

# Annual Gala of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in NY

By Vasilis Voultzos

NEW YORK – The annual gala of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens was held May 9 at New York's Capitale Ballroom.

The event attracted four hundred philhellenes, archaeologists, diplomats, scholars, and charitable entrepreneurs to celebrate the educational offerings and years of excavations of the American School in Greece, which now number 138 consecutive years.

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, founded in 1881, provides graduate students and academics with a consortium of approximately 190 colleges and universities in North America, and a base for research and study in Greece. These institutions – with courses in classical archeology, linguistics, Byzantine, Ottoman and modern Greek studies, archeology, political science, history

dle of democracy, beginning in 1931, and in ancient Corinth since 1896. The theme of this year's gala, in perfect harmony with the Corinthian columns of the Beaux Arts Hall of the Capitale Ballroom, was Celebrating the Corinth Excavations and Remembering Pioneering Archaeologist Hetty Goldman.

The event began with a cocktail reception where the attendees gathered to enjoy the exhibition of Greek artists whose creations were available for purchase in a silent auction throughout the evening. Dinner followed, accompanied by live Greek music.

Nicholas Burns, a member of the Board of Directors of the School's Gennadius Library and former U.S. Ambassador to Greece, told *The National Herald*, "I am here to support two great institutions, which I think are the anchor of American presence in Greece. Both have their beginnings in the 19th cen-



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ABOVE: Academics, administrators and board members of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens gathered for a 'family' photo at the end of the gala.



LEFT: Approximately 400 people gathered at Capitale in New York for the annual gala of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, celebrating its 138 years of operation.

RIGHT: The pioneering archaeologist and academic Hetty Goldman.



and other social sciences – utilize the American School's extraordinary academic programs, excavations and libraries. The postgraduate program of the School is considered by many universities as a prerequisite for a PhD in Greek studies.

The American School carried out archaeological excavations in the Athenian Agora, the cra-

ture and are the best example of the Greek and American spirits. Whoever wishes to support Greece should support Gennadius and the American School of Classical Studies. I'm very happy to be here tonight."

The head of the Kerkyra publications, Alexandra Vovolini, told TNH, "It is a great celebration for the American School of

Classical Studies, which also includes the historical Gennadius Library. It is very moving to see American citizens supporting the culture of Greece, helping both archeology and our heritage, because in Gennadius there are very important collections of archives. This is the fourth time the event has taken place in this great venue. It is

important that Americans attend and learn about Greek culture, but it is also important to remember that we are also honoring a woman pioneer tonight, Hetty Goldman."

George T. Orfanakos, executive director of the American School, served as the master of ceremonies of the event and, after welcoming the audience, in-

visited Alexander Zagoreos, Chairman of the Board of Directors, to the podium. Zagoreos said, "The success of the school in the most recent decades is living proof of the dedication and generosity of administrators of this heritage, those who came before and those who are currently serving the school."

This was followed by Jenifer

Neils, professor and director of the school, who presented the documentary *Hetty Goldman: First Among Equals*. The voice of Hetty Goldman in the short documentary was performed by legendary Greek-American actor Olympia Dukakis.

Hetty Goldman, a member of the well-known family who founded Goldman Sachs Investment Bank, could have chosen a much easier life. Instead she became the first female scholar of the American School of Classical Studies in 1911, the first woman to conduct archaeological excavations on the Greek mainland as well as the first female professor at Princeton. Goldman worked in Greece and Turkey during a time of great conflict for the region. Her life was adventurous and often dangerous. She was a fearless New Yorker who challenged the male establishment in the field of archeology, pioneering the way for many women to follow.

Goldman's grandniece, Megan Goldman-Petri, climbed to the podium and thrilled the audience as she spoke of the importance of her grandmother's legacy in her and her daughter's lives. Other speeches were offered by William Loomis and Professors Mark Lawall, Jack Davis and Christopher Pfaff.

The proceeds from the auction, the gala, and the evening's donations will support research and the archaeological excavations in Corinth, and also help to build and expand the school's student center in Athens, which includes the following three buildings: Loring Hall, the Annex, and West House. This transformative project is estimated to cost a total of \$ 9.7 million and has a one-year deadline. "The completion of this phase will fulfill our goal of providing the best possible facilities for our students and scholars while contributing to our vision of preserving the historic structures of the campus, increasing green space and improving sustainability," said George Orfanakos.

The event was attended by Ambassador Maria Theophilis, Consul General of New York Dr. Konstantinos Koutras, President of Atlantic Bank Nancy Papaioannou, Nicholas Burns, Businessman John Catsimatidis with his wife Margo, and Yanna Darilis.