

**Archons**  
OF THE Ecumenical  
Patriarchate®

*Protecting the Future of Faith®*

The Archon Office

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**The Most Historical  
and Greatest Honor  
in Christendom**



**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.**



# Archon

*A Solemn Honor,  
An Awesome Responsibility*

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

# Historical Timeline

## 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



## 11th century BC

Medon of Athens was the first to bear the title of Archon

Archon  
"Ἀρχων"

## 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



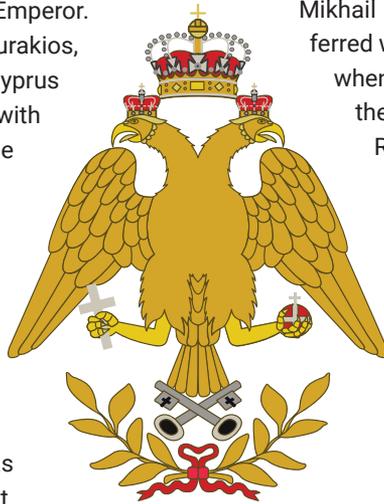
century BC), Pericles, Themistocles, and Aristides the Just (fifth century BC). Other renowned Archons include Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor. Theodosios Staurakios, the governor of Cyprus who corresponded with Saint Photios the Great in the ninth century, was an Archon. So 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 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.

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 ἀρχοντες, and this title continued to be used after the Roman Empire conquered Greece and Anatolia in the third and second centuries BC.



#### Archon Regalia

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

**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.

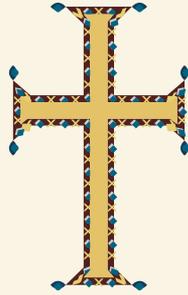
**10th century**

Saint Symeon the New Theologian explained that Archons were people who had both power and honor



**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.



**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.



**1883**

Anglican Brotherhood of St. Andrew was founded in 1883



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 hegoumeni. 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.



### **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.

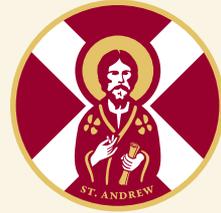


**Today**

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

**1966**

Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is founded



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 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.

*Co-authored by*

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*President of the Pammakaristos*  
*Brotherhood of Archons in Europe*

# 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 Alex G. Spanos**

Owner of the Los Angeles Chargers



**Archon Mikhail Gorbachev**

Former Soviet Union Leader



**Archon Paul S. Sarbanes**

United States Senator



**Archon George Stephanopoulos**

Former White House Communications Director and News Anchor, ABC



**Archon President Jimmy Carter**

US President



**Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis**

National Commander Archon Grand Aktouarios



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



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