

Welcome Speech on THANKSGIVING DINNER 2018
By President George C. Xiradakis
Ecali Club, November 21, 2018

- Your Excellency US Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic and Honorable President of Propeller Club of Piraeus **Mr. Geoffrey R. Pyatt** and Ms. Mary Pyatt
- Dear Deputy Chief of Mission **Mary-Kate Burnes**
- Dear President of the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce **Simos Anastassopoulos**
- Dear Economic Attaché **Chip Laitinen**
- Dear Commercial Counselor **Keith Silver**
- Dear Commander of the Hellenic Navy Fleet Logistics, Vice Admiral Nikos Kafetsis
- Dear Defense Attaché Captain Timothy Ketter
- Dear Representatives of American Farm School of Thessaloniki
- Presidents and Members of the Board of Different organizations
- Dear Members of American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce
- Dear Past Presidents and Past Governors of Propeller Club of Piraeus
- Dear Governors, Officials and Members of the International Propeller Club of United States of America – Port of Piraeus
- Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Propeller Club, Port of Piraeus I would like to welcome you and thank you for sharing with us this special evening that Propeller Club is jointly organizing with the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce.

The meaning of Thanksgiving has undergone numerous transitions. Starting as a harvest festival, it turned to be a gathering in unity, an expression of gratitude for survival, an extension of ourselves, giving to underprivileged people. **To my heart**, the true meaning of Thanksgiving focuses upon **empathy and relationship**; and by saying Empathy, for those who have Greek as a mother tongue, I mean «ενσυναίσθηση», to put yourself in other people's shoes.

The power of Empathy is a great gift of human beings. It is the key to the human relationship. It's a deep and heartbreaking emotion. I am pretty sure that all of us, gathered here tonight for this Thanksgiving dinner, have the ability to feel empathy for other people's misfortune. The destructive wildfires that have churned through Mati and California this year, killed hundreds of fellow citizens, leaving homeless and devastated people.

Such a devastation automatically gives us a good reason to be grateful for the most important element as human beings. Life! On another note, Empathy, shows the path to support each other, look after each other, and remember that once we're all together, we have the chance to overcome the trials of our time.

Allow me on behalf of the Propeller Club to express my gratitude to the American Embassy for its tireless support to our Club, to our friends from the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce for the fruitful cooperation and the entire maritime community for its strong backing which culminated to a unique Amver Awards Event reaching a record number of 1.200 participants and 95 sponsors that enable us to continue our historical mission.

Last but not least, a special thanks and gratitude to Mr. Simos Anastasopoulos for his efforts to bring together so many companies capping in a very successful Thessaloniki International Fair organization.

I wish you all, a wonderful Thanksgiving evening!