

J. Calamos Honored by Capital Link at its Forum

By Constantine S. Sirigos, TNH Staff Writer

NEW YORK – Faith in Greece is the essence of events like the inaugural dinner of the 15th Annual Capital Link Greek Investor Forum, and the achievements of Greek-Americans like the honoree John Calamos, are proof for many that a new Greece can be built.

The dinner in the stunning dining room of the New York Yacht Club resplendent with maritime symbols and regalia apropos of Greece's maritime history was presented in cooperation with the Consulate General of Greece in New York.

The Forum was organized by Capital Link in cooperation with the New York Stock Exchange and major global investment banks. According to the event's invitation, "Over its 15-year history, this event has been established as the main Forum that updates the U.S. business, financial, and investment communities on the progress and outlook of the Greek economy and main sectors of business activity."

Nicolas Bornozis, the Founder and President of Capital Link, welcomed and thanked the guests and sponsors and acknowledged the Greek and Cypriot diplomatic Corps, including Greece's UN Ambassador Michel Spinellis, its Ambassador to the United States, Christos Panagopoulos, its Consul General George Iliopoulos, and Cyprus' Consul General Koula Sophianou.

Ambassador Panagopoulos presented Calamos' 2013 Capital Link Leadership Award "for his contribution to fostering closer business relations between Greece and the United States." He also thanked Bornozis "for being the voice, in a way, of Greece here in this great country and particularly in New York."

Panagopoulos began his introduction by noting Calamos is a man who needed no introduction. Indeed his achievements are well known through the financial press. Listing his net worth at \$2.7 billion, Forbes' terse bio notes: "Son of Greek immigrants swept floors at family's Chicago grocery store. Developed passion for stock market in teens after investing parents' \$5,000 nest egg. Joined Air Force after earning M.B.A in 1965; served year in Vietnam. Became stockbroker, specialist in convertible securities. Founded Calamos Asset Management 1977. Took public October 2004."



Ambassador Christos Panagopoulos presents the 2013 Capital Link Leadership Award to John Calamos "for his contribution to fostering closer business relations between Greece and the United States," at the inaugural dinner of the 2013 Capital Link Greek Investor Forum.

Panagopoulos, however, added the Hellenic and philanthropic dimension, noting that Calamos "is the force behind all good things for the Hellenic Community, a very successful entrepreneur, and a man who never forgot his past...and honors his Hellenic heritage in every way."

Calamos was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago and is its Chairman. After expressing his appreciation for the honor, he told the guests he was looking forward to gaining more insight into the Greek economy at the Forum. "I am often asked by colleagues why I am interested in such a small market," he said, adding "Besides looking for investment opportunities, which can be found in any sized market, they forget the importance of heritage."

"Being the son of Greek immigrants, the older I get the more I value heritage," he continued, and emphasized "the importance of educating our youth... about the importance of that history," and its role in building their own character and values.

He feels strongly that his heritage was an important element of his success. "My parents taught me to work hard and be proud of who we are as a people," and to appreciate the values of ancient Greece, which blend well with those of the United States.



Facing the camera (L-R) C. Dean Metropoulos, Amb. Christos Panagopoulos, John and Mae Calamos, John S. Koudounis, Mizuho Securities USA, Yannis Sianis, Calamos Investments, Evangelos I. Lakatzis, A. S. Papadimitriou & Partners.

“I am extremely proud to be both Greek and American. We learned from them, and they can learn from us,” he said. “We are proud of our Greek heritage and I feel strongly that we have an obligation to help Greece in its time of need...and to encourage them...and they need to learn to be competitive in this new global economy.”

He is confident that by rebuilding its private sector Greece will unleash the innovation and creativity of its people.

IMPRESSED WITH SAMARAS INITIATIVES

Calamos told TNH “I am impressed with Prime Minister Samaras. He is trying to do the right thing and he’s got the right strategy. Unfortunately, culture trumps strategy every time so I hope the people can get behind him and allow him to execute his strategy and hopefully they can come out of this.”

He agrees that the people attending the Forum can perceive Greece’s progress, “and if they are confident, they will invest in Greece. This is the most positive I have been about Greece in many years.”

Calamos concluded by talking about the National Hellenic Museum. “We have often heard that ‘we are where we come from.’ As we become older and successful it’s important to give back,” he said.

He is devoted to the Museum’s cultural mission of “teaching future generations the history and success of the hardworking Greek-Americans in following the American dream,” and urged the guests to support the Museum and similar

endeavors. “I think it’s important. I think we are the last generation that can do this. If we do not, then I am afraid it may be lost forever, so please help us.”

“It’s so important,” he said of helping Greece and promoting Hellenism in America, that “I will continue to do this, even if I am forced to drink hemlock,” referring to the heroism of Socrates, who inspired him when he studied philosophy in college.

Bornozis offered special thanks for the support through the years of the NYSE Euronext, which earlier in the day honored the Greek delegation and the Greek NYSE listed companies at the NYSE Closing Bell ceremony.

He noted the valuable positive exposure for Greece provided by the event seen by such a broad business audience daily.

Attorney Theodore Vakrinos told TNH “I am pleased with Capital Link because it sends an optimistic message about Greece. We hope that all the decision makers take the needs of the people of Greece into account and make the correct long term decisions.”

Bornozis introduced Panos Papazoglou of Ernst and Young, the dinner’s sponsor, for a brief presentation. He placed this year’s forum in the context of the progress Greece has made since 2009. Most importantly, he believes most of the people of Greece now understand that the country benefits from less government interference in the economy, smaller government, and that jobs and growth will come from entrepreneurs, not the state.

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