



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Katz, Gianaris, Simotas, Constantinides Host Greek Independence Day Celebration

MICHAEL GIANARIS March 11, 2016



(Astoria, NY) – Senator Mike Gianaris, Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas, Councilmember Costa Constantinides and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz hosted a celebration of Greek Independence Day at the Stathakion Center in Astoria. The Queens Elected Officials took to marking the occasion with a ceremony, recognizing Greek heritage and culture, and honoring local community leaders.

Honorees of the event included Petros Galatoulas, President of the Federation of Hellenic Societies, Anna and Stamatis Bililis, Owners of Stamatis Restaurant, Harry Xidias of City View Pharmacy and Niko and Vicky Voulkoudis from the Christos Voulkoudis Guardian Angel Foundation.

**Senator Gianaris** said, "I am proud to celebrate another Greek Independence Day. There is no better place than here in Astoria, the heart of Greek-American culture, to remember our heritage and celebrate the spirit of freedom and the desire for independence that has for so long linked America with the country of our ancestors."

**Assemblywoman Simotas** said, "Celebrating Greek Independence is about rejoicing in the passion for democracy that we all share. As I raise my own daughter I am always mindful of my responsibility to pass on the story of Greece's heroic fight for freedom and justice. Today we recognize six Greek-Americans who have spent their lives honoring the ideals of their Hellenic heritage and who have made indelible contributions to the well-being of our communities," said Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas.

**Councilmember Constantinides** said, "I join with Queens Borough President Katz, Senator Gianaris, and Assemblymember Simotas in celebrating our Greek cultural heritage, which has encapsulated democratic and civic values for millennium. We're especially proud to honor these Greek-Americans who have worked to promote Hellenic values throughout our community. We recognize their contributions to our city. I thank everyone for attending today's celebration and for helping to promote civic engagement in our neighborhood."

Greek Independence Day is a national holiday in Greece, commemorating the start of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire in 1821. The holiday coincides with the Annunciation to the Theotokos, celebrated by the Greek Orthodox Church, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and told her that she would bear the son of

God.

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