



Archons
OF THE **Ecumenical**
Patriarchate

Protecting the Future of FaithSM

Archon

*A Solemn Honor,
An Awesome Responsibility*



Saint Andrew founded the See of Byzantium in the year 38AD, installing Saint Stachys as bishop.

This See would later develop into the Patriarchate of Constantinople, having Apostle Andrew as its Patron Saint.



To Be An Archon

is to Receive the Oldest and Most Prestigious Honor in the Entire Christian World

Today, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are a devoted group of passionate leaders, relentlessly focused on protecting religious freedom for all and ensuring the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate – the historical spiritual center of the world’s 300+ million Orthodox Christians.

The Archons also have one of the longest and most illustrious histories of any organization in human history.

The Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus organization was founded in 1882, and the Anglican Brotherhood of St. Andrew in 1883, but the title of Archon is significantly older than both, and older than any other comparable group or organization. While the Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew were founded in 1966, the ancient order of Archons is the oldest and most prestigious honor that can be bestowed upon a layman in the entire Christian world.

The title of Archon, in fact, has been conferred upon notable, distinguished, and accomplished men since eleven centuries before the time of Christ. To bear the title of Archon is to be part of a fraternity that includes statesmen of ancient Greece such as Medon of Athens, the first to bear the title of Archon in the eleventh century BC, Solon (sixth century BC), Pericles,

Themistocles, and Aristides the Just (fifth century BC). Other renowned Archons include Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor. Theodosios Staurakios, the governor of Cyprus who corresponded with Saint Photios the Great in the ninth century, was an Archon. So was the tenth-century Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, and key members of the renowned Phokas military family that flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Other notable Archons throughout the ages include the diplomat and historian of the late period of the Empire in Constantinople, Georgios Sphrantzes. So, too, was the great statesman and last Grand Duke of the Empire, Loukas Notaras. In the twentieth century, the celebrated Greek film pioneer Spyros Skouras was an Archon. The beloved Greek tenor Nikos Gounaris was honored with the title of Archon. In a similar way, former U.S. President



Archon Regalia

The Cross of Saint Andrew and a badge depicting the double-headed Byzantine eagle are commonly worn to identify today’s Archons.

Jimmy Carter and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev were conferred with the title of Archon when they were awarded the Athenagoras Human Rights Award in 1987 and 2005, respectively. In our own day, the billionaire philanthropist and sports team owner Alex Spanos was also an Archon.

Archon (ἄρχων, plural ἄρχοντες) means *ruler* or *lord*. In ancient Greece, as well throughout the life of the Roman Empire in its Byzantine period, it was frequently used as the title of a specific public office. It has been in use as a title for men of honor, distinction and public responsibility for virtually as long as there has been recorded history.

In ancient Athens, beginning in the eleventh century BC, the city was ruled by a council of nine Archons, three of whom oversaw political, military, and religious affairs, while the other six comprised the judiciary.

Over time, civil magistrates in ancient Greece were generally known as ἄρχοντες, and this title continued to be used after the Roman Empire conquered Greece and Anatolia in the third and second centuries BC.

When the Empire became Christian, the title continued to be used. In the Christian empire, the word was often used as a synonym for *dynatoi* (δυνατοί), a word used for high military and government officials, as well as metropolitans, bishops, and hegoumenoi. Office holders were not just secular officials,

but important leaders of the Christian community. As Archons, they took on specific religious responsibilities for the service and promotion of the Holy Orthodox Faith in the Roman Empire.

By the eighth and ninth centuries AD, the governors of several Byzantine provinces, including Dalmatia, Cephalonia, Crete and Cyprus, were known as Archons. Archons also were given other positions of civic responsibility, including charge of government installations such as naval bases, the mint, and arsenals.

By the tenth century, Saint Symeon the New Theologian explained that Archons were people who had both power and honor, and included them among those who were able to converse with the emperor personally on a regular basis. The governors of some cities and

mayors of some towns were referred to on occasion as Archons. Also, some generals (στρατηγοί) had aides who were known as Archons. In the Christian Roman Empire, this meant that they were also men of singular piety and commitment to the Church.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, the title of Archon was established as a special rank in imperial Constantinople, held by the highest-ranking official among the members of the Christian Emperor's court.

When the Ottomans conquered Constantinople in 1453, the political and military Archons were swept away along with the other accoutrements of Byzantine rule. The title of Archon continued to be bestowed, however, within the Church. A sign of how unique this

Archon "Ἀρχων"



● **11th century BC**
Medon of Athens was the first to bear the title of Archon

● **33AD**
The year of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead

● **8th and 9th centuries**
Governors of several Byzantine provinces, including Dalmatia, Cephalonia, Crete and Cyprus, were known as Archons



● **6th & 5th centuries BC**
The title of Archon is conferred upon notable, distinguished, and accomplished men, such as Solon, left and Pericles, right



● **4th century AD**
Constantine the Great was an Archon



● **10th century**
Saint Symeon the New Theologian explained that Archons were people who had both power and honor

distinction was, and still remains, is the fact that only the Ecumenical Patriarch has the solemn right and responsibility to confer the honor of the title of Archon upon anyone.

Today, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew confers this noble and venerable title upon laymen who have performed outstanding service to God's Holy Church, and whose labors in the world brought honor to the Hellenic community. Archons historically were honored because of their love, loyalty and support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and their contribution to its advancement and welfare, just as the Archons of today are likewise honored. They understand that this honor is not simply a recognition of past accomplishments, but a solemn responsibility before God to serve His holy Church and

protect and defend our Holy Mother Church of Constantinople.

The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate meet annually as part of their efforts to advance religious freedom and the global salvific mission of the Sacred See of Saint Andrew. They celebrate their patronal feast on November 30, the feast day of Saint Andrew the Apostle. The fundamental goal of the Archons is what it has been since the days of classical Athens: to preserve peace, advance human dignity, foster civic responsibility, and ensure the integrity and future of faith.



13th century

Title of Archon is established as a special rank in imperial Constantinople, held by the highest-ranking official among the members of the Christian Emperor's court.



1883

Anglican Brotherhood of St. Andrew was founded in 1883

Today

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew continues to confer the noble and venerable title upon laymen who have performed outstanding service to God's Holy Church



1453

Ottomans conquer Constantinople, political and military Archons are swept away along with the other accoutrements of Byzantine rule



1882

Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus organization was founded in 1882.



1966

Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is founded

Modern Day Archons

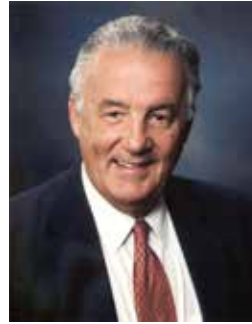
Many notable individuals within the Christian community are Archons.



Archon Spyros P. Skouras
Motion Picture Pioneer and
President of 20th Century Fox



Archon Michael Bilirakis
Member of the
U.S. House of Representatives



Archon Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senator



Archon George Stephanopoulos
Former White House
Communications Director
and News Anchor, ABC



Archon Alex G. Spanos
Owner of the
Los Angeles Chargers



Archon Mikhail Gorbachev
Former Soviet Union Leader



**Archon President
Jimmy Carter**
US President



Anthony J. Limberakis, MD
National Commander
Archon Megas Aktouarios

Investiture of the Archon Class

Each year, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, invests Archons at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York.





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of classical Athens:**

**To Preserve Peace,
Advance Human Dignity,
Foster Civic Responsibility, and
Ensure The Integrity And Future Of Faith**



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Patriarchate

Protecting the Future of Faith™

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