



ORDER OF AHEPA HARRISBURG CHAPTER

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March 21, 2017

Press Release:

On Tuesday, March 21, 2017 eight Ahepan brothers from our local Ahepan Chapter #64 of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania along with a delegation from various parishes from the Pittsburgh Metropolis embarked on a visit to the State Capitol of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to celebrate the 196th Anniversary of the Greek War of Independence which started on March 25th, 1821. This group which included a young man Angelos Giannaris who was dressed as an “evzone” a Greek soldier enjoyed the opportunity to be welcomed by Senator Mike Regan and many other distinguished dignitaries representing the State government of Pennsylvania at the State Capitol. Representatives Sheryl Delozier, Ryan Mckenzie, and Greg Rothman along with State Senator Mike Regan joined the delegation to commemorate Greek Independence Day. The Proclamation was then presented to Supreme Governor Anthony Drakos and District Governor Alex Barlamas of Pennsylvania Ahepan Jurisdictions of Pennsylvania. Lt. Colonel Nestoras Vargemizis of the Hellenic along with AHEPANS Dr. Michael Billys and Tom Paparoidamis who represented the Hellenic community were also honored by the House of Representatives. A Proclamation was then signed by Gov. Tom Wolf to Commemorate Greek Independence Day of 2017.

Father Michael Varvarelis gave the Opening Prayer opening the session of the House declared by Speaker of the House Rep. Mike Turzai while remarking how Greece was under the domination of the Ottoman Turks for over 400 years then finally declared it's freedom on that particular day in 1821. It took 8 years until this War was finally won in 1829. This was a very important step for the world's insistence in 'freedom and democracy' for the entire world to see. Greece showed both courage and faith in its declaration on that important day in 1821 and this recognition is an honor for the entire Greek community of the world.

A photo session was convened at the Rotunda area in front of the indoor Capitol steps for the first item on the agenda where Senator Regan addressed the group and honored the Greeks by reiterating society's appreciation for the Greek community at large. This was immediately followed by an extensive tour of the State Capital along with the Senate Chamber and Supreme Court Chamber. Speaker of the House Mike Terzai introduced Representative Sheryl Delozier who gave an inspirational speech for the resolution for the Proclamation for Greek Independence Day on this day. Deputy Majority Whip Rep. Ryan Mackenzie along with Rep. Greg Rothman also stood before the House formally introducing our group. Rep. Mckenzie who spoke so eloquently last year is also an Ahepan Chapter President also gave very inspirational remarks including that “over 1.3 million Greek-Americans call Pennsylvania home”. AHEPANS Supreme Governor Anthony Drakos, District Governor Alex Barlamas, Dr. Michael Billys, and Tom Paparoidamis were then invited to the podium to be recognized by the full membership of this highly esteemed House of Representatives. They were welcomed by a round of applause from the entire body of the House. Rep. Delozier then read the proclamation out loud to the entire House chamber recognizing the Greek Independence Day of March 25th, 1821 which was also loudly applauded. Other AHEPANS in attendance were Chapter #64 President Dimitri Zozos, Col. George Jatras, Prof. George Papacostas, and Treasurer Paul Giannaris ‘father of his young evzone’! Hellenic Army Colonel Aristos Perris along with his daughter Theoni Perris also represented the Hellenic Army.

Submitted by:

Dr. Michael Billys

Chaplain, Ahepa Chapter #64 of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania