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Thessalonica Agricultural & Industrial Institute



Class of 1951

When The Love For A School  
Spans Generations



**AMERICAN  
FARM SCHOOL**  
Thessaloniki • Greece



**Perrotis  
College**  
Agriculture • Environment • Life Sciences

*Issue 182  
Winter 2020*



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## From the President

The vision of the American Farm School – to educate students to become responsible and conscious stewards of the land, scientists, leaders and citizens of the world – has endured difficult times in the past; challenges that made it even more necessary and relevant. The year 2020 was a time like that, not only for our institution but for the whole world. And as this year comes to an end, the American Farm School's vision proves – once again – its timeless character.

In spite of the difficulties plaguing Greece since the financial crisis, the academic year 2019-2020 began on promising footing. Our progress towards the year's goals was abruptly halted in February with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dealing with a global emergency presented a very new kind of challenge, but one which our students and staff responded to with the utmost efficiency. The academic year ended in the midst of a pandemic. With hard work and the use of modern technology, we managed to successfully continue providing knowledge at all educational levels.

Given the pandemic, the performance of our secondary education students at the national college entrance exams was remarkable: 70% of students will continue their studies at Greek universities, while 10 students were accepted to renowned universities in the U.S. on full scholarships, including Brown, Brandeis, Davidson, Pomona, and WPI.

In June 2020, Perrotis College received the initial recognition by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) as a "candidate institution" meeting the conditions to proceed to final accreditation and the faculty and staff continue to work towards this direction.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors in both Greece and the U.S. we remain on track to complete the Comprehensive Campaign, getting closer to our goal of \$23 million by 2022.

The year 2020 has been a difficult year for all humanity. Faced with the most difficult challenge of the century, individually and collectively, we addressed it as an opportunity to reexamine, regroup, and reshape our personal lives and the future of our institution. We – students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors – who constitute the fabric of the institution's resilience, were faced with dramatic challenges that needed to be addressed with determination, innovative thinking, and sacrifices. And we, individually and collectively, succeeded in doing so.

Thank you for supporting our vision. It remains strong because of you.

Sincerely,  
Panos Kanellis, Ph.D.

President  
American Farm School & Perrotis College





# US Ambassador to Greece and Consul General of Thessaloniki visit the AFS

The AFS was happy to welcome to campus the U.S. Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Geoffrey R. Pyatt, and the new Consul General of the U.S. in Thessaloniki, Ms. Elizabeth K. Lee, shortly after her appointment in late August. Ms. Lee, who was introduced to the Institution for the first time, spent the morning learning about the School's history, its academic programs, the Educational Farm, and the important role the School has played over the years in the region, and in Greece.

"It's always a great pleasure to be back on the campus of the American Farm School, really one of the crown jewels of the American educational legacy here in Greece and especially in Northern Greece. I am especially pleased to be introducing our new Consul General in Thessaloniki Liz Lee [...]. One of the distinguishing aspects of the Farm School for me is the very strong relationship with the United States, [...], so it's wonderful to be back on campus even at this unusual time", Mr. Pyatt said in his statement. He later concluded: "I promise that on the part of both the Embassy and also our new Consul General, we will continue our strong record of partnership with everybody here on campus".



From left to right: Mr. Geoffrey R. Pyatt, Ms. Elizabeth K. Lee, Dr. Panos Kanellis



## Back to School...and home again...

The school year started on a hopeful note – students of all ages returned to campus in the fall with perhaps more excitement and anticipation than any other year. After endless months of distance learning, sheltering in place, and general upheaval, they were finally able to interact with classmates and teachers, albeit with carefully instated preventative measures, and the diligent enforcement of COVID-19 guidelines.

Only a few days into November, the country entered its second national lockdown, once again forcing the closure of all

non-essential businesses and schools. While these are unwelcome developments, further pressuring Greece's vulnerable economy, the School is doing everything it can to ensure the highest level of instruction, as well as a sense of community for our students and their families. Since last spring, the Institution has been fully prepared to quickly transition to online instruction at all levels, with teachers, faculty, staff, and families rising to the challenge.



# Perrotis College

## News

### Perrotis College and Krinos Olive Center in Pan-Mediterranean Collaboration

Faculty and staff from Perrotis College and the Krinos Olive Center have begun working with partner institutions from Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Spain and France on an exciting new initiative, ARTOLIO: Profitable and Sustainable artisanal olive oil industry in the Mediterranean. The project has received funding from ENI CBC Med, an EU funded program which promotes cooperation across the Mediterranean.

The project aims to assist small-scale olive producers whose businesses have become unprofitable due to small plots of land, limited manpower, and the impacts of globalization. The initiative will provide technical and business training in addition to hands-on support, to increase yield, improve quality, and produce resilient, profitable local enterprises. This will be accomplished by establishing Native Olive Regional Knowledge Centers (NOREKCs) in each region to assist local farmers, as well as a pan-Mediterranean network connecting the NOREKCs to share information and best practice. The collaborative project began in October 2020 and will run for 30 months.



### New Degree Programs at Perrotis College

Building on a reputation for offering practical and timely programs in fields related to agro-food and the environment, Perrotis College is expanding its portfolio of degrees by introducing several new majors.

The M.Sc. in Sustainable Agriculture & Management welcomed its first students in October 2020. The graduate program focuses on the development and utilization of sustainable crop production techniques to mitigate the effects of climate change and soil degradation, thereby increasing yields while decreasing negative impacts on the environment.

The undergraduate curriculum has been enhanced for the 2020-2021 academic year through the addition of two new degree programs, the B.Sc. in Environmental Science and the B.Sc. in Digital Marketing Management. The Environmental Science major focuses on the way in which past and current interactions between land, air, water and biological organisms influence environmental changes, and the impact these



interactions could have in the future. The Digital Marketing Management program aims to equip students with the skills needed to produce effective and engaging digital campaigns which complement traditional marketing efforts.

These new majors complement the existing degree programs, offering additional opportunities for students to gain knowledge and hone skills in fields of vital importance in today's changing world.



# Secondary Education News

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## Little Green Farmers

Little Green Farmers, a program undertaken in collaboration with AgroApps and co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funding, is a platform that promotes proper nutrition for children. By helping kids and their parents engage in the process of growing, preparing and understanding food, the Little Green Farmers aims to help families play an active role in providing healthy food choices for the entire family.

Via an interactive digital platform, users can upload photos and videos of their crops, compare plant growth, and exchange ideas and tips. The platform will serve as a “toolkit” which will include an AI-powered educational chatbot, providing information on cultivation methods, as well as the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables within a fun and playful digital environment. Data will be collected from soil condition monitoring sensors (IoT) among other sources, to generate appropriate cultivation advice.

This entertaining format will encourage kids to take an interest not only in proper nutrition, but in growing their own food, and caring for the environment – be it at home, at school, or in their neighborhoods.

As “little” ambassadors for environmental awareness and mindful entrepreneurship, the AFS Elementary School students and their families serve as the exclusive beta-testers in the pilot program for the digital guide.



## Cyclical & Bioeconomy at Haseotes Middle School

It's never too early to find your calling! The Career and Learning Academy program at Haseotes Middle School allows students to explore and learn about different professions early on, so that they can start to think about possible career paths in a way that is both fun and informative. Part of the program has them participate in projects that relate to the professional and business worlds.

This last cycle saw our Middle Schoolers focus on the areas of bioeconomy and cyclical economy, in a thematic unit based on the award-winning learning scenario, “Don't waste your waste! – Raising bioeconomy awareness”, created by Middle School teachers Olga Grigoriadou and Eleni Voukloutzi. In this sequence, our 8th graders created their own detergent using

natural products, while learning about the concept of bioeconomy, and how it integrates into various professions and businesses.

To enhance the learning experience, representatives of “Staramaki” (a social cooperative enterprise that manufactures straws from wheat) presented the company's vision and innovative production process to the class. They discussed with our students the principles of social, sharing and cyclical bioeconomy on which the company was founded. A rewarding experience for all involved, students are looking forward to the upcoming segments in the Career and Learning Academy program.

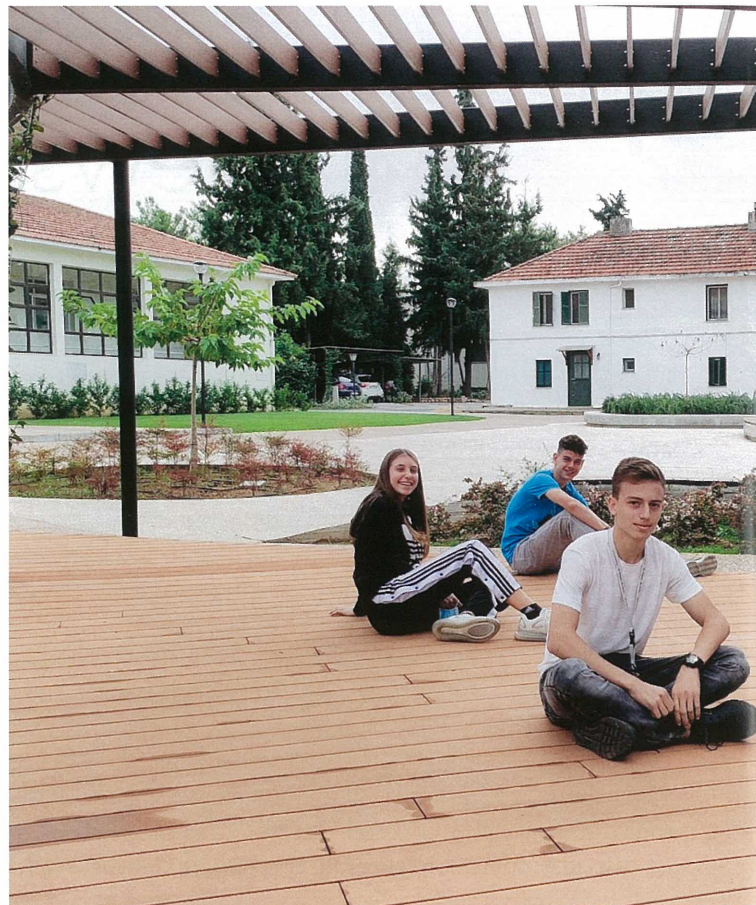


# Historic High School Gets a Facelift

If COVID-induced distance learning has confirmed one thing, it's that surroundings can play an important role in the learning process. Having positive spaces to explore, move, create and socialize is truly something our students and parents have come to appreciate all the more as we navigate these turbulent times.

Luckily, once in-person instruction resumes, our High School students will get to enjoy the fully redesigned quad connecting James and Massachusetts Halls – the two classroom buildings that house the General and Vocational High Schools. This space, made possible thanks to a generous gift from First Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and “Greek Summer” alumna Ms. Frances Manthos, had become a favorite meeting spot for students before the recent lockdown.

In keeping with the effort to promote a greener campus, the quad incorporates eco-friendly design elements in a manner that is both functional and fun. The new quad will soon be complemented by the renovation of Massachusetts Hall – a project sponsored by Trustee Stefanos Panteliadis and his brother Aristotelis Panteliadis in honor of their father, noted Greek businessman, esteemed Trustee emeritus, and AFS alumnus, Mr. Pantelis Panteliadis.



## High School Students Write Textbooks For The Elementary

After creating the educational website Edu4kids (<https://edu4kids.webador.com/v-dimotikou>), twelfth graders Konstantinos Andriotis and Daniel Kotorri decided to broaden their initiative by writing a series of educational workbooks with the help of fellow classmate Dimitris Graikos. The online platform was started in the hopes of helping younger students to stay engaged in the learning process during the pandemic by creating material that was both informative and entertaining. After receiving very positive feedback on the website, Andriotis, Kotorri and Graikos decided to expand the project to include workbooks, and were involved in every step of the process, from the selection of exercises and other learning materials, to the layout and final design of the book. To date they have produced textbooks for the 1st through 6th grades, and hope to continue to build their content library. To learn more about this project, follow them on Instagram at @edu4.kids.





## High Schoolers Get Published In Scientific Journal

At AFS, our students aren't just young researchers, they're published scientists! Staying true to the School's "learn-by-doing" principles, seven of our General High School students co-authored the paper "Study and creation of a seismograph for educational use" which was included in the peer reviewed *The Open Schools Journal for Open Science*. This is the first European peer reviewed scientific journal to accept original papers written by school-age students in the areas of science, engineering and technology. The idea is to take students through the entire process of what it means to be a scientist – from the production of scientific data, to the dissemination of findings through the rigorous process of publication.

Under the guidance of physics teacher Nikos Pegiopoulos, members of the Robotics Club Konstantinos Andriotis, Dimitris Graikos, Daniel Kotorri, Konstantina Agapitou, Maria Ioannou, Dimitris Christou and Pavlos Azilazian wrote the paper to accompany their national award-winning seismograph. "Our primary goal in making a seismograph was to inform the general public about earthquakes so that there is a better response when these occur and fewer accidents as a result", explained one of the participants.

Projects like this are part of the School's wider effort to engage students in the sciences in a creative, learner-centric way. Afternoon workshops in physics, chemistry and biology, science clubs for astronomy, robotics, entrepreneurship, the environment, etc. are just some of the many ways that students can explore scientific learning beyond the classroom.

## Study USA Adjusts To New Restrictions

With universities in both the USA and Greece operating distance or blended-learning programs, and travel restrictions in place, AFS graduates commencing their studies in the US have had to adapt. Of the 10 class of 2020 graduates accepted to US universities, only three were able to join their classes in person for the first semester, while the other seven remained in Greece and completed their work remotely. Among the students in Greece, four are anticipating that restrictions will be eased enough for them to join their programs in January. Those who made it to the US received a warm welcome from a network of 'mentors', AFS alumni, Trustees and friends, who greeted them at the airport, provided accommodation, and ensured that they arrived safely at their schools with care packages of some basic necessities in hand.

Current High School seniors in the Study USA program continue to apply to their chosen institutions as usual, and await decisions. We wish them the best of luck!



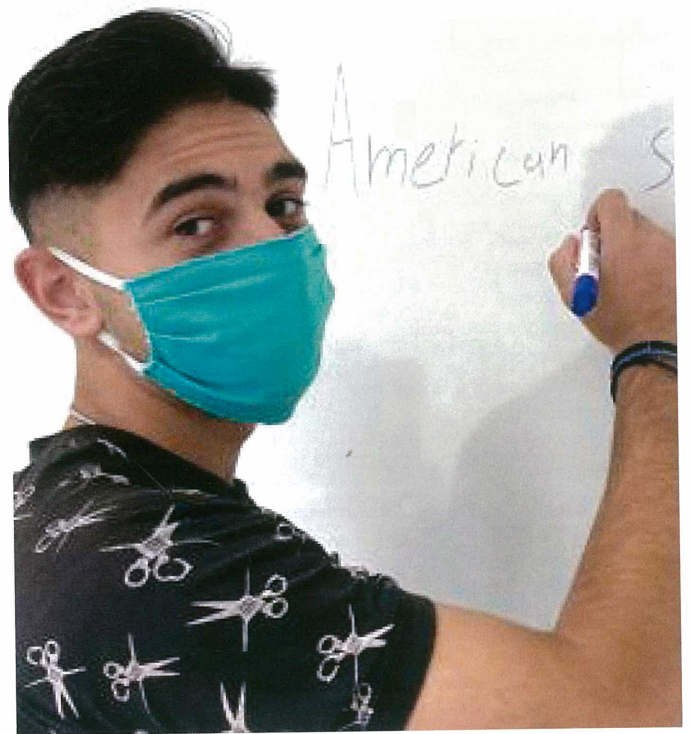
# Tawani Foundation Scholarship

## for a Student in the Vocational High School

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Sixteen year-old Vaggelis Theodorakis has dreamed of following a career in the police force or the military. This year, through a generous contribution from the Tawani Foundation (<https://www.tawanifoundation.org>), Vaggelis is in his first year of studies at the Vocational High School and making important strides towards fulfilling his goals.

Born in 2003 and raised in the very disadvantaged area of Dendropotomos in Thessaloniki, he is one of the many children to call the “Lighthouse of the World” (Φάρος του Κόσμου <http://farostoukosmou.com/en/home/>) their home, and Father Athenagoras not only a spiritual father, but guardian. “I have wanted to study here since my brother came to study at the AFS’ Haseotes Middle School. I am so happy that I have been given this incredible opportunity”. With contagious enthusiasm he goes on to describe the classrooms, the teachers, and the hands-on teaching style that make him feel special and always very lucky. Looking ahead, Vaggelis wants very much to give back – “I want to serve my country”, he states. “This has always been my dream, and Father Athenagoras always tells us to chase our dreams until we make them a reality...that’s exactly what I plan to do”.



Father Athenagoras, equally appreciative of the doors that are being opened for young Vaggelis, seconds that this is the best thing that could have happened to him at this point in his life, effusively thanking the Tawani Foundation for the role it has played in securing this opportunity.

This is not the first time Father Athenagoras has worked with the American Farm School to get young people from the Lighthouse of the World into programs that will help them to succeed professionally. For sixteen years now, he has striven to ensure that over 450 young students get an education.

The AFS thanks the Tawani Foundation, its founder COL(IL) Jennifer Pritzker, and Chairman of the Chicago Committee of Friends Maria Gebhard for their generous support of our program and its students.



# When The Love For A School Spans Generations

Panagiotis Kontos' story is the stuff of fairy tales. In 1948, young Panagiotis left his village of Pappados on the island of Lesbos (Mytilene), and literally set sail for the place which he would consider "home" from thereon after – The American Farm School. Though he was still very young – only 12 years old and the School's youngest student boarder - Panagiotis' father had contacted the School and explained that his son who had just finished the elementary school was an exceptionally gifted student, a boy who would surely thrive if given the opportunity to study in such a unique program. Panagiotis was not only accepted to the AFS, he was awarded a full scholarship to attend what would now be the equivalent of the Vocational High School. A bright, curious, and skillful young man, he stood out in spite of his young age and was loved by his teachers and the administration. In fact, he commanded such a presence that during the historic visit to campus of the royal couple of Greece, Panagiotis was chosen to welcome the King and Queen on behalf of the entire student body.



Panagiotis Kontos at the School a few years ago

Graduating from AFS in 1951, he returned to Lesbos where he taught for several years at the local high school. A restless spirit, he secured a Fulbright Scholarship in 1955 to continue his studies in the US, and, with only a small suitcase in tow, he boarded a ship to New York. Initially attending Goshen University in Indiana, he transferred shortly after to attend another institution in North Carolina, where he met classmate and future wife Martha Hasser. The couple soon married and had two children, George (1961) and Maria (1963). The young family moved to New York, where Panagiotis worked as a stockbroker and a teacher, only to return to North Carolina shortly after, forcing him to start his professional life up again from scratch. This time Panagiotis took a different approach, and putting to use the entrepreneurial and

technical skills he had acquired at the American Farm School, he created a vertical, automated unit for boiling, peeling, preserving and distributing eggs. This business venture went extremely well, ultimately seeing the distribution network serve hotels and restaurants across the entire country. In 1988, just before selling the business to investors interested in his patents, Panagiotis Kontos actively participated in the campaign efforts of US presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. Not one to rest on his laurels, Panagiotis went on to found a small restaurant chain with franchises in three states, while at the same time he took up teaching again. In 2017, he returned to Greece permanently, and settled in Thessaloniki with his wife, where he remained until his passing last April.



Giorgos Kontos and his wife Martha Hasser

To his last days, Panagiotis never stopped being thankful for his time at AFS, transmitting his love for the institution and his profound gratitude to his children. In a recent interview for the Alumni newsletter, George Kontos shared his own deep-seated appreciation: "The life of my family would be completely different if it wasn't for the School. My father acquired skills which served him his whole life. We sincerely thank you for everything you have done for our family. My sister and I grew up listening to our father talking about the American Farm School and what an amazing institution it is. The School provided him ethical principles and values that followed him throughout his life. It made him what we call 'a good person'".

Panagiotis Kontos passed down not only these stories to his children, but most importantly the values that made them so proud of the man that he was. To honor his memory, Martha, George, Maria, and his granddaughter Elizabeth have very generously lent their support to the School's historic scholarship program. Covering the tuition fees for the course of a student's high school career seems like the perfect tribute; a way, as George points out, "to offer a young man or woman the same opportunities that our father had when he came to study at the School".

A heartfelt thank you to the Kontos family, who we feel so fortunate to consider one of our own!



# Welcome New Trustees!

Joining the Board of Trustees in October 2020:



**Annie Maniati Efstathiou** is a lawyer and member of the Athens Bar Association, with a degree from Democritus University of Thrace. She also holds an M.Sc. in Shipping Trade and Finance from City University, London. After practicing maritime law in London and Piraeus, she transitioned to shipping finance and credit – first for I&F, a well-known private consulting firm in Piraeus, and then for Fortis Bank in Rotterdam. In 2004 she gave birth to her first daughter with husband Christos Efstathiou. As a mother of a child with special needs, she has become very actively engaged in organizations providing social support, medical care, and counseling to families with special needs children. Through her efforts she has helped to raise funds and awareness for this cause. Mrs. Efstathiou currently serves on the Board of Ionas, the Hadjipaterion Foundation, the Museum of Cycladic Art, and Axion Hellas. She is involved in the oversight of a small family farm, as well as the family shipping business with her husband. They live in Kifissia with their five children.



**Alexander Georgiadis** is President of Krinos Foods Canada Ltd., and affiliate companies. He has extensive experience in international trade, and his companies specialize in manufacturing, trading, importing, and distributing a wide variety of Mediterranean food products to the North American market. Krinos is the largest importer and distributor of premium Greek foods in Canada, and its products can be found in supermarkets, gourmet food shops, ethnic markets, hotels, restaurants, and top food service establishments. Over the years, Krinos has expanded with distribution networks and production facilities in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Edmonton. Georgiadis holds a BA in Political Science from IONA College, and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University, where he was elected President of his class. He has served on its Advisory Board since 2009. Georgiadis is a founding member and co-President of The Hellenic Initiative – Canada, a philanthropic organization that aims to provide direct crisis relief to the people of Greece. Georgiadis speaks Greek, English, French, and Spanish. He and his wife Evee Moscahlaidis have four children and a granddaughter, and divide their time between New York, Toronto, and Athens.



**Petros A. Levis** has over 25 years of senior executive level experience in the US food industry. He has led in the areas of consumer insight, product innovation, product development, quality control and manufacturing, and compliance and regulation at Pillsbury, General Mills, Danone North America (formerly WhiteWave Foods), Caliper Foods, and has also worked as a private consultant. Levis holds a Masters degree in Flavor Chemistry from Kansas State University, and PhD in Food Science with an emphasis on Sensory Studies from the same institution. He served on the Alumni Committee of the College of Food and Nutrition for four years, serving one year as president. Levis lives in Denver, Colorado with his wife Dr. Ann McCalley who works in higher education.



**Phoebe Legakis** is an Agronomist (M.Sc.), Vice President and C.E.O. of the company HELLAFARM S.A.. Born and raised in Athens, she holds a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Reading (U.K.) and a M.Sc. in Plant Protection and Pest Management from UC Davis. Since 1996, she's been working in the family business HELLAFARM S.A., one of the largest companies in Greece active in the sales of agricultural and veterinary supplies (plant protection products, specialty fertilizers, seeds and animal health products). She lives in Athens with her husband and their three children.

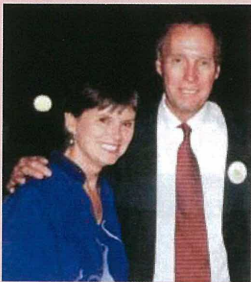


# Over 35 years of Friendship and 85 Years of the International Propeller Club of Piraeus

Since 1935, the International Propeller Club of Piraeus has been promoting commerce, goodwill and cultural ties between the US and Greece. One aspect of their work is providing assistance to worthy causes on a national scale; the American Farm School is proud to be one of the beneficiaries of their support for several years running. The Propeller Club's first gift to the School was in 1983, and their involvement has continued through today in the form of fundraising events and donations to the School's Scholarship Program. Thanks to their continued efforts, numerous deserving students have been able to experience the unique educational programs offered by the School. Celebrating their 85th anniversary this year, the International Propeller Club continues to be a devoted friend and champion of the AFS, for which we are truly grateful.

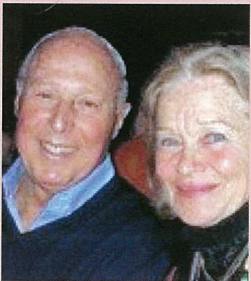


## In Loving Memory



**David Buck** Former AFS President

With great sadness we bid farewell to former AFS President David Buck, who passed away in October 2020. David was President from 1999 to 2004. A dedicated educator, David served at the International School of Prague, the International School of Curaçao, the International School of Vienna and the International School of Kuala Lumpur prior to his tenure at the American Farm School. Soon after his arrival at the School he stated, "when we first visited the campus, it became obvious to us that there was a contagious, proud atmosphere, one we had experienced at no other school". David will be remembered for his kindness and as a visionary leader by those who knew him. He will be greatly missed by the AFS community.



**Eriberto 'Scoci' Scocimara** AFS Family Member

It is with heavy hearts that we say goodbye to Eriberto 'Scoci' Scocimara, who passed away in November 2020. Scoci's wife, Manita, has been a Trustee of the School since 1992, but their support goes back 40 years, including the participation of their children and grandchildren on the Greek Summer program. A successful businessman with a passion for education, travel and history, and a true gentleman with a natural ability to put those around him at ease, he touched many lives. Scoci will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all of us at the American Farm School.



# Planned Giving

Planned Giving allows supporters of the American Farm School to integrate gifts into their overall financial, tax, and estate planning. A planned gift enables a donor to make a lasting impact by contributing significantly to the School and making a difference by helping many future generations of students.

## METAMORPHOSIS SOCIETY

The Metamorphosis Society recognizes and honors the generosity and foresight of those individuals who have made provisions in their estate that include the American Farm School and who have apprised the School of their intentions. The name “Metamorphosis” is chosen for its deeper connection to the School’s tradition of providing education that brings about positive change, or “metamorphosis,” in the individual.

*David Acker, Charlotte Armstrong, Peter Bien, Emily Carey, Mr. & Mrs. C.W. Carson Jr., Hugh Cullman, Marvin Fisber, Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Doolas, Mr. and Mrs. George Draper, Phillip G. and Mary Foote, Barbara K. Heming, Sarab Holland, Truda Jewett, Claire C. Katsanis, Edmund Keeley, Elizabeth (Tad) Lansdale, Susan Mees Longfield, Mary R. and Charles F. Lowrey, Daniel and Mayo Morgan, Nicholas Pissaris, Gail and Ruth Schoppert, Charles L. and Joan Thomas, Nancy Worcester*

## BEQUESTS

By including the American Farm School in their wills, the following individuals provided a final gift that will strengthen the School’s endowment or support other educational needs.

*Theodora Abrames, Charles Storrs Barrows III, James Michael Broomas, Gregor L. Calender, Esther Carbart, Jean S. Crosby, Maria Couvaras, Alexander Drapos, Angeline Ducas, Lula Ducas, Marvin Fisber, Elizabeth M. Godley, Alice L. Hansen, Darlene Keeley, Eve Curie Labouisse, Clara Nickolson, Eleanor McKay Norris, Mr. & Mrs. James G. Paterson, Sr., Andrew Ponaras, Aristides Sideropoulos, Mary Elizabeth Stewart, Barbara L. Wood, Winifred E. Weter*

## ESTATES & TRUSTS

By creating an estate or trust, the following individuals provide annual support to the American Farm School that will last past their lifetimes.

*Esther Carbart, Ernest Thomas Chepou, Philip and Hazel Constantinides, Lois Kerimis, Fred W. Kolb, Mary P. Gill, Henry T. Maijgren, Demosthenis Raptelis, Dean C. Zutes*

*For more information about joining the Metamorphosis Society and other Planned Giving opportunities, please contact Laura Sommers at [lsommers@amerfarm.org](mailto:lsommers@amerfarm.org).*



## Stay in touch!

If you want to receive news about the American Farm School & Perrotis College send us an email at [sower@afs.edu.gr](mailto:sower@afs.edu.gr) and we will add you to our electronic newsletter contact list.

### Get social!

**Facebook:** [AmericanFarmSchoolThessaloniki / Perrotiscollege](#)

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### American Farm School & Perrotis College

Marinou Antipa 54,  
Post Office Box 60097  
GR-57001 Thessaloniki, Greece  
Tel +30-2310-492-700  
Fax +30-2310-492-710

[info@afs.edu.gr](mailto:info@afs.edu.gr)

800 Third Avenue, Suite 2800  
New York, NY 10022  
Tel +1-212-463-8434  
Fax +1-212-292-3801  
[usoffice@amerfarm.org](mailto:usoffice@amerfarm.org)

[www.afs.edu.gr](http://www.afs.edu.gr)