

**LEAD SPONSOR**

**By Christopher J. Wiernicki, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, ABS**

**Delivered by Kirsi Tikka, President and Chief Operating Officer, ABS Europe Division**

Thank you Nigel for the kind introduction and I congratulate you, Harry Fafalios and the Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee on acknowledging the contribution of London to the growth of the Greek fleet in this way.

Good evening everyone.

It is an honor for ABS to be associated with such a prestigious event, and by association with the eighteen illustrious individuals already elected to the Greek Shipping Hall of Fame and the two pioneers – Pericles Callimanopoulos and Alexander Tsavliris - who are joining them tonight.

It was Aristotle who noted that “You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor.”

We are gathered here to pay tribute to all these men whose legacy is one of great commercial courage yet who conducted their affairs with honor and integrity - men who exemplified the words of Aristotle.

We are also recognizing the unique relationship that exists between the Greek maritime community and London, for so long the center of global maritime commerce. It is a relationship that has been mutually beneficial and should, if common sense prevails, continue for generations to come.

The involvement of ABS within the amazing growth of the modern Greek fleet can be traced back to the immediate post World War II period. It was then that, on very favorable terms, the US government made available excess Liberty ship tonnage to Greek owners whose fleets had been devastated supporting the Allied cause.

The “Blessed 100”, as they came to be known, were all ABS class and we are grateful for the continued support that we have received from successive generations of Greek owners, including those in the Hall of Fame, over the intervening years.

Aristotle also counselled that “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit”. Like the members of the Greek Shipping Hall of Fame, ABS is committed to the pursuit of excellence and we pledge all our resources to continuing to assist our courageous Greek clients in their ongoing endeavors.

I particularly congratulate the families of tonight’s honorees on the manner in which you have furthered your forefathers’ dreams and wish every member of the Greek maritime community “kali tychi”. (Good fortune).

Thank you all.