

WELCOME SPEECH

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Chairman, Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee

Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to stand before you today and introduce the Greek Shipping Hall of Fame London Dinner.

The significance being twofold in that London is still the epicentre of global shipping and the Greek shipping industry itself has been greatly aided by its position in London over the last century.

The Members of the Greek Shipping Hall of Fame are a diverse group of individuals, who through their hard work, intelligence, integrity and far-sightedness have taken the industry as a whole to a much higher level.

Their dream was not just to run a large maritime enterprise but to contribute to Greece's increased role as a trading nation and to use their talents and innovation in every sector of the maritime world and to be the best at it.

Amongst the various Inductees are those who introduced new ship types, new forms of shipping finance, refining and upgrading standard ships, and creating a much improved environment for those who served at sea.

Some of the Inductees were not only successful private business people but also played a prominent role in the public arena of Greek shipping, on a national and international level. These people gave of themselves to ensure that the voice of Greek shipping was heard at the highest levels and in doing so burnished the image of an industry that started so humbly yet reached the point where today the Hellenic shipping industry is among the top 2 or 3 in the world.

Many of the Greek Shipping Hall of Fame Inductees did not confine their commercial talents to shipping alone and in fact achieved great success in many different forms of business.

Most of all, in Greek shipping it is not just important what you create but what you leave behind. Apart from the families that wish to continue this great heritage there are also a large number of institutions that have been created by the Inductees that have contributed enormously to Greece and internationally in the medical, cultural, educational and social fields.

With one of the most modern fleets spanning virtually every sector, there is no place on the globe where a Greek ship is not performing its role of facilitating world trade.

Finally I would like to mention the most unsung member of Greek shipping's hall of fame - the seafarer. Without the hardworking, sacrifice and selfless contribution of the Greek seafarer who would sometimes spend months, even years away from his family, Greek shipping would not be in the position that it is today.

The ability of Greece to still provide a satisfactory maritime education system means that many future generations of shipowners and shipping decision makers will be in a position to continue the centuries old tradition of connecting Greece with maritime transport and making the dream of many young Greeks come true; that of seeing the blue sky and white waves of the Greek flag fluttering over the stern and their company ensign firmly painted to the funnel.