



National Hellenic Museum
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greek Prime Minister toured the National Hellenic Museum during U.S. stay

CHICAGO (Oct. 16, 2017) – His Excellency Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, was guest of honor at a reception held at the National Hellenic Museum (NHM) in Chicago yesterday, hosted by Greek Consul General Polyxeni Petropoulou.

Addressing hundreds in attendance, Prime Minister Tsipras said, “I want to give you great thanks because you have never forgotten Greece and your feelings [for the country] are perhaps deeper than ours. And you agonize more than we do, and, with the help of technology, you know what is happening in Greece faster than we do. You are always with us.”

Prior to joining the reception, Prime Minister Tsipras, accompanied by his longtime partner Betty Batziana, NHM President Laura Calamos, Ph.D., NHM Board of Trustees Chairman John P Calamos, Sr., and NHM Trustees, conducted an impromptu extensive tour of the Museum, including ongoing exhibits, *Aegean: A Creation of Archipelago*, and *Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America*.

“We are so honored to have been included on the Prime Minister’s first trip to Chicago,” said Dr. Calamos. “As the preeminent museum dedicated to portraying the breadth of the Greek American experience, we enjoyed being able to spend time with the leader of Greece.”

In his presentation at the reception, Prime Minister Tsipras recounted: “On the top floor of this building, [the Museum] has a very impressive exhibit about their stories.” He then said: “I am very happy and honored to be at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago, an important monument to our culture and our history - a place where the Greek community's heart beats.”

“Museum artifacts and recorded oral histories are incorporated into our programming to foster understanding about the impact of immigrant journeys from all parts of Greece, and the NHM Collections are used by researchers and educators alike,” says Dr. Calamos.

“The Prime Minister appeared particularly impressed by the world map, a centerpiece of our *Greek Story in America* exhibit which marks the diaspora of Greeks throughout the world and the resulting impact of Hellenic culture worldwide,” she added.

The core exhibit at the NHM encompasses thousands of unique experiences that portray the hardships and successes that continue to contribute to the American mosaic. Prime Minister Tsipras expressed curiosity at the display of newspapers, restaurant, and candy-making artifacts.

“He hadn’t realized that many Greek immigrants went into the confectionary business in America,” says Dr. Calamos. “He seemed impressed to see the deep level of connection to Greek culture in so many ways.”

In that same exhibit, Ms. Batziana was especially drawn to photos and artifacts related to the roles of immigrant Greek women in America during the first part of the 20th century.

Both Mr. Tsipras and Ms. Batziana also showed great interest in the children’s area of the Museum, in particular its scale model of Athena’s toe as she would have stood on the Acropolis, and an augmented reality experience of the Parthenon. This experience is one of early steps the NHM is taking toward digitization and worldwide access to the National Hellenic Museum.

The sight of Athena’s toe and the reminder of the history of the Parthenon led to a discussion about the Parthenon Marbles and the NHM Trial Series.

“The Prime Minister was happy to hear about the dramatic legal examination of ancient and modern issues, and the expected release of the DVD of the NHM Trial of The Parthenon Marbles,” says Dr. Calamos.

“We are also very proud of the progress the Museum is making,” said NHM Trustee, C. Dean Metropoulos. “I think it is going to be the most relevant historical Greek cultural organization, certainly in the US” he said at the reception. Trustee George Korkos, M.D. remarked: “I believe strongly, that this building, this brick and mortar building – one of a kind – will be the leader and will sustain Greek American relationships here in America.”

“The National Hellenic Museum offers such an outstanding blend and balance in its dynamic programming that connects us to our historic past while also looking toward the future,” added Dr. Calamos. “We are completely honored to have had the Prime Minister, Ms. Batziana, and the accompanying ministers visit the Museum, meet proud Greek Americans, and learn about the educational work we do here at the NHM.”

Chicago is home to one of the largest Greek communities in the United States. Prime Minister Tsipras is visiting the city prior to his planned visit to Washington, D.C., later this week.

B-roll of the reception for the Prime Minister of Greece now is available for download at: <https://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/files/>



His Excellency Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece, speaks at the National Hellenic Museum on Sunday, October 15, 2017, on his first visit to Chicago and as the first Prime Minister of Greece to visit the Museum.

Photo Credit: Helene Genetos 2017



His Excellency Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece, speaks as an audience of Greek American community members watch at the National Hellenic Museum on Sunday, October 15, 2017.

Photo Credit: Helene Genetos 2017



*From Left to Right: Joanne Koudounis, John S. Koudounis, Betty Batziana, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, John P. Calamos, Sr., and Dr. Laura Calamos.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*



*Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Ambassador Haris Lalacos, Dr. Laura Calamos, John S. Koudounis and John P. Calamos, Sr. tour "Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago" exhibit.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*



*Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Betty Batziana, Dr. Laura Calamos, John S. Koudounis and John P. Calamos, Sr. tour "Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago" exhibit.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*



Betty Batziana, Dr. Laura Calamos, John P. Calamos, Sr., John S. Koudounis, Yanni H. Sianis, and PM Alexis Tsipras

Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017



*Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras eyes world map in NHM's core exhibit Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America exhibit with Betty Batziana & Dr. Laura Calamos.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*



*Betty Batziana & Dr. Laura Calamos examine Greek confectioners display in NHM's core exhibit, Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America exhibit.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*



*Betty Batziana and PM Alexis Tsipras tour the NHM's core exhibit, Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America.
Photo Credit: Starr McCaffery 2017*

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About the National Hellenic Museum

The [National Hellenic Museum](http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org) (NHM) portrays and celebrates Greek heritage and the Hellenic legacy through educational classes, exhibits and programs. With a growing repository of over 20,000 artifacts, the Museum catalogs and highlights the contributions of Greeks and Greek Americans to the American mosaic and inspires curiosity about visitors' own family journeys through cultural expression, oral history and experiential education. Located in Chicago's Greektown, the NHM provides lifelong learning for the whole community using artifacts and stories to spark inquiry and discussion about the broader issues in our lives.

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org> or call 312-655-1234.

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