

## **Stockton Dedicates Dr. Demetrios Constantelos Hellenic Collection and Reading Room**

Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Church of America Speaks

***For Immediate Release; with photos, captions on [flickr](#)***

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**Galloway Township, NJ** - Faith and reason - two pillars in the life and work of Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos, came together tonight as The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, in partnership with the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies, dedicated the Constantelos Hellenic Collection and Reading Room.

Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, who first met Dr. Constantelos in 1946 in Athens, said his life combines "science and piety; faith and knowledge." The archbishop called the new facility "a landmark achievement" and praised the learning environment at Stockton.

Dr. Constantelos was born in Spilia, Messenia, Greece and ordained a priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in 1955. He is an expert in the field of Byzantine (medieval Greek) history and a professor emeritus of History and Religious Studies.

He said when he first came to Stockton in 1970, some were confused about his field. "It's not Business, it's Byzantine," he joked about having had to explain.

The new facility houses 3,000 rare and important works from Professor Constantelos' personal collection and research materials, a donation of one of the finest private libraries in New Jersey. It also features a mural by George Kordis, professor of Art at the University of Athens, Greece, and well-known painter of religious imagery in the Orthodox tradition.

The room will be open to students, faculty and the community and act as the statewide repository for the New Jersey Greek-American Oral History Project.

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A matching gift challenge of \$150,000, made by the Friends of Hellenic Studies and Zoe and Dean Pappas, has helped fund the project. About \$244,000 has been raised toward the \$300,000 goal for an endowment to maintain and expand the collection.

Throughout the course of his distinguished career, Professor Constantelos has written books, contributed to journals, participated in symposia, spoken at conferences, had articles published in multiple languages, actively represented his community in interfaith dialogues and, as one of Stockton College's first professors, helped put the institution on the map.

At tonight's opening ceremonies, he received accolades from many.

"You've taught people to live in a very practical and wise way," said President Herman Saatkamp. "You've provided the foundation for our students to have a genuine sense of the Aristotelian heritage that continues to be so important...Greek civilization is at the heart of all we do in this country and the western world."

Dean Pappas, chair of the Stockton Board of Trustees, said, "The Greeks have a word for everything - 'axios' means something between esteemed and worthy - and certainly you are that."

Dr. Tom Papademetriou, associate professor of History and executive director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies, credited Dr. Constantelos with starting the college's thriving Hellenic Studies, which is emblematic of Stockton's commitment to global engagement.

"Hellenic Studies is now a reality and we're proud to be part of it," said Eugenia Kramvis, president of the Friends of Hellenic Studies.

The Stockton Oratorio Society, led by Dr. Beverly Vaughn, and members of the choir of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Egg Harbor Township, sang both the Greek and American national anthems - earning praise from the archbishop for their proper Greek pronunciation.

Commander Konstantinos Kalkandis, a Naval representative of the Hellenic Republic's Ministry of National Defense, spoke in Greek and English, and donated a book to the collection. Project manager Tula Christopoulos read tributes from Stockton graduates who were inspired by Dr. Constantelos to pursue their interests in history and giving back to the community.

"This has been a wonderful example of the cooperation between Stockton and the community," said Dean Lisa Honaker of the School of Arts and Humanities. "Demetrios is a link - he's a scholar, a gentleman and a priest."

Dr. Constantelos said he was "a very lucky person as a family man, as a priest, and as a scholar." He choked up talking about how his late wife, Stella, had faith and waited two years for him to recover from a serious illness before they were married. His four children, John, Eleni, Maria Loukeris and Christine Constantelos-Simms attended.

Individuals who would like to contribute to help reach the \$300,000 goal may contact Nicholas Sena, leadership annual giving coordinator, at (609) 652-4789; or email:

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More information can be found at [Stockton.edu/constantelos](http://Stockton.edu/constantelos)

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