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AHEPA Canada Honors Prime Minister Harper with Organization's Highest Award

The prime minister is the fourth one to receive AHEPA's Socrates Award

OTTAWA, ONT. (April 29, 2013) – AHEPA Canada awarded Prime Minister Stephen Harper with the prestigious AHEPA Socrates Award, Friday, April 26, 2013, at the magnificent Chateau Laurier Hotel.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is the fourth Canadian prime minister to receive the award, following: John Diefenbaker (1961), Brian Mulroney (1987), and Jean Chretien (1994).

Labour Minister Hon. Lisa Raitt accepted the award on behalf of Prime Minister Harper. She described how honoured she was to accept it on his behalf and how impressed she was with the history and works of AHEPA, not only in Canada, but throughout the world.

In a statement Prime Minister Harper wrote, "It is truly a privilege to receive the Socrates Award from AHEPA. While I regret that I am not able to accept this award in person, I am proud to be among the select few honoured for leadership and promotion of democracy."

AHEPA Supreme President Dr. John Grossomanides offered remarks. He presented an update on the philanthropic work AHEPA has achieved in recent support of Greece as it endures an unprecedented economic crisis. This includes donating more than \$140,000 to feed families in Athens, helping to secure the delivery of four containers of medical equipment and supplies to hospitals in Greece, one of which was the AHEPA Hospital in Thessaloniki. The value of the four medical supplies shipments was \$2.4 million.

In addition, AHEPA Canada President George Vassilas highlighted the charitable work AHEPA has accomplished in Canada since its establishment in Canada 85 years ago. These works include many legacy projects in cities across Canada as well as multiple large donations to Hellenic – Canadian institutions.

Dignitaries in attendance included: Ambassador of Greece to Canada Eleftherios Anghelopoulos, Senator Pana Merchant, Senator Leo Housakos, PC MP Costas Menegakis, Supreme Court Justice Andromarche Karakatsanis, Metropolitan Sotirios, Excharch of Canada for the Greek Orthodox Church, and Daughters of Penelope Canadian President Aspa Kostopoulos.

Event co-chairs Nina Antonakes, Nick Aroutzidis, Margaret Dritsas worked diligently to ensure the event was a success, added AHEPA Canadian President Vassilas.

Major sponsors for the Parliamentary Banquet were NA Engineering (Nick Aroutzidis) and Boardwalk Rental Communities (Sam, Melissa and Van Koliass).

"We are deeply grateful to our two major sponsors for their generous support without which we could not have had a successful event," said AHEPA Canadian President Vassilas.

AHEPA (American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association) is the world's largest association of people of Greek descent, with over 500 chapters spanning the globe. It works to promote the ancient Greek ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility and family and individual excellence.

The AHEPA Family is an umbrella organisation that encompasses four divisions: AHEPA, the men's division, the Daughters of Penelope, the women's division, the Sons of Pericles and the Maids of Athena, the youth divisions. The organisation was founded in the Atlanta, Georgia in 1922. Since then it has borne chapters across the world - Canada, Greece, Australia, New Zealand UK, Bulgaria, Germany, Turkey, France, Panama and Cyprus. For more information, please visit ahepacanada.org & ahepa.org.

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