to find someone special to share their life with who they can admire. Celebrity is an obstacle." Avgitidis-Pyrgiotakis has a Masters in Global Affairs – Private Sector & Economics from NYU and her family is from Serres, Alonissos, and Athens. She enjoys exploring different cuisines, spending time with family and friends, traveling and discussing current events and business strategy.

Niko Bonatsos, 32

Talent is universal while opportunity is not and that is a constant reminder for an early stage venture capitalist investing in young tech startups. Niko Bonatsos, the Managing Director at General Catalyst Partners, admits he wasn't the greatest engineer but he loved technology and entrepreneurship. Putting those two together is "magical" and he readily points out that the best part of his job is "partnering with ridiculously ambitious founders who are building category defining companies." Bonatsos also spends a lot of time mentoring young founders and student entrepreneurs at Stanford University, YCombinator and other mentoring organizations. Bonatsos' most memorable moments in his career came from "invest-



ing via General Catalyst in category defining startups like Classdojo and Snapchat that are now household brands!" He received his education at Stanford, the University of Cambridge and the National Technical University of Athens. Bonatsos also worked in Tokyo at the R&D headquarters for Yokogawa Electric Corporation. Bonatsos was born in Athens and grew up between Greece and the UK. He enjoys spending time with his wife and friends and enjoying the Greek islands every summer.

John Catsimatidis Jr, 23

Finding a Republican in New York is unique. Finding a young Republican who graduated from NYU is almost unheard of. Yet John Catsimatidis Jr is not only proud of that fact but he's opti-

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A weekly publication of the NATIONAL HERALD, INC. (ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ), reporting the news and addressing the issues of paramount interest to the Greek American community of the United States of America.

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mistic that his message of opportunity and idealism will start a fire among millennials, maybe even those at odds with the GOP. His message is two-fold: there are just as many Republicans as Democrats out there that are concerned with helping people and the second part? Don't lose faith in the political system and let it create apathy. Easier said than done but if anyone has the motivation for this mission it's Catsimatidis who is determined to show an alternative to the clichéd "dirty ol world of politics" mindset that has turned off so many of his peers. "Senator Sanders and Donald Trump have struck a chord. They recognized how upset Americans are and how broken they perceive Washington to be. Laws regarding campaign finance and the influence special interest groups have needs to change, and we might finally see that happen. Whether you like any of the candidates or not, the amount of people paying attention to politics is setting records. Political apathy is poison to a free and democratic system's sustainability, and I am happy to see more people involved on both sides." When Catsimatidis is not busy staying abreast of the local, national and international political scene, he is an executive at the Red Apple Group in the energy and investment divisions. An exciting development coming soon for the company is their opening of one of the largest biodiesel plants in the Northeast which will be built in Brooklyn. And that may just be the first stop in Catsimatidis' dream to see North America become 100% energy independent. Catsimatidis is involved in the Catsimatidis Family Foundation and

serves on the Emerging Leaders Council of the Federal Enforcement Homeland Security Foundation. He was recently awarded the Partner in Caring Next Generation Award by The Bridge, an organization focused on housing, treatment and training for those suffering with both mental illness and substance abuse. Catsimatidis' family is from Nisyros and he enjoys computer programming and playing the guitar.

Alexandra Cavoulacos, 30

In Greek mythology, the muses are goddesses of various arts. In real life, the founder and COO of The Muse, Alexandra Cavoulacos is helping millennials find their dream job. "The Muse is the most trusted career site for Millennials and beyond, changing the way candidates find their ideal jobs and helping employers find their best-fit candidates. Selected by over 50 million people a year as their career platform of choice, The Muse delivers quality advice, skills-building re-



sources, and coaching services to passive and active candidates. Employers rely on The Muse to hire top talent by showcasing their brands and corporate culture, creating authentic and lasting connections with candidates before they even apply." Since starting The Muse five years ago, Cavoulacos has led the operations and product functions of the company. "My big focus has been on growth and scaling, making sure that we're prepared for what's coming next. On the product front, that's taking the time to speak to users and clients, and really push the envelope in terms of user experience. I'm excited about our work on the data and personalization side, which continues to deliver more and more value to our Musers. On the operational side, I work to think ahead -- what might we need in 3 months, 6 months or a year -- and also to solve issues as they come up. We've grown the company to 135 employees through rapid growth, so every quarter has a new opportunity or challenge for me to dig my teeth into." When asked the best part about her job, she immediately credits her team. "It sounds clichéd, but I look forward to coming to work every day because I'm surrounded by passionate, smart, insightful people who are also collaborative and kind. We're all here to build an impactful company; that's a hard goal, but doing it together is part of the fun." But starting a company is never easy and there are many highs and lows she admits. "The hardest part more recently has been working to maintain our culture as we've experienced rapid growth. When we were small, those things came naturally - office outings, regular lunches, etc. But as we've grown, my co-founder, Kathryn, and I have needed to be much more deliberate about preserving the culture that has set us apart." But even the hardest parts bring the greatest rewards. Getting accepted into Y Combinator in their winter 2012 class was the most memorable moment of her career. "Based on what we knew of the program at the time, we didn't think we were the type of company that YC was looking for. But we applied anyway, and YC proved us wrong. We were their first all-female team, as well as their first team of non-technical founders, though I've since learned to code and design." In San Francisco she was an inaugural advisor for Hackbright Academy, the leading software

engineering school for women, and as a mentor for the Lean Startup Conference. Cavoulacos is also involved with Yale in Tech and the Y Combinator alumni network. Alexandra grew up in Paris before coming to the US for college. "My high school was established in 1952 as a school for the children of international personnel working at NATO's military command HQ (now in Belgium), so it was a hybrid between French public school and international school with over 13 different nationalities supported. In addition to a bilingual curriculum, I was required to take two additional languages, so I graduated high school ready for the global economy and appreciative of the power of diversity and cultural differences." Her family is from Athens and she spent every summer visiting her grandparents in Greece. She enjoys reading, long distance cycling (having biked for 3 weeks from the South of France to Paris) and mentoring and coaching entrepreneurs in her spare time, especially first-time founders, women, and non-technical founders.

Nikolas Cromydas, 29

If at first you don't succeed, try again. Nikolas Cromydas took that advice and is now the CEO and founder of New Coast Ventures, a design, development and venture capital firm based in Chicago. But he says the most impactful moment of his career was shutting down his first company where he had built a business, was accepted into a top 10 venture accelerator, pitched 500 investors at the incubator's demo day and secured a lead investor only to watch it all crumble in a matter of months as the investment dollars didn't come through. Cromydas explains the lesson learned saying it taught him humility and perseverance and the importance of building something that didn't rely on external funding. That's where New Coast Ventures comes in. New Coast Ventures is a digital innovation company helping large companies and entrepreneurs build technology solutions. "The best part of my job is helping clients bring their ideas to life. Everyone has an idea. We help make it happen. We help large companies gain a competitive advantage by moving quicker than they thought possible and we give entrepreneurs the necessary innovation tools to start their first business." Cromy-



das' family is from Sparta and Crete, and he enjoys playing platform tennis which is a combination of tennis and racquetball that is played outside on a miniature tennis court as well as trying new restaurants and spending time with family and friends.

Chrysoula Deligianni, PhD, 31

From biology class to dance ballet, Chrysoula Deligianni easily made her way between both worlds that she loved so much growing up in Greece. And now she finds herself using the same stretching techniques she learned in ballet class (and a twirl here or there in the biology lab when no one is around) while she works as a molecular biologist post-doctoral researcher at Mount Sinai. She explains how her love of biology grew into her current career saying, "I've always had a strong interest in sci-



ence, and my undergraduate training in the laboratory of Prof . Papamathaiaakis and Dr. Kretsovali, in IMBB FORTH (Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology), cemented my interest in molecular biology and biochemistry. So the decision to pursue graduate training was easy. To my favor Professor Spilianakis accepted me in his team and together we worked on the spatial organization of the genome, since then it has become my passion." She con-

tributes her interest in the field to the influence she received from her mentors and says the best part of her job is new discoveries. Deligianni received her Bachelors, Masters and PhD at the University of Crete and still vividly remembers some very defining moments in her career. "One of the most impactful moments was when our work was selected among more than a thousand others to be presented in an international conference, and I received a presentational award as well. I had just finished my first year as a PhD student and I was extremely nervous for this presentation, but at the same time, I felt really proud of what we have been doing in this small lab in the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology in Crete. My second most impactful moment was when I defended my thesis. I will never forget the opening speech (before my presentation) of my supervisor. His touching words about me and our project made all the effort worth the trouble." She is now passing those same words of encouragement onto the younger generation saying, "To all those young people who love science, my best advice would be to learn as much as you can about your career path and as early as possible. And never give up." Deligianni is from Nafplio and enjoys doing crossfit and spending time with family and friends.

Maria Dimakopoulou, 25

In November 2011, Maria Dimakopoulou received an email from Google. She replied back and this was the peak that unfolded many other peaks before her eyes that she conquered over the following 5 years. "My professional passion is Mathematics and Computer Science for decision making. Currently, I am pursuing my PhD studies at Stanford, focusing on Operations Research & Optimization. It has always been my dream to work on research problems directly drawn from and applied to industry. I feel very fortunate to have worked with Krux, a very dynamic company in the space of marketing intelligence, as it has inspired the line of research I am pursuing at Stanford. From 2012 to 2015, I worked at Google, first in the Operations Research & Optimization team and then in the Ad Exchange Optimization team. This experience defined my passion for my field." She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the School of Electrical and



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Computer Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens. "I always had great respect for this academic institution, which spawned many generations of acclaimed Engineers, including my grandfather. So, in 2014, when I graduated with 10/10 GPA, the highest ever achieved in the 200-year History of National Technical University of Athens, it was a dream coming true for me." At school, Maria developed a strong interest in Mathematics, participated and won several prizes in national and international competitions. Since the beginning of her studies, she has been attracted to the challenging problems in the area of Algorithms which also have a tremendous impact on real-life applications and she is seizing any opportunity to pursue them. "Undoubtedly, the best part of my job is the people with whom I collaborate. I am impressed by the people I have worked with at Google and Krux. Not only they are incredibly smart and constantly improving themselves, but also they put a lot of energy to elevate and catalyze the contributions of each other. One would normally expect such a culture from Silicon Valley companies that change the world, but when I experienced it, I was amazed. Similarly, at Stanford, the intellect of the people with whom I collaborate and from whom I learn, is what motivates me most. There are professors such as Peter Glynn, Susan Athey, Olivier de La Grandville, who are top contributors to the world progress and inspire me not only with their knowledge, but also with their attitude. I fully entrust them in steering my passion for my field. At the same note, it is certainly a great honor to be the latest "Arvanitidis" Stanford Graduate Fellow in memory of William K. Linvill. The greatest part, however, is that I got to know Dr. Nick Arvanitidis. He is a remarkable figure in Silicon Valley, an amazing person, a role-model and I feel very fortunate to have him in my life." In 2014, her solution to a three-year-old problem in the Intel processors improved thousands of Intel machines and brought her acclaim inside Google, Intel and CERN. In 2015, she developed an algorithm that significantly increased the revenue of Google Ad Exchange Auction. Over the past years, she has been honored with a number of awards in the field of Computer Science, including the Intel Innovation Award and the Google Anita Borg Memorial Award. In June 2016, Stanford honored her with the Annual Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement at the Graduate Level in Management Science & Engineering. However, she feels that the most impactful and memorable moments have not come yet. "This enhances my dedication to offer even more to my field". The hardest part for Maria is people who try put her in their box and confine her freedom to create. Dimakopoulou was born and raised in Athens and her parents are doctors. Maria's mom always told her that "when at a crossroad, always choose the most difficult path" and that has become her mindset. Dimakopoulou enjoys swimming, travelling across the world with company and exploring surreal art.

**Christopher Michael
Dodd, 40**

A Greek-American doctor whose own grandparents were Greek immigrants fleeing war is bringing compassion and medicine to the most medically and socially complex patients locally and globally. Christopher Michael Dodd is Regional Medical Director for Concerto Health, a new breed of healthcare organizations aiming to help improve the lives of those living in poverty and heavy burdens of chronic diseases, mental illness and substance use disorders. "Concerto employs a concierge model of care that allows multi-disciplinary care teams to spend extended amounts of time (that includes some visits) with their patients in order to allow them to build and maintain strong relationships. The social determinants of health - what actually makes people sick often has little to do with disease and much more to do with the social context of their lives - i.e. living in poverty, lack of housing, mental illness, race, lack of access to food, potable water, and sanitation, little formal education, etc." Dodd is also the founder and president of Maravilla Health, an US-based non-profit launched in 2015 to support grassroots organizations in resource-poor Latin American countries which focus on improv-

ing health and creating jobs. "One such organization is Atencion Primaria en Salud (APS), a community-based organization in the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere, Nicaragua. Maravilla Health seeks to develop and expand the community health entrepreneur (CHE) model best championed by APS. It trains and empowers community members to provide basic health care services in the most impoverished and remote areas where there is no doctor. CHEs learn to take vital signs, assess patients, and provide appropriate treatment and referrals when specialized care is needed. APS also helps Community Health Entrepreneurs establish small pharmacies in their own communities where medications are otherwise not available." Dodd has been working with APS since he was a medical student in 2004. But it's not just his work globally that inspires him. He explains, "As you may know, the U.S. is currently facing an epidemic of deaths from opioid use (prescription narcotics, heroin). To become a part of the solution I underwent training to become a Buprenorphine prescriber, which is a medication used to treat opioid addiction. I now have the pleasure of caring for a number of people whose lives were filled with chaos - abusing heroin, without work, etc. ... now living productive lives. One of them recently stopped me from walking out of the examination room, took my hand, and said "Dr. Dodd, I just want to thank you for saving my life ... I couldn't have done it without you." Wow, just one moment like that continues to drive me to do what I do." Dodd is on the faculty at the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington and two of his primary roles there are to mentor public health/medical students as well as to direct the Nicaraguan Social Medicine Course and Rotation - hosting medical students in Nicaragua for a one week didactic course on Social Medicine and 5 weeks of rotations- time with an APS community health entrepreneur, time in a rural hospital/clinic, time in an urban hospital/clinic, etc. Dodd's mother is Greek and her parents were immigrants from



the island of Marmara, which is currently modern day Turkey. "They were Asia Minor Greeks who were forced to leave their home during the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange after World War I in the year 1923. They then became refugees in Greece and eventually immigrated to the U.S. My Pappou worked on the railroads and eventually settled in Tacoma, Washington." Dodd enjoys international travelling and spending time with his wife Maria Christofilis and two daughters Evangelina and Elena.

Angelo Drakopoulos, 31

Most thirteen year olds are focused on grades and sports. Angelo Drakopoulos was focused on working every evening and every weekend while at the same time attending grade school to

help provide for his family just recently arrived to the States. After only living in America for one year he landed on the honor roll all through high school and then graduated Cum Laude with his BBA in Finance from DeVry University. Since then he's tirelessly focused on financially helping Greek-Americans both in Greece and America while currently working at the Republic Bank of Chicago. Understanding the economic issues happening to both countries is paramount to his job since many of his clients have financial ties to both Greece and the United States. But it's not just about the financial success of his clients that matters to him- it's the physical and spiritual success of those in need that has Drakopoulos going on mission trips throughout the year. He proudly supports organizations such as Feed My Starving Children, Bread of Life Orphanage



in Romania and Passage to Life in Athens, Greece whose mission is to reach out and save those suffering from drug addiction, prostitution and poverty. He agrees with the organizations' belief that a strong foundation in their Christian faith is just as important as food on their table and clothes on their back. But Drakopoulos never forgets where he came from. "I came here as an immigrant when I was 13. It was very hard for me as I was in a totally new environment, didn't speak the language and had to support my family. The way that some of the Greek Americans helped me was amazing. Now that makes me want to help people in their difficult times." Drakopoulos is from Kiato Greece where his family owned successful automobile and agricultural companies as well as a fruit exporting business before immigrating to the United States.

Lydia Emmanouilidou, 23

When telling stories changes lives, Lydia Emmanouilidou doesn't do it for the awards... though sometimes those come. Emmanouilidou is a Higher Education Associate Producer for Boston's NPR station (WGBH) and involved in all aspects of producing local and national higher education reports, including enterprising story ideas, conducting research, and mixing radio pieces. While working in public radio for about two years now since graduating college, she's also has been doing internships and temp work in journalism since starting college. While working for NPR's Investigative Unit, she had the opportunity to contribute some research to the Peabody Award-winning series World War II Secret Mustard Gas Testing. The NPR investigation found that tens of thousands of American troops served as test subjects, and approximately 4,000 "were used in extreme tests that government studies have linked to illnesses including skin cancer, leukemia and chronic breathing problems." Since the stories aired, a dozen U.S. senators have called on the Depart-



ment of Veterans Affairs to help World War II veterans who were exposed to mustard gas, and hundreds of people have been able to use NPR's online database to determine whether they or their relatives has been exposed to mustard gas. Recently she and coworkers at NPR were honored with two awards: the RFK Award and the Television and Radio Journalism Award in the 22nd Annual NIHCM Research and

Journalism Awards for their Injured Nurses series. She says, "The best part of my job is leaving the office and getting out in the community to talk to people about the issues that matter to them." Emmanouilidou was born in Thessaloniki and moved to Newton, MA around 12 years old. She enjoys, running, reading and taking acting classes.

Isabella Huffington, 25

A child's fascination of just simply "making things" can lead to something so much more and it's led Isabella Huffington on a journey of self-awareness and exploration as an accomplished artist. Perhaps her secret to success is also the freedom to work unstructured by the weights of static nonsense but allowing the inspiration of art to carry her through to the next stage of completion. She explains her motivation saying, "Being an artist requires constant self-motiva-

tion. If I want to make something happen I really have to show up. There is no road map and often for each success there are multiple failures. But my Yiayia used to always say that failure is the stepping stone to success. And any good Greek knows Yiayias are always right." Huffington focuses on creating art out of everyday objects saying "I've always been really interested in creating art out of every-day objects. I love that every day I'm making things. That even when the day has seemed hard or unproductive I can look down at what I've done and see progress and say I made that. I think there are so many beautiful, interesting things around us that we just don't notice because we've forgotten how to really look at things. I've always wanted to bring beauty into the every-day. I even wrote my thesis on art and accessibility at university, which

Continued on page 6



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Ioannis Christos Zouzas, M.D., is an attending orthopaedic surgeon at Winthrop University Hospital who specializes in sports medicine and shoulder surgery. He received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and completed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at Columbia University – New York Presbyterian Hospital. During his training at Columbia University he completed a research fellowship in the Columbia University Trauma Training Center. He was elected to be chief orthopaedic surgery resident during his final year of training at Columbia University. He then went on to complete a sports medicine fellowship at the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic in Los Angeles where he assisted in the care of multiple professional sports teams including the L.A. Dodgers, the Lakers, and Kings, as well as local high school and college teams. He has also served as one of the physicians for the NFL Players Association Collegiate Bowl game and the PGA Tour's Northern Trust Open. His post-residency training focused on both surgical and non-surgical techniques to treat shoulder, elbow, hip and knee disorders in athletes of all levels, from teenagers playing organized sports to weekend warriors and elite athletes. Dr. Zouzas has also published multiple peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and has presented his research at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) National Meeting. Dr. Zouzas performs shoulder, elbow, hip and knee reconstructive procedures including total shoulder replacements, and arthroscopic treatment of rotator cuff tears, shoulder instability, ACL reconstruction, and hip labral repairs.

Education:

Medical School: New York University School of Medicine, New York, New York
 Residency: Columbia University-New York Presbyterian, New York, New York
 Fellowship, Sports Medicine and Arthroscopy: Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic, Los Angeles, California

Board Certification:

Board Eligible, American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery

Academic & Hospital Appointments:

Attending Physician, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, NY

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American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)
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Surgery (SOLAS) national meeting as a podium presentation. He currently specializes in advanced back and neck surgery and has a particular interest in the application of MIS lateral access surgery to adult spinal deformity.

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**Constantino “Deano”
Kastis, 33**

Chrysovalantis “Chrys”
Kefalas, 37

in Maryland, earning the endorsement of The Baltimore Sun, the state's leading newspaper. The Sun wrote, "When Republicans primary voters go to the polls, they should pick the candidate not only best positioned [to win the senate seat] but also to serve the state with distinction in Washington, and that is attorney Chrys Kefalas." After finishing third in a crowded 14-candidate field, he returned to help lead the NAM, the largest industrial trade association in the



country, representing more than 14,000 manufacturers in the United States. He says the most impactful moment was “the night I lost my first election. Despite the outcome, we won over thousands of supporters, enough to fill a major league ballpark, and built a movement that lifts everyone up and leaves nobody behind.” Kefalas’ father is from Rhodes, and his maternal grandparents are from Karpathos and Pireaus, respectively. He enjoys mentoring young people to pay forward all the great advice and mentorship he’s received in his life.

Manolis Kellis, 39

Working in computer science since 18, working in genomics since 23 and being a professor at MIT since 27—these are just some of the accomplishments of Manolis Kellis. He is also an institute member of the Broad Institute where his research is on understanding the human genome and the mechanism through which genetic differences predispose humans to disease. Kellis loves blending his love of computer science and math and his love of biology and the natural world. He believes that computer science is at the heart of decoding the circuitry of human cells, deciphering the language of DNA and mining



our fat cells that decides whether they will store excess calories as fat or whether they will burn it as heat (Claussnitzer, New England Journal of Medicine, 2015). These three papers have major implications on our understanding of human disease, and on the strategies for therapeutic development against some of the most important diseases we face today. Kellis is from Athens and is a devoted father to two children and loves spending time with them and discovering the world through their eyes.

Sophia Kioulaphides, 18

The engineering field is only 18% female dominated and Sophia Kioulaphides is hoping to help increase that number once she graduates college. But since the age of 12, Kioulaphides wanted to be an engineer and credits her math teacher for encouraging her to pursue a career in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field. She talks about her accomplishments just in high school alone saying, “In senior year of high school, I became an Intel STS semifinalist with my project on artificial neural networks. I felt that this was my greatest achievement so far, as I had worked extremely hard on that project for about 2 years. That entire experience opened before my eyes a whole a field of science that I had not known about until that moment and made me incredibly curious to discover, to explore new frontiers of knowledge. Other than be-



Kioulaphides went with one of her classes to Japan that was involved in a joint effort with the University of Tokyo to tackle worldwide engineering problems. “Getting to travel to Asia for the first time and meet so many friendly people was truly incredible! I was able to both see how the students there tackled problems like energy storage, the global food chain, or education, and at the same time immerse myself in the culture, one that is drastically different from the one that I have grown up in.” Kioulaphides’ father was born and raised in Athens and she visits her paternal side often.

**Drs. Jason Kofinas and
Antonia Fthenakis
Kofinas, 32 AND 30**

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ASRM 2016

A black and white photograph of the ASRM 2016 conference stage. Two men are seated at a long table on the left, and one man is standing at a podium on the right. A large, stylized logo for ASRM 2016 is overlaid on the top half of the image.



technology and new gadgets,
and long walks with their
adorable puppy.

Cristos Kontos, 36

What does a BS in criminology, a master's in forensic psychology and a fashion label have in common? Ask Cristos Kontos, the founder of MAC&LOU and you'll get your answer. The company creates leather bags, shoes and other accessories that compare to premium Italian brands and that was his mission saying he embraces the need to create quality products that are reasonably priced." While it's difficult he said to get "people to understand they don't need to spend a fortune to own a quality prod-



act," he feels honored when seeing something he created worn by random people on the street. The most impactful moment of his career was being "hired by a renowned Asian fashion company to develop their entire handbag collection for three straight seasons." And he hopes his efforts will bring awareness to the other talented Greek designers out there creating amazing products. He has two words for everyone: "Support them!" Kontos is from Cyprus and enjoys playing with his son- and newborn baby girl!

Yiorgos Kostopoulos, 29

From a young boy in Greece taking private lessons in violin and music theory to now having his own record, "Last Trip to the



Moon” has taken Yiorgos Kostopoulos all over the world chasing his musical dreams. “Since I was a child, I used to spend a lot of time playing on my piano and eventually I started writing music. The thrill of writing new music when the inspiration comes and the magic moments of energy when improvising and playing music with other accomplished performers is the best part of my job.” But the job doesn’t feel like work at all since this is his passion and love at the same time. Two memorable moments for Kostopoulos happened when he recorded his own album in the studio (Last Trip to the Moon is available on iTunes, Amazon and Spotify) and when he played at Lincoln Center in New York City with the World Peace Orchestra. And if the hardest part of his job means carrying the upright bass, he’s ready to see what else the musical winds bring him saying “The more you give, the more you take back.” Kostopoulos has shared the stage with a wide range of performers in the US and Europe. Artists including Ulysses Owens Jr., Michael Mossman, Alexander Markov & World Peace Orchestra, Emilio Solla, Lammy Istrefi Jr., Camille Gainer Jones, Vitor Concalves, Livio Almeida, Oran Etkin, Joe Gallardo, Douglas Walter, Milcho Leviev, Tuomo Uusitalo, James Shipp, Celia Owens, Sly Scott, Spiros Exaras, Costas Baltazanis, Kyreneia Opera Orchestra and also with some of the most accomplished singers in Greece such as Marios Frangoulis, Alkistis Protopsalti, Dimitris Bassis and Stavros Siolas to name a few. He also participated in the New York Times acclaimed off-Broadway musical “Louis Armstrong: Jazz Ambassador” and has performed in venues around New York City including the Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Kaufman Music Center, Cooper Union, Louis Armstrong House Museum, Shapeshifter Lab, Bitter End, Somethin’ Jazz Club, Silvanas, Shrine, Pianos and Princeton University. Kostopoulos splits his time between New York City and his hometown of Athens, Greece when he’s not cooking, watching movies and traveling across the world for fun or for work.

Nadia Kountoures, 28

Every year a young girl would watch the planes in the sky at the Chicago Air and Water Show. Now at 28, she's a pilot flying them all over the country... and the world. Nadia Kountoures went to the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign to study aviation and within weeks was at the controls of an aircraft. During her studies, she obtained several types of pilot licenses and ratings, including her flight instructor license. As a senior in college, she began flight instructing for beginner student pilots and continued even after graduating. In 2011 she began working as a corporate pilot for Gogo LLC, a Chicago-based company that provides in-flight internet

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service and other entertainment and connectivity services for commercial and business aircraft. She talks about the different types of aircraft she's had the thrill of flying. "I began flying a smaller turbo-propeller aircraft called a King Air 200. Shortly after, the company acquired a business jet called a Challenger 600 and trained me to fly it. After flying that jet for a couple years, the company acquired a Boeing 737 and trained me to fly it also." A pilot's life is full of travel and that is true for Kountoures who gets to travel on a weekly basis from all over the US, to Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland and Iceland, the Middle East and even Greece! One moment stands out the most from all the others. She explains, "Flying my first trip across the Atlantic Ocean has been my most memorable moment so far in my career. There is no radar coverage over the ocean, so crossing it in an aircraft requires following special procedures making it more challenging than flying over land. It requires specific training and preparation, and I had the most rewarding feeling of accomplishment after completing my first trip across the Atlantic." There are challenges in the air but Kountoures welcomes them with open arms. "There are many variables that could affect whether a scheduled flight happens as planned or not. For example, sometimes the company decides they want to reschedule a flight to a later date or a different location, and other times a thunderstorm system will require us to divert to an alternate airport destination. As a corporate pilot I am required to be prepared to adjust the flight preparations, and my own personal schedule, to deal with these changes." But she's also flying high with a personal mission: one that may help motivate a young girl—or boy— one day looking into the sky and perhaps seeing Kountoures flying over her. "One of my wishes is to be able to inspire people of all ages,

genders, and cultures to pursue their dreams of flying. I think it is something that anyone can accomplish if they study hard, follow the rules and truly have a passion for aviation." Kountoures is a third generation Greek-American (her great-grandparents immigrated to the US in the early 1900s) and enjoys biking, yoga and trying out new local restaurants with friends.

Elena LaQuatra, 24

Miss Pennsylvania USA is proudly wearing her crown as a Greek-American helping to bring awareness to those who are deaf or are hard of hearing. Previous to winning this title, LaQuatra held the state titles of Miss Pennsylvania's Outstanding Teen 2007 (under the Miss American Organization) and placed second runner-up at the national competition, Miss Pennsylvania Teen USA 2010 (under the Miss Universe Organization). She currently is an agency signed model working all over Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and West Virginia and after receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Communications from Point Park University, started working for WTAE-TV, Pittsburgh's ABC news affiliate. In February, she participated in The Starkey Hearing Foundations Super Bowl Mission Trip. The foundation provides hearing aids internationally to underprivileged communities and third world countries. She talks about the emotional impact this has on her saying, "There is nothing sweeter than seeing a person hear for the first time. You just see their faces completely light up and usually they start crying as well. It's truly life changing. All of the people I have met along the way- whether it has been a celebrity, a CEO, an elderly veteran, a parent of a deaf child, a billionaire, or a 4-year-old girl who thinks I'm a princess, I have been so inspired by each person. I cherish these memories so deeply and will never forget



the opportunities and friendships that pageantry has awarded me with." LaQuatra is Greek on her mom's side and her family immigrated from the island of Ithaca, Greece. She enjoys traveling and spending time with her two Chihuahuas, Miki and Taco.

Alex Loizou, 28

When your company saves a business' Christmas than that's probably the best present you could get. Alex Loizou is the co-founder of trouva.com, a destination marketplace for premium lifestyle products. Sourced from a network of 150 independent boutiques, these boutiques sell their products through the e-commerce site Trouva. A customer is able to buy unique



handpicked items you rarely find anywhere else...to put it simply, they make boutique shopping easy. Loizou explains why helping other businesses is his favorite kind of work saying, "I always wanted to run my own company, mainly because my drive is very much linked to being able to start from scratch and create something that produces value. When my cofounders told me about the idea, I thought it would be very interesting to help independents by providing them the technology and community they need to compete against the chains." Loizou was part of EntrepreneurFirst, did a short stint at IBM and was a freelance mobile app developer during University. StreetHub (Loizou's original company) raised millions of dollars to help kick start the business model of Trouva being an e-commerce store for consumers interested in their goods. Loizou grew up in Cyprus and admits to not having much spare time outside of his company.

Alexander Louizos, 36

What happens when a vascular surgeon stops operating on patients to create artificial intelligence to save even more peo-



is from Rhodes and enjoys cycling and cooking saying it saved him from the startup roller-coaster.

Nicole Malliotakis, 35

A fighter for policies to better her community, the daughter of New York City immigrants, and throw in a book, bicycle and yoga pose...and you would get 3-term candidate Nicole Malliotakis. Defeating a two-term incumbent, Malliotakis (R) currently represents Staten Island and Brooklyn in the New York State Assembly. "The best part of



public service is being able to make a difference in my community and fight for policies I believe in to make our state a better place to live. Because I am a member of the opposition party, I often spend my time fighting against bad pieces of legislation to prevent them from becoming law instead of spending time focusing on advancing my own policy agenda." Interested in politics and government since a teenager, Malliotakis volunteered on campaigns at city, state and federal levels. Serving in the administration of New York State Governor George Pataki and working in the private sector monitoring energy and environmental policies, Malliotakis decided to run as a candidate in 2010 for a simple reason: "I felt we were underserved by our representative at the time and believed I offered a better alternative to the citizens of the district." Her most memorable moment was being sworn into office and being seated in the Assembly chamber for the very first time. But while that memory will be one of her favorites, she was most impacted by the terrifying moments following Hurricane Sandy helping hundreds of families in her districts deal with the storm's aftermath and rebuild their lives. Malliotakis' father is from Crete and her mother is a

Cuban exile of the Castro dictatorship. She enjoys reading, bicycling and yoga when not fighting for her constituents.

Elpitha Hope Nalpantidis Malone, 31

Where others see hopelessness she sees hope....and maybe one's name does inspire their profession. E. (Elpitha) Hope Nalpantidis Malone, MA, LMHC is a child, adolescent, and family therapist specializing in behavioral therapy, mindfulness and play therapy. She works out of her practice in the Bronx helping children and families become happier, healthier, more skilled versions of themselves. Understanding that therapy takes hard work and changes aren't often immediate, she helps families slowly progress and acknowledge, "there is nothing better than looking back with a family on what seemed to them a hopeless situation and seeing the progress they've made. It's really rewarding to see the children and families I work with soar." In fact, she cites them as a source of encouragement and motivation in her personal and professional life. She adds, "I've had so



many memorable moments, but my most memorable has been opening my office this past April. It's been an incredible and challenging experience to have my own business, but the minute I got those keys is absolutely my most memorable- it was the moment I knew I was exactly where I needed to be!" She also runs sibling support groups for brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Nalpantidis is from northern Greece and is first generation Greek-American. She enjoys spending time with her husband Eliot and dog Zeppelin.

Spiro Marangoudakis, PhD, 34

What started as a childhood interest in accelerated mathe-

Continued on page 8

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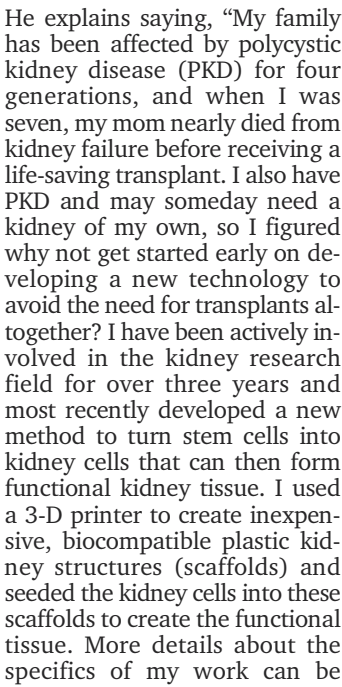
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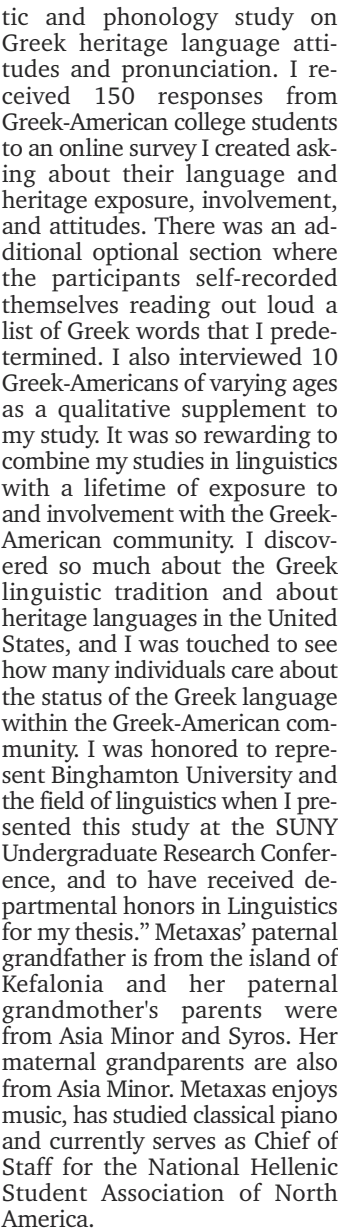


Some kids entering college are planning frat parties and football games but not Demetri Maxim. He's developing a new technology to "grow" kidney tissue from stem cells- something that personally affects his family.



Christiana Metaxas, 22

Traveling to New Zealand and Australia at only 11 eleven years old with the People to People student ambassador program founded by President Eisenhower started a passion for one Greek-American girl from NY that has turned into a cultural ambassadorship to Cyprus after college. Christiana Metaxas graduated with a BA summa cum laude from Binghamton University (SUNY) with a double major in Linguistics and French and a minor in Classical Civilization. While at Binghamton, she joined and then became president of Hellenic Cultural Society increasing membership and participation. Metaxas was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received a Fulbright grant to Cyprus for the 2016-17 academic year where she is currently an assistant teacher of English. "I hope this will be my first step towards launching a career in international service. I always seek opportunities to engage with the international community. My Greek heritage has played a large role in my choosing to study linguistics and languages and the histories and cultures attached to different linguistic communities. I studied abroad in France and Spain during college and at the American Community Schools of Athens for a semester of high school. During the summer of 2014, I volunteered in Greece in the midst of its financial crisis at a free day-care facility administered by the Archdiocese of Athens. I was able to interact with the children and staff in Greek." Metaxas' senior thesis, Greek Heritage Speakers in the USA: An Examination of Language and Identity, allowed her to study her Greek heritage through a linguistic lens for the first time. "In my thesis, I survey the history of the Greek language and recent research on the bilingualism of heritage speakers – a heritage speaker is someone who grows up exposed to a non-majority language in their home environment. After discussing the development of the Greek language and its linguistic communities, I conducted a sociolinguistic



Olive oil, beauty products and e-commerce all come flowing together for one successful entrepreneur and executive in Manhattan. After spending 4 years in investment banking for Citigroup in London and Manhattan, Katerina Mountanos dived into e-commerce and entrepreneurial endeavors and has no plans to quit anytime soon with success after success. “In 2010, I joined a company called Quidsi, which ran several e-commerce sites including Diapers.com, Soap.com, Beautybar.com and Wag.com. I was given a lot of autonomy in my roles there and the experience to work for a very successful fast growing startup that was eventually acquired by Amazon helped me fall in love with startups and entrepreneurship. It was one of the founders of Quidsi who started Jet.com and recruited me back to work for him a second time.” Mountanos is the VP of the \$100 million Home category on Jet.com, a fairly new mass-market e-commerce business recently sold to Walmart. “Jet is a very exciting place to be right now as we begin to integrate with Walmart. There

is so much that can be done to reinvent and win in ecommerce with the support of a \$200+ billion retail company. And separately working to grow a brand new food brand (Kosterina sells premium, organic, extra virgin Greek olive oil directly to American consumers on kosterina.com) gives me my entrepreneurial fix and helps me continue to learn about digital marketing, partnerships and international operations. I love the dichotomy and experience of working to grow both the largest retailer in the world and a brand new tiny retail business with 1 SKU at the same time. You would be surprised to see how much overlap there is!" In 2012, Katerina co-founded Manicube, a company focused on improving the lives of working professionals by offering affordable, high-quality personal care services (manicures and haircuts) in corporate offices. Katerina worked to grow Manicube to serve over 200 corporate clients and over 30,000 end customers across four US

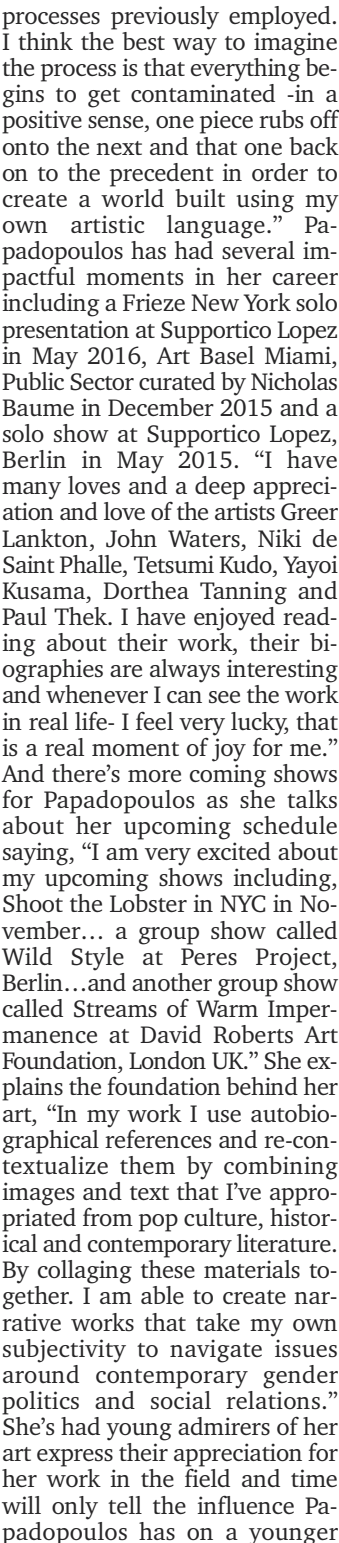


As a child, she wanted to be the first female president of the United States, and then a lawyer, but Nicolle Pangis believes she ended in the career where she is absolutely best suited--advertising. Pangis accelerated through the ranks in digital media, including leading a joint venture integration with Dentsu, one of the largest advertising companies in the world at age 28; running Global Product Management and Strategy for 24/7 Media--one of the pioneering companies in digital advertising--for five years and then becoming President of Europe and North America in 2012 at age 33. Earlier this year, she was named "The Most Powerful Woman in Programmatic" advertising by an industry publication. Pangis is now the Global Chief



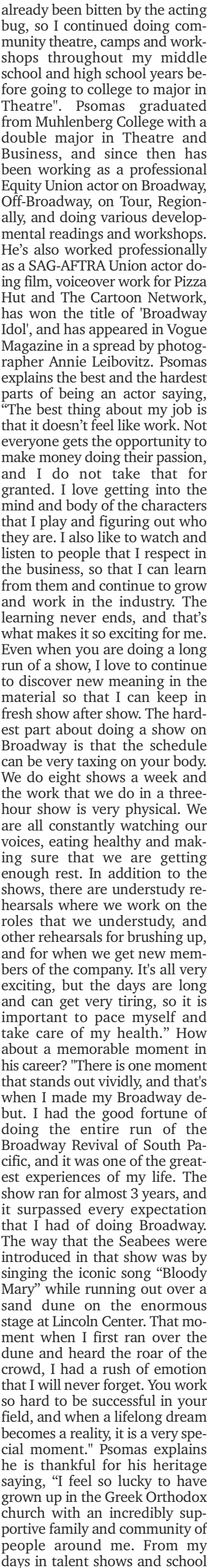
feel lucky to be able to work and have fun at the same time and a lot of that is driven by loving the people I work with. A few of my dearest friends stemmed from work relationships.” But work relationships aren’t the only important pieces to Nicole’s puzzle. She explains saying, “Raising a family is so fulfilling but takes a lot of coordination, and with two working parents it becomes even more of a scheduling dance. When you have a global position, you add travel to the equation, and there is an extra level of complexity. I’m fortunate to have an amazing support system including my husband, parents, in-laws, siblings and a devoted babysitter. That village is the only way to keep it all working, so my girls stay happy and supported, even when I am traveling.” While Pangis participates in a mentoring program at her company, and drove the launch of a women’s leadership initiative within Xaxis called X-women last year, she says that mentoring and leadership initiatives are not about a one year program...they are about creating relationships and skills that continue indefinitely for an individual throughout their career. Nicole completed her BS from Boston University in three years and received an MBA from Rutgers University. Nicole was named to Crain’s NY 40 under 40, Advertising Age’s 40 under 40, and is the recipient of Cynopsis Media’s Top Women in Digital Award and Advertising Women of NY and Working Women Media’s Award for Mother of the Year. Her maternal side has roots in Chios as her mother was born in the Apollo Hotel which was owned by her great-grandfather at the time and is now a landmark in Chios. Her father’s side comes from Kalamata and Sparta. When she’s not taking in puppet shows, participating in dance parties in her kitchen, or doing crafts with her two daughters, Nicole is an avid runner which she credits to keeping her mentally and physically healthy for her family and job.

When curiosity in the arts is developed through study and practice, you may see that piece in Athena Papadopoulos' art gallery one day. The artist explains how she flows in between projects saying, "It has been a very long process of moving from one work to the next. Each time another process is added it continues to evolve and merge with



generation. Papadopoulos received her MFA from Goldsmiths, London and BFA in Visual Art and Art Theory from University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Her father's family is from Kاستoria and she enjoys reading about art, artists, fiction, as well as, cooking and baking and ... rearranging her rooms.

As a 10-year-old boy, George saw his cousin's high school production of "Fiddler On The Roof" and realized that he wanted to be an actor. Fast forward and he is presently playing the principal role of Avram in "Fiddler On The Roof" on Broadway. He says, "Fiddler changed my life, and after seeing it as a child, I decided to sign up for my elementary school talent show; I sang 'Where Is Love' from the musical Oliver. It turned out that one of my neighbors who attended the show was related to the talent manager Shirley Grant, and introduced me. She signed me as a client and I worked professionally as a child actor for a short time doing projects in the theatre, voice-over and print. Ultimately my parents and I made the decision that school should stay a priority, so I stopped, and I think it was the best choice for me at the time. However, I had



Michael and his father Stavros Mourkakos, owners

plays, to my current work on Broadway, the Greeks have literally come in bus loads to show their love and support; and the amazing thing is that they don't just come alone, they bring along their friends and relatives, so the crowds just keep growing. The business I work in can be very hard, and it is an honor to have so much positive energy around me. My parents and my sister have been a tremendous support over the years, and without them, I would not be where I am today." Psomas' family is from Lemnos and Sparta.

Georgios Pyrgiotakis, 38

From Physics to Materials Science to Bioengineering and now to Public Health, you could say



Georgios Pyrgiotakis has quite a few interests and talents. Currently he's a nanoparticle engineer and researcher at the Center for Nanotechnology and Nanotoxicology at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He gives a whole other meaning to the term 'splitting hairs' as he explains exactly what he does. "Nanoparticles are considered the particles that have dimensions less than one millionth of the width of the human hair. When it comes to particles so tiny, looking at them becomes a huge challenge on itself. It requires techniques that push the limits of current techniques and very often it requires the use of several techniques at once. My research is at the forefront of sci-

ence and engineering, innovating and changing the way we look at these particles. It is just amazing how in a beaker we can make billions and billions of them, while controlling their properties down to molecular scale. Every day there is a new problem that we try to solve. The journey trying to solve these problems and overcome these challenges, has been keeping me interested for 15 years and will keep me for years to come. However, since I am an academic, I could not do without mentoring and teaching a new generation of scientist and engineers of all ages and backgrounds--from PhD students to elementary school students." His research is making an impact on lives all over the world through the discovery of a "green method" that with the use of pure water can inactivate pesky bacteria that is lurking on the surface of common vegetables. This, now a patented technology, has gained national and international attention, including Pyrgiotakis being featured in the Economist's Technology Quarterly issue. He believes this technology will become a key player in the battle against airborne bacteria and airborne infections especially in developing countries where healthcare is not very accessible. Pyrgiotakis holds a PhD from the University of Florida and is from Crete. He enjoys cooking and engineering food- including reading about the history and science of food and then writing about this knowledge on his blog, Nerd Meets Food.

Aravella Simotas, 37

Who knew a Greek girl growing up in Astoria would one day represent her own neighborhood for New York State Assembly? That's exactly what Aravella Simotas, a lifelong resident of Astoria, Queens, does for New York's 36th Assembly District. In 2010, Simotas (D) became the first Greek-American woman elected to office in New York and



the first woman elected to office in her district. Simotas' involvement in civic affairs dates back to high school, where she organized fundraising events for local charities. Since then, she has established a strong record of public service and has devoted herself to improving the lives of others. "I am a lifelong resident of Astoria and proud to be a product of the New York City public school system. My interest in public service and civic affairs really began in High School when I organized fundraising events for local charities. When I was in law school I worked with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and local elected officials to stop the construction of more power plants in Western Queens, a neighborhood already suffering from the effects of existing power plants. This victory of environmental advocacy - which resulted in cleaner air for Astoria - really gave me a taste for the good that elected officials can do and for the joy that comes when you know you've helped make people's lives better." Simotas received her Bachelor of Arts degree in economics and philosophy, summa cum laude, from Fordham University in 1999. She received her law degree from Fordham Law School in 2002, where she served as the managing editor of the Fordham Environmental Law Journal. In

2011, Simotas was named a "Rising Star" and listed in the The Capitol's "40 Under 40" list of "Albany's next generation" of political leadership. In the same year, she also was one of the first winners of the Geraldine Ferraro Leadership Award. Simotas was named "Greek American Woman of the Year" in 2013 by the Association of Greek American Professional Women. In April 2014, Simotas was honored with a Women in Leadership Award by the Center for the Women of New York. She was also named "2015 Woman of the Year" by the Pancyprrian Association Women's Issues Network. In addition to those she has been given numerous awards and honors from cultural and local civic associations. Simotas' family is from Kefalonias and she married her husband John Katsanos there in 2004 and they baptized their daughter Eleni in 2013 on the island as well. She enjoys gardening and spending time with her extended family.

Maria Georgiades Sfakianos, 36

Walking away from death and walking towards life is one surgeon's dream come true for her patients. Maria Georgiades Sfakianos is Associate Program Director of Surgical Critical Care Fellowship and Assistant Professor of Surgery at Northwell Health. She is a trauma surgeon, emergency surgeon and surgical critical care doctor all rolled into one. She explains saying, "The best part of my job is when someone comes to the emergency department or the surgical intensive care unit acutely ill to the point when they are near death and they walk out of the hospital with a smile. It is very satisfying." She also gives back teaching others how to help those in need being involved in resident education for the general surgery program at North Shore- LIJ. "My field involves the sickest of patients and the families that support and love them



and to be a part of the toughest point in the lives whether it is being struck by a motor vehicle or needing emergency surgery is truly a special relationship." Sometimes all of her hard work doesn't keep death away though and she explains the toughest part of her job. "There are times when I will do everything I can using my medical knowledge and skills but the patient still doesn't survive due to the severity of their illness. It is hard not to take this part home with you." But the most memorable moment for Sfakianos' career was when a young woman came to her who was in a boating accident and Sfakianos spent 9 hours in surgery to save her life. "Throughout the week we tried very hard to save her leg (severely injured in the accident) but after multiple surgeries an amputation was required due to the infection. I built a strong relationship with her and she taught me to never give up. She taught me strength and courage. Her positive nature and motivation throughout the hospital stay that year was very impressive and served as an example for many other patients." Sfakianos is from Kastoria and Peloponnese and enjoys running by the water, cooking and spending time with her two chiweenies and family, including a newborn!

Jeff Stefanis, 25

Need to go somewhere in a big city without parking, traffic

or congestion and without walking or taking the subway? Ebikes is to bikes what email is to mail. Jeff Stefanis is the co-founder of Riide who designs electric bikes and sell them as a subscription. Stefanis explains, "For \$79/month riiders get their own bike, unlimited maintenance, and theft insurance. After two years they own it forever or can upgrade to the latest model for free." Stefanis talks about where the idea of "ebikes for urban commuters" came from. "I have always been extremely passionate about sustainability and environmental justice. With addressing the inadequacies in urban transportation my co-founder, Amber Wason, and I saw an opportunity to solve a piece of both of those issues." The 36V 9ah lithium-ion battery has a 25 mile range- and it's a bike so you can use the pedals too. The bike can be charged in any standard wall outlet in just two to three hours and at 40



Jonathan Timmes

pounds, it is one of the lightest ebikes every created. But the impact of these bikes are much deeper than one would normally think explains Stefanis. "Talking to our riiders is by far and away the best and most impactful part of my job. Hearing how Riide has not only saved them time and money but shifted the way they see and interact with their cities for the better."Stefanis is from Lesbos and enjoys playing basketball and soccer.

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