



## CONSULATE GENERAL OF GREECE HOSTS 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOSTON MARATHON WREATH CEREMONY WITH ALPHA OMEGA COUNCIL FOR BOSTON MARATHON WINNERS ON APRIL 11TH

*The Four Olive Branch Wreaths Were Cut from the Plains of Marathon, Greece and Will Be Used to Crown the Winners of the 128th Boston Marathon on April 15th*



*Photo 1 Caption: Boston Marathon Wreaths (photo credit: Areti Bratsis)*



*Photo 2 Caption: (From L-R ) Boston Athletic Association Vice Chair Keith McDermott, Consul General of Greece in Boston Symeon Tegos, Boston Athletic Association President & CEO Jack Flemming, Alpha Omega Council President Paul Tsitsopoulos (photo credit: Areti Bratsis)*

**BOSTON, MA (April 12, 2024)** – The 40th Anniversary of the Boston Marathon Wreath Ceremony took place at the [Consulate General of Greece in Boston](#) on Thursday, April 11th. Consul General Symeon Tegos presented four olive branch wreaths cut from the plains of Marathon, Greece to the [Boston Athletic Association](#), which will be used to crown the winners of The 128th Boston Marathon on Monday, April 15, 2024.

The wreath ceremony was co-sponsored by the Consulate General of Greece in Boston and the [Alpha Omega Council](#) of Boston, with support from the [26.2 Foundation](#). Alpha Omega Council is a Greek American organization cultivating the ideals of Hellenism by uniting Americans of Hellenic descent and Philhellenes through philanthropy and fellowship.

The evening began with welcome remarks by Alpha Omega Council President Paul Tsitsopoulos, who provided history on the olive wreath and the crowning of it on victorious athletes in the Ancient Olympic Games, which was eventually introduced to the Boston Marathon beginning in 1933.

“The Marathon is a time when the connection between our countries shines brightest. I am very proud that we have been able to keep these beautiful and important traditions alive and to help remind all of the Boston Marathon’s roots in Ancient Greece,” said Alpha Omega Council President Paul Tsitsopoulos. He concludes, “On behalf of the Alpha Omega Council, the board of trustees and its membership, I thank you all for joining us here this evening. The AOC is honored to be a part of this celebration and we thank Consul General Symeon Tegos for hosting us here at the Consulate. We also look forward to continuing our strong relationship and our friendship with the Boston Athletic Association and its dynamic leadership team.”

Tsitsopoulos introduced Arielle Mitropoulos, Greek-American, Cambridge-native, five-time Boston Marathon charity runner, and WMUR-TV news reporter as the Master of Ceremony and Emcee for the evening. Mitropoulos reminisced about receiving the Peter Agris Memorial Journalism Scholarship from the Alpha Omega Council for young Greek-Americans pursuing journalism, which ultimately inspired her career. She also spoke to the unparalleled gifts and contributions that the Greeks have given to the world, as well as the prevalence and importance of Greek history and culture in our daily lives.

An invocation and prayer was offered by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, which was followed by the National Anthems of Greece and the United States, which was sung by Tiffani Mezitis.

Additional honorary remarks were provided by Consul General of Greece in Boston, Symeon Tegos, who spoke to the concept of our lives, just like the Ancient Greeks, being a constant battle and Marathon. Tegos added, “I am honored to present these four gold wreaths, cut from the plains of Marathon as a gift from the people of Greece. These wreaths connect Greece with the Boston Marathon and ideals of democracy and peace.”

The Marathon Wreaths arrived at the ceremony by the Maidens from the Boston Lykeion Ellinidon, who each carried a wreath triumphantly. They were presented by Tegos on behalf of the Consulate General of Greece in Boston to Boston Athletic Association Vice Chair Kieth McDermott. “It was an honor for us to be here at the Boston Marathon Wreath Ceremony,” said Boston Athletic Association Vice Chair Keith McDermott. “Boston is the Athens of America. This describes our cultural and intellectual traditions and our legacy of democracy.”

The 40th Anniversary of the Boston Marathon Wreath Ceremony was also observed during the program. In 1984, in recognition of the historic ties which continue to this very day between the birthplace of democracy in ancient Athens and the City of Boston, the birthplace of the American Revolution in 1775, a team consisting of Greek Consul General Christos Panagopoulos, the Boston Athletic Association, Governor Michael S. Dukakis, Lieutenant Governor John Kerry, Mayor of Boston Raymond Flynn, BAA Race Director Tim Kilduff, and Peter Agris of the Alpha Omega Council, created the tradition of formally presenting the BAA with olive branch wreaths to crown the first-place winners of the Boston Marathon.

In recognition of their contributions in establishing this tradition, Alpha Omega Council President Tsitsopoulos presented a gold olive branch to Ambassador Ray Flynn; President of the 26.2 Foundation Tim Kilduff; and daughter of the late Peter Agris, Nancy Agris Savage.

The wreaths were offered in the name of Stylianos Kyriakides, a true humanitarian, patriot, and marathon champion. His 1946 Boston Marathon victory, over renowned marathoner Johnny Kelley, is still considered one of the most memorable in Boston Marathon history. Kyriakides’

goal in running the Boston Marathon was to raise awareness, funds, and medical supplies for his countrymen who were suffering from the aftermath of WWII and their heroic resistance to Nazism. His victory and success in returning to Greece with aid represents the first charity run of the Boston Marathon.

Presently, charity runners have become an important element of the Boston Marathon and in 2023, \$40.2 million was raised for more than 200 non-profit organizations. Beginning this year, the Boston Athletic Association has announced [Bank of America](#) as the presenting partner of the Boston Marathon. Bank of America also acknowledges charity runners and has created a replica of the “Spirit of the Marathon” statue featuring Kyriakides, the original located at the Marathon 1 mile mark in Hopkinton, for display at this year’s Bank of America Marathon Expo, taking place Friday, April 12th through Sunday, April 14th at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center at 900 Boylston Street in Boston.

Demonstrating the charity aspects of Monday’s marathon, Tsitsopoulos and Kilduff then introduced charity runner James Condulis, 26.2 Foundation’s Team Inspire charity runner. Condulis is running in Monday’s marathon and raising funds in support of the Alpha Omega Council.

Other notables that were present included the Boston Athletic Association President & CEO Jack Flemming; Boston Athletic Association Board of Governors Adrienne Benton; Boston City Councilor Edward Flynn; Hopkinton Board of Select Members Muriel Kramer, Amy Ritterbusch, and Mary-Jo LaFreniere; and “Boston Marathon Traditions & Lore” author Paul Clerici. Governor Michael Dukakis and John Kerry were regrettably unavailable to attend the ceremony.

Passed appetizers were offered by Ithaki Restaurant and wine was offered by Greek Wine Club.

The four olive branch wreaths presented from the Annual Boston Wreath Ceremony on April 11th were gifted to the Boston Athletic Association from Greece and will be used to crown the winners of The 128th Boston Marathon on Monday, April 15, 2024. For more information on the Boston Marathon, please visit [www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon](http://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon).

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### **ABOUT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF GREECE IN BOSTON**

The Consulate General of Greece in Boston provides services including the renewal of passports, application of VISAS, citizen issues, military service matters, and power of attorneys. For more information on The Consulate General of Greece in Boston, visit [www.mfa.gr/usa/en/consulate-general-in-boston](http://www.mfa.gr/usa/en/consulate-general-in-boston).

### **ABOUT THE ALPHA OMEGA COUNCIL**

Alpha Omega Council is a non-profit philanthropic organization, based in Boston, Massachusetts, and, its mission is to promote patriotism to the United States and to cultivate the ideals of hellenism, by supporting various scholarly, athletic, medical, charitable, scientific, literary, religious and educational activities throughout New England and the United States. The Alpha Omega Council is comprised of Americans of Hellenic ancestry in Business, Education, Academia, Medicine, Law, Politics, Science and other fields. Since its inception, the Alpha Omega Council has contributed over \$2,000,000 to various philanthropic causes, not including the annual Peter Agris Memorial Journalism Scholarship Awards. For more information on Alpha Omega Council, please visit [www.alphaomegacouncil.org](http://www.alphaomegacouncil.org).

### **ABOUT THE BOSTON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (B.A.A.)**

Established in 1887, the Boston Athletic Association is a non-profit organization with a mission of promoting a healthy lifestyle through sports, especially running. The B.A.A. manages the Boston Marathon, presented by Bank of America, and supports comprehensive charity, youth, and year-round programming. The Boston Marathon is part of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, along with international marathons in Tokyo, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York City. Starting in 2024, the Boston Marathon's presenting partner will be Bank of America. The 128th Boston Marathon is scheduled to take place on Monday, April 15, 2024. For more information on the B.A.A., please visit [www.baa.org](http://www.baa.org).

### **ABOUT THE 26.2 FOUNDATION**

The 26.2 Foundation is a philanthropic non-profit 501(c)3 organization promoting the sport of marathoning, health, wellness and development through programs in education, the fine arts, community relations, and the construction of the International Marathon Center. For more information, please visit [www.26-2.org](http://www.26-2.org).

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