

Transcript from Thursday, June 2, 2022: Mayor Eric Adams Hosts Greek Community Reception

June 2, 2022

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. This is a real continuation of our relationship from the days of being the Brooklyn borough president. And I just want to thank the Greek community because when I was 13 points down in the poll, and no one thought it was possible, you stated “No matter what, Eric Adams is our next mayor, and we are going to stand with him.” And I will always stand with this community. Thank you so much. This is an important day as we are on the verge of your amazing parade. And we welcome you here to your house. We know that New York is the Athens of America. We have the largest Greek population outside of Greece right here in New York.

Mayor Adams: And I want to thank the foreign dignitaries that are here, our ambassadors and consul generals. And we know that New York has always had long, deep ties with your community. And I'm proud that we are the home of the largest population in the United States. We will be celebrating your important parade this weekend. I look forward to marching with you. I look forward to the great food. I look forward to the great culture, and I look forward to just being around those I consider to be friends for so long.

Mayor Adams: And your history is rich in this city, since arriving in 1844. And we should keep in mind that you have mastered the art of small businesses and professions. And when you think that in 1857, you had the first Greek restaurant that opened in this city. Today, now crossed all five boroughs, you have Greek taverns, diners, and restaurants throughout this entire city and our own Greek town in Astoria is often referred to as the largest Hellenic city in the world outside of Athens. For over 150 years, this community has been shaping our city in a real way. The Greek nation has given us everything: democracy, drama, food, philosophy, and Carvel ice cream, can't forget that.

Mayor Adams: So as we come back from two years of being engulfed with COVID, the pandemic has impacted all of us, but Greek history teaches us power, freedom, and

how we come together to survive. It teaches us that we must always dream and work towards a better tomorrow, and it shows us how to get stuff done. And before I present the certificates, I really want to thank our partners here from EmblemHealth, who continue, if one of our representatives here just raise your hand, they continue to support all of the communities in this city. And it's crucial that we give the support that's needed. And here's my final message to you that I've been stating for the last three weeks, let's do something. Let's dust off our copies of the Pledge of Allegiance, and let's reread it to our children. This is a great country, America.

Mayor Adams: And I believe that we heard the words so often that we don't realize the significance of it as we hear the impact of what's happening across the globe. When I heard of the poll that stated 50-something percent of Americans would not defend a country if we are invaded by foreign invaders, that is not who we are. We need to reignite the patriotism of this country and what it has done for all of us.

Mayor Adams: And no matter who we are, we've come from somewhere to these shores and in states that you don't have to abandon your homeland to your new adopted home, only in America. And so I do still pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. I still pledge that.

[Applause]

Mayor: And I ask us all to support our police, support our police. The prerequisite to prosperity is public safety and justice. And I hear that it— All the things people are doing for those who break the law. How about us start doing things for people who follow the law? How about doing that? How about standing up for people who walk into a drugstore and pay for the things they need and not steal them and walk out?

Mayor Adams: How about standing up for the people who are the victims of violence and gun violence and ensure that they get the support they deserve? How about supporting the people who swipe their Metrocards and pay their fare and not jump over the turnstyle, but they say that they all have the right to do what is right? So how about a different energy? How about looking out for the good guys? How about looking out for the everyday good people of the city that are doing the right thing? We've done a lot for people who are doing the wrong things. I want to be a mayor that's there for those who are doing the right thing. And it starts by rightfully supporting those who wear the blue uniform for us every day. Let's support our police. And so before we give the awards, I

want to bring on two of our colleagues in government to allow them to say a few words. Their words may be kind, but remember, they're not Greek like me. So I want to bring on my good friend from Staten Island, Councilman Borelli.

[...]

Mayor Adams: And now Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

[...]

Mayor Adams: So we want to get to the honorees, but again, we want to thank His Eminence Elpidophoros for all of his blessings and marching with me during difficult times of just, a real spiritual leader. And we truly thank you for blessing us here with your presence. So our first honoree that we want to lift up, just my good friend, Very Reverend Eugene Pappas. A few words, Reverend. Yes, yes. You know you can't go anywhere without saying a few words.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Seven years ago when I met the Father, he said, "You're going to be mayor. You're going to be mayor." And he has not left my side for all this time. I cannot thank you enough.

Mayor Adams: And the next honoree is Jimmy Kokotas. I'm going to say a few words, Jimmy. Long time friend, we've been together for how many years, Jimmy? I put on a lot of weight from his restaurant out on Coney Island.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Thank you. And the next honoree is Stella Pantelidis. She could not make it. So my good friend, Zoe, is here to accept it on her behalf. Zoe? Say a few words on behalf of her, Zoe.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Okay. My team, we got one more.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Who's here from the parade, the Hellenic parade. Just raise your hand. Okay. We have one more honoree and then we can get to some food. We want to do a special honoree to Gus Sirakis from the Department of Building, development of technical affairs at the Department of Building, an amazing leader. All he has done and continue to do for our city, a dedicated public servant. Come on, Gus. So on behalf of 8.8 million New Yorkers, today, June 2nd, is Gus Sirakis Day.

Gus Sirakis, Acting Commissioner, Department of Buildings: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you everyone. I want to, of course, thank our mayor for giving me this great honor. This is both a surprise and a wonderful testament to all the work that the people at DOB do. I'd like to also thank my family, my wife, Eleny, my son, Michael, and my daughter, Christina, and everybody at home who puts up with me and all the time I spend away from them doing great things. And of course I'd like to thank Commissioner Eric Ulrich and Commissioner Fred Kreizman for their support in getting this wonderful award and wonderful recognition. This is truly humbling. Thank you. Ζίτο i Elláda.

Mayor Adams: Oh, we forgot one of our last honorees, bear with me. And Johanna is going to accept on her behalf. Stellios Taketzis. Joanna, if you could say a few words.

[...]

Mayor Adams: That's right. That's right.

[...]

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Thank you all. Enjoy the food and the rest of the evening. Appreciate you. See you at the parade.