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**PAULETTE  
POULOS**



Paulette's birthday party with her parents Charles and Rebecca Poulos and other family members



With Michael Jabaris



(L to R) Barbara Bush, President George W. Bush, Paulette and Archbishop Iakovos



Paulette with her mother Rebecca Poulos and her brother Peter Poulos



Paulette with her Brooklyn Sunday School student Jim Gianopoulos, Chairman & CEO of 20th Century Fox Film

# PAULETTE POULOS

## Serving the Church for 50 years and the heart and soul of Leadership 100

by Dimitri C. Michalakos

Paulette Poulos has an apartment in White Plains but she's rarely there. "My brother teases me," she says. "He tells the pharmacy, whatever vitamins you give my sister give me five bottles. I keep a crazy schedule, long hours and a lot of traveling. But the good Lord has been good to me."

Poulos joined the staff of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in 1965 and worked in the Department of Laity, Youth Ministry, Stewardship and Director of LOGOS before going to the Archbishop's Office in 1984 as his Administrative Assistant.

After the passing of Archbishop Iakovos in 2005, Paulette was hired as the Development Director for Leadership 100. She began our conversation by expressing her deep respect and heartfelt gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios who appointed her as the Executive Director of the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund in 2011.

The bubbly and ever-tireless Poulos praised the capable and dedicated George Tsandikos, Chairman, for devoting his time and talents toward the mission of Leadership 100. Sustained by their Faith, Tsandikos and Poulos log untold miles, recruiting new members and spreading the word of the organization. Poulos is deeply committed to the Church and her personal gift for the common touch has proven to be most successful. Presently there are close to 1000 dedicated stewards who have enrolled as members of Leadership 100.

"It's one-on-one basically," she says. "Steve Yeonas (a past chairman) always said letters don't work. They need the one-on-one approach. Many times I will send a letter together with a membership packet to a prospect inviting them to join. I will follow up with a personal call and arrange a meeting (breakfast, lunch or dinner) to talk about Leadership 100. I am happy to say that oftentimes we receive a positive response. They are just waiting for someone to reach out to them."

A good example of the personal approach is when Fr. Elias Villis, a wonderful priest and personal friend, introduced her to Michael Psaros, a member of the Church of our Saviour in Rye, New York. They attended a luncheon at the Rye parish and after a few short moments, she realized that Mike was a beautiful human being who was committed to his Church and family. After she explained the purpose of Leadership 100, he replied "If Fr. Elias believes in the program, and you believe in it, and the Archbishop believes in it, go ahead and sign me up!"

Another example of Mike's commitment was at the Leadership conference in Orlando where Psaros was a forum speaker. He attended with his wife Robin, his children, parents and his brother Harry and his family. During the General Assembly, Paulette had encouraged members to consider enrolling family members and friends into the program and Psaros immediately took her over to his brother and said, "It is my honor to sign you up as a Leadership 100 member". His brother Harry was in tears and responded "I am so honored to be a part of Leadership 100. Thus, that is the way it's done! It's an outreach – one-on-one."

For her, the work is more than a job and certainly a mission because it was a last wish of Archbishop Iakovos who nurtured her in the church that she be involved in the Leadership 100 program which was so dear to his heart. She became his administrative assistant in 1984 and remained with him until his death in 2005.

"He was an amazing man," she says. "He was a man of great vision and faith and I learned so much from him over the years. His dream was to establish a national endowment program to help

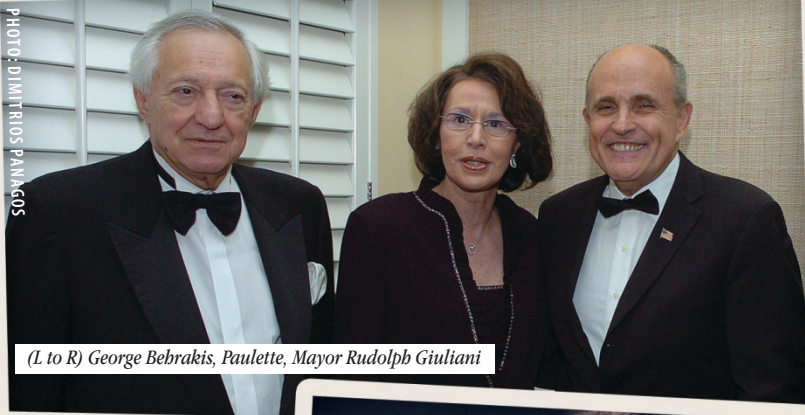


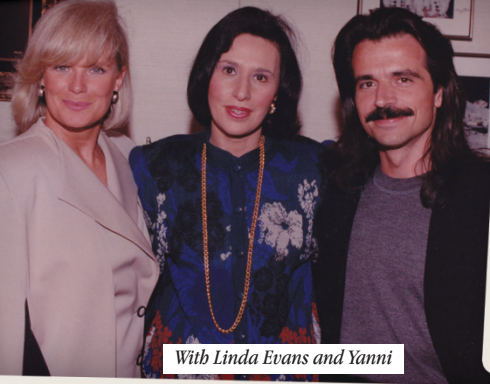
PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

(L to R) George Bebrakis, Paulette, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani



PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

Saint Nicholas crystal design replica presented by Archbishop Demetrios to George S. Tsandikos, Leadership 100 Chairman and Paulette Poulos, Executive Director



With Linda Evans and Gianni



With President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton



PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

Paulette with her parents Charles and Rebecca Poulos, sister Carol and brother Peter Poulos

sustain the National Ministries of the Church. His Eminence wanted to alleviate the pressure for parishes who were struggling to meet their budget and to make sure they had adequate funds to handle the necessities and repairs for their respective communities. The Archbishop met with dedicated laymen in the persons of Arthur Anton, Andrew and Tom Athens, George Chimples, Peter Dion, Michael Jaharis and George Kokalis, and asked for their assistance to find a way to raise additional funds. These were capable churchmen and businessmen, who established an endowment program called Leadership 100. They traveled from city to city at their own expense to find 100 members who could contribute \$10,000 a year for ten years. Needless to say, they were successful in their efforts and the 100 members kept increasing to the current number of 966.

Since 1989 Leadership 100 has distributed over \$42 million in grants for the National Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Hellenic College/Holy Cross has always been a primary concern for Leadership 100 and over \$17 million has been given for scholarships to young men in the Theological School who are preparing for the Priesthood. "We have already completed a \$10 million grant offering \$1 million per year for scholarships and are presently in the process of completing another \$10 million grant to the school."

Each year she meets with the senior class when they visit the Archdiocese for a week of orientation. "I am moved to tears when these young men come to hug me and say, "We thank you and Leadership 100 for the scholarship support you offer. What can we do for you, how can we give back?" My response is always the same, "just be good priests!"

Leadership 100 has provided the seed funding for various ministries including the IOCC, OCMC, Internet Ministry and Technology Infrastructure, parish development and stewardship Orthodox Christian Network, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry and has offered annually \$30,000 to each Metropolis for their camping ministry programs.

Leadership 100 has also given nearly \$1 million to provide retired priests with pensions and another million to eliminate student loans for active priests; it has given to religious education, Greek education, parish development, ecumenical relations, and the Centers for Family Care.

"You ask how we get the young people into the church?" she says. "You need to give them programs; you need to give them a reason to be involved. That's what we do with the money: we transform it into ministries that can be used so that the young people can be a part of the church. And I think it's working."

She commends George Behrakis, Chairman Emeritus who had reinstated a Partners Program where members 18 and older can start with a contribution of \$2,000 a year, to become sustaining members and start their own participation in the ministry of the church.

"When they had the celebration of the 50th Anniversary March of Martin Luther King to Selma this year, Justin Bozonelis and George Soterakis, who are the co-chairmen of the Partners Program, organized a day of service for the young people in various parishes. Following the Divine Liturgy, they met in the Church hall and prepared emergency relief packets for IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) to distribute throughout the world. These young people

touched me because they were blessed in their own lives and learned it was time to give back to others less fortunate."

A world traveler for the church, but a Brooklyn girl herself, Poulos learned to give back from the example of her parents, Rebecca and Charles Poulos, both immigrants from Greece, who took their kids to church and Sunday School, every Sunday.

"My mom and dad tirelessly worked for our home community, Three Hierarchs in Brooklyn, and every year did the cooking for Hellenic College and St. Basil's Academy luncheons. They would cook for 500-600 people, and when the money ran short, they would make up the difference, even though they were not rich."

Her sister Carol was an Executive and Legal Administrative Assistant who now lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her brother Peter is a graduate of Holy Cross Theological School and serves as Director of Pastoral Care at New York Methodist Hospital and is a Certified Supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Poulos has said that she loves children and would have loved to have a family of her own but admits that she could not have given all this time and all this energy to the church. "Anyone who knows me agrees that there was no time for anything else," she says. Poulos goes wherever she has to and does whatever is needed. "I think God had a different path for me and I am grateful that I was able to follow it and, in my own humble way, offer back to the Church that has given me so much to be thankful for in my personal life."