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## Leadership 100 Membership at Record Level For 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference

### Leadership 100 Members Raise Over \$1 Million for Grants

On the eve of the Leadership 100 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Conference next week, February 5-8, in Puerto Rico, membership has increased to a record 814 with 64 new members joining in 2008 and 374 members fulfilling their pledges of \$100,000 each. An estimated 324 members and their guests will gather at The Ritz-Carlton San Juan Hotel in Carolina, Puerto Rico to celebrate 25 years of the Leadership 100 mission to advance Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America. In addition, despite the economic downturn, a special grant fund, the Leadership 100 Grant Fund, under the chairmanship of Charles H. Cotros, has raised \$1,060,350 in cash and pledges from Leadership 100 members to continue support of scholarships for seminarians studying for the priesthood at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and the critical ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Stephen G. Yeonas, Chairman of Leadership 100, said all the indicators look positive at the momentous historical occasion. He said conferees will gather primarily to honor the Founders who have contributed to the success of Leadership 100 by presenting them with the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence at the Grand Banquet, named for the visionary Archbishop Iakovos who initiated the organization, on Saturday night, February 7.

“Our Spiritual Leader, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, and our esteemed Metropolitan Athenagoras of Mexico and Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta will join us to commemorate the historic founding of the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund, Incorporated and our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Conference Chairpersons, George D. and Margo Behrakis and conference sponsors have given their untiring efforts and personal financial support to design this conference as a true celebration,” Yeonas said.

The Conference program will feature leading members and speakers from all fields of endeavor who exemplify the pursuit of excellence and the achievements of Greek Orthodox Americans, including a business panel discussion on important economic issues moderated by George D. Behrakis and including Charles H. Cotros and John G. Pappajohn at the Opening Breakfast and a Forum led by the legendary lawyer, Plato Cacheris, also a member of Leadership 100. A special Saturday Brunch and Spouse program will be addressed by the Emmy Award winning broadcast journalist, Deborah Norville, host of *Inside Edition* for more than a decade and the entertainment will be highlighted by the preeminent country soul singer, Ronnie Milsap, winner of seven Grammy Awards, as well as the Alpha Band, the best in Greek music.

New members and fulfilled members will receive special recognition and Leadership 100 Partners, the young professionals and future leaders, now numbering 74, will orient young adults at the conference to the purpose and goals of Leadership 100. There will also be a Welcome Reception on Thursday night and the Hellenic Festival on Friday night.

The hallmark of Leadership 100, since its founding in 1984 under the inspired leadership of Archbishop Iakovos, has been to define leadership as excellence and commitment to the Orthodox faith and the Hellenic heritage, exemplified by its outstanding Founders, Officers and Members and over 25 years of advancing Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America.

In honoring Leadership 100's Founding Members, Arthur C. Anton, Sr., Andrew A. Athens, George K. Chimples, Peter M. Dion, Michael Jaharis and, posthumously, Thomas A. Athens and George P. Kokalis, with the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence, Leadership 100 will recognize their vision and zeal as well as their dedication to service and determination to pass the torch of leadership to the next generation.

Previous recipients were Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, George J. Tenet, and Yanni in 2003; Melina Kanakaredes and John D. Negroponte in 2004; Senator Olympia J. Snowe in 2005; Dimitris L. Avramopoulos in 2006; Rudolph W. Giuliani in 2007; and Theodore Angelopoulos and Ambassador Gianna Angelopoulos Daskalaki in 2008.

As new generations arise, Leadership 100 is passing on its legacy of leadership as excellence, engaging Greek Orthodox American leaders from throughout the country to join a unique network of dedication and mutual respect that has an enormous impact on the Greek Orthodox Church, the Greek American Community and the Country.

From its initial 100 members at its historic beginning, Leadership 100 now counts in excess of 814 members toward a goal of 1,000 members prior to its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. More significantly, Leadership 100 has led the way over two and a half decades in demonstrating support for such programs Internet Ministries, Information Technologies, Parish Development and Interfaith Marriage and Family Ministry, while continuing support for Home Mission Parishes, Greek Education, Religious Education, Youth Ministry and Outreach and Evangelism, providing a \$12 million commitment for scholarships for seminarians, \$1 million to eliminate the student loan debts of clergy, and \$1 million to ease the financial burdens of retired clergy and presbyteres and clergy in need of assistance.

Leadership 100 has always adjusted to the realities of the world and the needs of the Church in good times and bad, giving start-up funding when Orthodox Christians banded together to provide international assistance, initiating International Orthodox Christian Charities, which was on hand for the crises in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the devastating fires in Greece. When missionaries were needed in Africa and Asia, Leadership 100 supported the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. When the tragedy of September 11 beset New York, Washington and Pennsylvania and traumatized all Americans, Leadership 100 established relief centers and raised funds for assistance to those who suffered loss and provided support for the rebuilding of the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas which was destroyed by the collapse of the World Trade Towers.

Total grants since the inception of Leadership 100 will exceed \$28 million in 2009. This is because Leadership 100, in response to the current economic crisis and its effect on its Endowment Fund, has raised the additional \$1,060,350 for the special Leadership 100 Grant Fund, which was formed by the Executive Committee in October of 2008 to continue its grant program until such time as the earnings from the Endowment Fund allow the organization to resume grant distributions.

Paulette Poulos, the Executive Director (Interim) of Leadership 100 said, “The story of Leadership 100 – its successes in membership, contributions and primarily in grants – its support of our Church, and its influence in our Community - is not complete without the untold story of how Greek Orthodox American men and women from all walks of life have come together to renew their faith and their commitment to the Church in America to insure that the legacy of their forbears is passed on to their children and their children’s children.”