

# ΕΜΦΑΣΙΣ

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*Peter Eliopoulos*

*The days and  
accomplishments  
of a true Spartan!*

Στέφανος Ταμβάκης -  
ο νέος πρόεδρος του ΣΑΕ

Δημήτριος Μανωλάκος -  
ο νέος πρόεδρος του Εθνικού Κογκρέσου



# Peter Eliopoulos



*Peter as a young boy  
back in the Village*

## *The days and accomplishments of a true Spartan!*



*(from left to right)  
Peter's sister, mother,  
father and wife*

*by Demetris Maradianos*

### *From Ancient Beginnings*

**T**hroughout ancient Hellenic history, generations of heroes participated in establishing and creating a world within the motherland and abroad that was in part exonerated and in part condemned. Collectively the Spartans were a particular group that thrived in the polemic art, with each individual having to pass through a vigorous selection process in order to be the chosen to defend their homeland!

The selection process started early in the life of the Spartan male. In fact, the dreadful task of determining who would be powerful enough to sustain these weighty requirements was left to their mother! The mother's role was to decide whether her beloved son would be strong enough in his life to defend his motherland. If the mother's decision was that her son had all the qualities needed for this role, then she would keep him under her supervision until the time when she would turn him over to the Army for camp training. Tragically, if her son did not have all the necessary skills, strength and character, then it was her job to take him to Mount Taygetos and throw him off the cliff of Kaiadas Lakos to his certain death.

Many generations later, from this land of great strength, commitment and progress comes a man who is well known in our Hellenic community of Toronto; a man who grew up as a Spartan and remains to this day as a true believer of our Hellenic heritage, history and culture. His name is Peter Eliopoulos.

### *To Modern Times*

**B**orn in Potamia, Sparta, Lakonia, Peter came to Canada in 1967 at the age of 12 with his parents Nikos and Ekaterini and a younger sister named Jean. Like many immigrants before him, Peter and his family left behind their homeland in hopes of a better life in the new world.

Peter remembers those early days clearly. When the family first moved to Canada, they lived in Toronto, near Jane and Wilson; where, unlike the Danforth, Peter's new neighborhood did not have many Hellenes. That should have been a challenge, since Peter didn't have much command of the English language in those early days. In true Spartan spirit though, Peter learned to communicate through sports, primarily Hockey and Basketball.

The house where Peter lived with his mother, father, sister and his two Uncles' families was small but it never felt cramped. Everybody ate, worked, shopped, slept and lived together and

he remembers it as a good time and a good life. Peter remembers fondly how everyone would squeeze into his uncle Peter's car to go to church on Sundays.

There was less choice back in those days, as Peter recalls. It was a simpler time and everything seemed to make more sense. In today's technologically advanced world he feels that we've lost that closeness. We all communicate through cell phones, text messages, email and intercoms. As Peter sees it, making more money and having more choice isn't always a good thing.

Peter, in true Spartan spirit, didn't have a choice but establishing himself in Canada in those early days. He went to school, worked at the family restaurant and adapted to the Canadian system. When he was just 12 years old, Peter remembers standing on a milk crate to reach the cash register at his Uncle's restaurant. Everything back then was a learning experience. On top of his busy school and work schedule, Peter





*Anna (wife), Katherine (oldest daughter), Nicole (youngest daughter), Peter, and Angela (middle daughter). This was taken in his village in Greece at his 50th Birthday Party.*

also took on a paper route, actually three paper routes to be exact; the Globe and Mail, the Star and the Telegram. He was still struggling to grasp the English language but by all accounts this was Peter's first real experience running a successful business and he loved it! He remembers surprising everybody on his route with a Christmas Card. Needless to say, his customers were so impressed with his dedication and his initiative that it quickly got to the point where he was making more money than his Mother. From this point on, there was no stopping him.

Peter's immediate family was the one who played a pivotal role in teaching him some valuable lessons. Peter's Uncles were the first to come to Canada and they had started to establish themselves with a family restaurant called 'The Charcoal Pit' - a drive-in hamburger place. In those early days, Peter worked at that restaurant and eventually came to learn some valuable life lessons and business sense from his Uncles. As a matter of fact, Peter credits his two Uncles (both named Peter) for teaching him the importance of having a good work ethic. These are lessons that he still uses today when running his own successful Hospitality and Entertainment Company. Years later, Peter temporarily shifted away from the restaurant business and was focusing his attention on the cloth-

ing industry. As he remembers it, he was a mover and a shaker back in those days when he met his future wife Anna. He was 21; she was 16 and freshly tanned having just returned from Florida. Peter was with his group of friends and Anna was with hers but they had a mutual acquaintance who introduced them. He remembers how she instantly stood out from that crowd. They soon met up for a coffee and not long after that, they were married and continue to be partners today not just in life but in business. Together they have raised 3 daughters, Katherine, Angela and Nicole.

After Peter and Anna were married, he left the clothing business and bought into a restaurant called 'Paul's French Foods'. He and Anna had no clue about cakes and pastries but they were both hard working and he was a good salesman with an obvious gift for gab, so success came quickly. Out of this business grew two other future companies currently underneath the Peter

& Paul's umbrella: Table Talk Catering & Special Events as well as Peter & Paul's Baskets, Gifts and Promo which Anna runs. These are both companies that bring in millions of dollars annually. The fact that things grew to the level that it is today is something that continues to astonish both Peter and Anna when they stop to take it all in.



## Under ONE AND ONLY HOST namely



### Life Today

The idea for "byPeterandPauls.com" has evolved over the years into the diversified hospitality and entertainment portfolio of companies it is today. Within the "byPeterandPauls.com" umbrella Peter has created a one stop shop where the customer's entire hospitality and entertainment needs can be taken care. The following table breaks down the varied companies working together under the name "byPeterandPauls.com":

#### **Paramount Conference and Event Venue**

A state of the art facility which opened in June of 2004 and includes 61,000 sq. ft. of entertainment space which can accommodate up to 1,650 guests.

#### **Bellagio Boutique Event Venue**

A place of elegance and sophistication which will take your breath away. There you have a choice of 3 non-partitioned rooms and seating up to 800 guests.

#### **The Manor Event Venue**

A facility with a beautiful and picturesque scenery! It needs to be seen in person to be truly appreciated. It is a 34,000 sq. ft. facility, offering 3 banquet halls which can accommodate up to 950 guests. It is set amongst the stunning greens of Carrying Place Golf & Country Club.

#### **Peter & Paul's Baskets, Gifts & Promo**

Offering a vast array of promotional and corporate gifts for all your specialized individual needs. Specializing in having

your corporate logo on anything you require (such as custom Service Awards, corporate Christmas Gifts, Home Closing and Customer Appreciation items) to sales incentives.

#### **TableTalk Catering and Special Events**

An established company that offers the ultimate conceptualization and planning in creative and formal events for home or office.

#### **Colelli Studios (Photography and Videography)**

Blends photographic, journalistic and filming techniques using a non-traditional approach and top quality materials to create photos and videos for any social or corporate event such as holiday celebrations, weddings, engagements and family portraits.

#### **S4 Show Solutions (AV & DJ services)**

Provides creative and innovative ideas, as well as DJ entertainment for any event including grand openings, product launches, award ceremonies, weddings, fashion shows and charity events. Their interactive DJ's offer unique party techniques to ensure your event are energized and entertaining.

#### **Search Engine (advertising & design)**

Creating the best solutions for your print and web related needs. They can help your business with strategic planning, direct mail pieces and corporate identity.





The main ingredient behind the success of all these companies lies in the way the finished product is packaged. Quite often the details have details. For the last 25 years, Peter has built the impressive reputation of his company on the fact that if you sign up for a Peter & Paul's experience, you are guaranteed something that is unique and unforgettable.

And the results of this philosophy are proven in financial results. Since numbers speak for themselves, here are some of the company's impressive statistics:

To date, byPeterandPaul's have:

- 25 years of service
- Hosted 66,350 parties
- Accommodated 5,830,040 guests
- Mixed 28,840,000 cocktails

Under ONE AND ONLY HOST namely byPeterandPaul's. That is truly remarkable!

At the risk of overstating the obvious, financially, Peter and Anna have done very well. That's not to say that everything has been smooth sailing for this power couple. A little over 15 years ago, because of a few bad real estate decisions, they lost everything and had to start over again. Reflecting back now, Peter refers to this experience as the greatest thing that ever happened to him. Now that the company has grown bigger and more powerful than ever before, there is an appreciation for what really matters- and it's not anything monetary.

Peter and his wife Anna don't measure their accomplishments only in business terms. They are very active in their fundraising efforts and community support initiatives. To date, they have raised over \$700,000 for the Hospital for Sick Children through their annual Charity Golf Tournament. And recently they were both chosen to chair the 13TH Annual Venetian Ball, a prestigious event in which they raised half a million dollars in one night alone. During the holidays, byPeterandPauls.com throws a party for underprivileged kids who might have otherwise missed out on a proper Christmas. These are the things that give Peter pleasure these days- making others happy.

When it comes to hobbies Peter prefers golfing, tennis, landscaping, architecture, learning more about history and geography as well as visiting all his animals (chickens, pigs, turkeys, lambs...etc...) back at the farm in Hellas.

The firm "byPeterandPauls.com" makes millions in revenue each year so needless to say financially, Peter is doing very well but he does not measure success by the size of his bank account; What he is most proud of is the fact that he has been married now to Anna for 27 years and has three beautiful girls to show for it. Aside from the various companies which have grown tremendously under the byPeterandPauls.com umbrella there have been quite a few other business ventures, such as: Peter founded Paparazzi Night Club as well as King Valley Golf & Country Club.

Peter loves waking up in the morning. He lives for creating and he has not lost his enthusiasm for throwing a really amazing party. To him there is nothing greater than watching an event come to fruition. Bringing people together to celebrate life is what he does best!

Even though "byPeterandPauls.com" is not a publicly traded Company, Peter would like to one day offer shares to people within his organization. He believes in the products that he has created and he would like byPeterandPauls.com to live forever. Besides the base here in Toronto, Peter has plans for global expansion. That is one of his many goals for the future.







**And a Vision for the Future and a Plan to Celebrate Hellenic Roots**

Although, he has always been proud of his Hellenic heritage, it's really only in the last few years that Peter has realized just how much he values and loves his Hellenic roots and the deep culture that comes with it. For awhile there it seemed like he was starting to lose touch with his culture. It wasn't until one trip back to Hellas, roughly eight years ago that his passion for his Hellenic heritage was awakened. It was during a night out in Athens at the Bouzouki, where Peter could not believe the passion for life that each person had in that smoky filled room. It reminded him of the kinds of parties and the events that he was trying to organize here in Canada. Needless to say he was hooked.

Thanks should also be given to the on-going project in Hellas that has been unfolding over the last six years. When Peter lost it all so many years ago, he made a promise to himself and to God that if things turned around, he would come back to Hellas and he would do something special. He is a man of his words and is right now in the process of creating something truly remarkable in this corner of the world. Peter named this project appropriately "The Village". For the last six years, Peter has been splitting his time between Canada and "The Village" in Hellas where he is in the process of creating something truly unique and spectacular that will put his tiny hometown Potamia Lakonias on the world map.

Two years ago, Peter accomplished his personal goal of building a church at the top of a mountain where he purchased all the land leading up to the peak. The church is called, appropriately enough St. Peter and Paul's and now that the church project is complete, the idea keeps evolving. The next step is planting a few thousand more trees, paving the roads and even-



Peter and Anna (chairs for the Venetian Ball)

tually the building of an exclusive hotel, a spa, horse trails, outdoor gardens and much much more. Peter wants to re-create parties and weddings the way they happened 100 years ago. He wants to remind the world about all the beautiful things that we have lost. That means, picking your own olives, baking the bread in the old ovens like our grandmothers used to do and getting back in touch with nature. Eventually the plan is to expand the "byPeterandPauls.com" name worldwide. 'The Village' in Hellas is the first step.

According to Peter "Styles change...style does not!" "by-PeterandPauls.com" has been leading the way for others to follow. Basically since the beginning, Peter felt like a leader in the business. With whatever he does, he aspires to be innovative and creative. As for competition, it's always healthy to have some of that. "It keeps you on your toes" as he well stated.

Peter will tell you himself that he is a particular person. He



knows what he likes and he knows what makes sense to him. He has a vision, so obviously he looks to work with people who understand not just what that vision is, but also somebody who will be able to bring something entirely new and creative to the table. This is one of the criteria he uses in hiring his employees. Right now byPeterandPauls.com employs over 600 people within all the companies. This is no longer a small bakery being run by him and his wife- it's an empire and its growing every-day.

Peter likes to see our community come together and be tighter than it is right now.

As he well stated "we have so much to be proud of but we squander a lot of energy and power by just looking out for our own best interests and getting too hung up on politics. If we helped each other more, we would have a much stronger community". Peter would also like to see the younger generation more involved with the community. How do we make this happen? By keeping current and changing with the times so as to attract these younger people.

Retirement is not in Peter's vocabulary but he does see himself spending more and more time in Hellas. His main goal which he has so far not been able to keep is to not have a desk. He wants to focus on what he does best, which is creating.

According to Peter his body has no choice. It will follow his heart back to where it was born. In the future you will find Peter back at "The Village", smiling and watching the world from the top of his mountain in Hellas, surrounded by family and friends from all over the world.



Cathy Reale (byPeterandPauls.com Executive Assistant), Mayor Linda Jackson, Peter, Laurie Bernardi (byPeterandPauls.com Director of Special Events)

We met with Peter at his "Peter & Paul's Basket, Gift, Promo" location along with his Director of Communications George Tsioutsoulas who we would like to express our gratitude and thanks for their great hospitality.

Needless to say the room filled with joy and glamour as soon as Peter entered it. His charismatic demeanor, smile and kindness won us over at once. Peter Eliopoulos has a dynamite and one of a kind personality with a determination to accomplish whatever he puts his mind to. The impression that he left on us is lasting and we are sure that was not the first time!