

## **Kostas Louis Vellios, 97, Archon Depoutatos, Order of St. Andrew**

Kostas Vellios died peacefully at his home in Brooklyn, N.Y. on Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026. He was 97.

There were many different aspects to his life embodying the roles of Family, Country and Faith. Combined, he epitomized devotion to country with his military service in the Korean War, to God and to his Orthodox Faith as an Archon Depoutatos in the Order of Saint Andrew, President of the Three Hierarchs Church Board, as a businessman and entrepreneur in the florist business, and community leader, and to philanthropy, donating his time and experience as a Free Mason, and on the Boards of St. Basil's Academy Brooklyn Council of Churches, HANAC, and the Order of Saint Andrew. He achieved many honors for his community service contributions through several NYC Mayoral administrations.

His ninety-seven years were rich with experience. He was an Archon in spirit before the Order was created. His life embodies "filotimo" sharing his deep love for his faith, family, community, and country. Born in the Bronx on Valentines Day, 1929 to Louis and Antonia Vellios (Protopappas), Kostas was raised with his sister Mary during the Great Depression, on Avenue J in Brooklyn, where the family florist has operated since 1931. Many of today's Greek florists got their start here, learning the trade and nurtured by the Vellios family. The store continues to provide a first start for many different immigrant groups to this day.

His education started in the flower shop. Every day after school, he delivered flowers by foot or bicycle for 10 cents an order. He is a graduate of PS 99 Elementary School and was in the first graduating class of Midwood HS. He holds an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Brooklyn College and a Bachelor of Science in Business from Pace University.

The childhood friendship with his friend, Bill Theodosakis, a fellow Archon, became a cemented relationship while at THY as its first President. Together they worked tirelessly on developing the Three Hierarchs Community as

consecutive year Parish council Presidents, and presenting the compelling exhibits of the Burning of Smyrna to Brooklyn area churches. They traveled together to the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Archons and to the Mount Athos Monastery.

At Three Hierarchs, Kostas created the Holy Order, and brought the dream of a Community Center to fruition, to house a full time Greek Afternoon School, and Nursery and Prekindergarten programs and supporting vibrant scouting programs. He had a gift for attracting the best hearts and minds with great skills to want to volunteer to run many of the youth programs when they first started and which continue to this day.

Kostas was in the National Guard and was a Korean War Veteran. Before he was 21 years old, this Bronx- born, Brooklyn- bred boy began his military trek through Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and San Francisco then traveled on a troop ship to Japan before hitting the ground in Korea. He served from 1950-1951 as a Sargent in the 802<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Aviation Battalion. He was a Heavy equipment operator for bulldozers, derrick, crane and shovels paving airfields and roads.

During his basic training, “Gus” met his future wife, Barbara Christon in Dallas Texas when he attended church there. A Long-distance relationship quickly developed into an engagement then marriage in 1952. This Greek southern belle moved to Brooklyn and into the same house that was known as “Hotel Diplatanos” as the relatives were still coming over. They raised 3 children, Antonia, Pamela, and Louis. Presently Kostas has eight grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren who dote on him endlessly. Kostas and his beautiful wife were married for 42 years before she past from Multiple Sclerosis in 2004.

Our Dad continued to grow the family business, expanding with Kings Plaza Floral Gardens in 1970 when the mall first opened, a flower and plant popup at Brooklyn Boro Hall Park, then Flowers by Konstantinos in 1977 at the newly built Citi Corp Center in Manhattan. Today the Avenue J Florist is the flagship store that remains with the decorating division of Konstantinos LTD now in the creative and able hands of his son Louis and grandson Konstantinos.

There is a litany of other organizations that our Dad was actively involved with and a member of: Mason in the Phoenix Lodge, Camp Fund Chairman sending underprivileged children to summer camp, President of Three Hierarchs and past sitting member on the Board of Directors of many organizations - Brooklyn Council of Churches, Saint Basils Academy, HANAC, Midwood Board of Trade and the one closest to his heart: Archon Depoutatos of the Order of Saint Andrew where he served on the National Council until his retirement in 2008. He was one of the founding fathers of the Athenagoras Human Rights Award and one of the first members of the newly-organized National Council since the Order's inception on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 10, 1966. Each year, our Dad, donates all the floral arrangements for the Archon Grand Banquet and supports the Archons endeavors.

Kostas Vellios accomplished most of his legacy to us all by the age of forty!

He had fun doing it all with love, admiration and respect. He always surrounded himself with the people he loves, and made a family out of them, a trait passed on from his father, his Greek heritage, and deep commitment to his Orthodox faith.