

Good evening!

First of all, from all of us at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) we want to extend our deepest sympathy to the family, friends, colleagues, loved ones of the late Reverend Calvin Butts, a true spiritual leader and a pillar of our community in NYC, my fellow honoree this evening. May he rest in peace.

I wanted to also extend my sincere congratulations to my fellow honorees for all you do!

A few thank yous, to Peg Breen and everyone at the New York Landmarks Conservancy for all you do to help protect the city's architecture, heritage, culture, community, and humanity. At a time when trust seems to be lacking, on many fronts, it is organizations like the New York Landmarks Conservancy who continue to follow their mission with passion and determination for the wider good.

It is only right that we are here tonight at a designated landmark room in a landmarked building. Thank you for the honor given to me and to all my colleagues at SNF.

Thank you to my great uncle, the late Stavros Niarchos, who provided us the means by which to be able to have the chance to try to do good around the world. Since his passing away and the birth of SNF back in 1996, 26 years ago and counting, we have been active in more than 135 countries around the world, trying to do our part and contribute to making our world a better place for all!

Thank you to all my colleagues, past and current, who have embarked on this journey of SNF's.

And in closing I wanted to share with you all a poem that has been a true landmark to my soul and has kept me going. It's called "Ithaka" a poem written by the late Konstantinos Kavafis, a Greek poet from Alexandria, Egypt.

I will leave you with the first three and the last three lines. The rest I urge you to read when you get some free time; and even better I strongly recommend you to actually listen to it (you can easily search it on the web) narrated by the late actor Sir Sean Connery, with music from the late Greek composer Vangelis.

"As you set out for Ithaka / hope the voyage is a long one / full of adventure, full of discovery...."

....And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you. / Wise as you will have become, so full of experience / you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean."



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
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It's all about the journey. And as you saw earlier in the video what I said about New York letting us all borrow it, and it's then what we all do to make this a better place for all, it is all about the journey and in so many ways New York City is the modern version of Ithaka.

And before I go, mental health! In a strange way we can thank COVID for helping get the stigma off mental health. It's a real issue, all around us, in almost every family, we need to feel free to talk about it and help strengthen every effort made to help treat, prevent, research, etc. On all fronts, we owe it to the more vulnerable, to ourselves, to our own humanity.

Thank you and stay human!