

Speech by Andreas Dracopoulos, Co-President of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of everyone at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, I would like to say how delighted and proud we are being here this evening and sharing with all of you our first recipient of the *Annual Stavros Niarchos Foundation Philotimo Award*. In attending tonight's event, I could not think of a better venue to announce this award, and I would like to thank Andy and Mike Manatos for their collaboration in establishing it, as well as for their farsightedness in recognizing the significance and the uniqueness of the concept of *philotimo*, and introducing it to a broad audience. But before I go on with the Award, I would like to take a brief moment to acknowledge how privileged and honored we feel to have had the opportunity to share this stage tonight with the parents of the late James Foley, as well as Ruslana Lyzhychko and Shimon Peres.

And now I would like to turn to tonight's *First Annual Stavros Niarchos Foundation Philotimo Award*. Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that caring for others, for our fellow human beings is what makes us all human, while Aristotle said that "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all"; now, the last thing you probably want to hear is another explanation, another elaboration of what the word *philotimo* really means. You probably heard already that the word is impossible to capture accurately in English. Or how *philotimo* is a concept and a state of mind, distinct to Greeks only. I will take the risk and simplify it without in any way looking to dilute its meaning: JUST GIVE IT ALL YOU HAVE, DO THE RIGHT THING, AND TRY TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR EVERYONE. Having said that, I will now try to capture its essence, its meaning, in relation to this award.

Everyone knows that Greece is basically an island nation. Its thousands of islands are an essential part of Greece's identity. Every Greek recognizes their importance – strategic, economic, geographic – while every Greek also knows that most of the islands remain isolated, neglected, abandoned from the Greek State, and left to their own devices however insufficient these may be. To be an inhabitant on most of these places means living a lonely, and dangerous life. In talking about the situation, one could easily say that Greeks have no sense of *philotimo* when it comes to addressing the needs of these islands and taking care of their inhabitants.

That is why the Mobile Medical Units are the recipients of the *First Annual Stavros Niarchos Foundation Philotimo Award*. Under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Takis Koulouvaris, who will describe the program in more detail, and with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, an extraordinary team of volunteers (doctors and assistants) have been providing free comprehensive and state-of-the-art health care services to thousands of residents of some of Greece's most isolated, remote and neglected islands. Their act constitutes a true manifestation of *philotimo* for the common good, which becomes even more important during the current critical times for Greek society.

I am delighted and honored to present Dr. Koulouvaris and all his colleagues at the Mobile Medical Units team with the *First Annual Stavros Niarchos Foundation Philotimo Award*, and to congratulate them for their efforts and hard work, which sends an important message about social cohesiveness and responsibility to one's fellow citizens. We look forward to continuing choosing our Award winners on an annual basis for other extraordinary acts of *philotimo*.

One of the favorite sayings of Emmanouil Kriaras, a modern Greek philosopher, who was born in 1906 and passed away this summer at the young age of 108, was that true love can only be achieved by being able to constantly seek your ideals. In closing, I urge all of you to do seek your ideals, to do your best to help the ones less fortunate, and in doing so, stay in love.

Thank you!