

King's Colourful History

Papandreou had roots in King



Those of us who follow news of financial problems in Greece, know that George Papandreou was prime minister of Greece from 2009 until resigning in 2011. What many of us are not aware of is that George graduated from King City Secondary School in 1970.

George was born in 1952 in Minnesota, where his father Andreas Papandreou lectured at the University of Minnesota after exile from Greece in 1938 by the fascist Metaxas dictatorship for allegedly supporting Trotskyism.

In 1968, after teaching at several U.S. universities, his father accepted a post at York University; the family moved to King Township and George, along with his sister and two brothers, enrolled as a student at King City Secondary School from which he graduated in 1970.

A National Post article by Adrian Humphreys described George as "... darkly handsome and brooding under a thick mop of black hair." He was a popular student, perhaps in part because his family owned a small winery.

In 2005, he was inducted into the school's "case of distinction," a display featuring some of its illustrious alumni. In his biography submitted at that time, he referred to the winery, saying that "... although the wine didn't taste very good, his classmates didn't mind it a bit!" He described his high school friends as being "mainly political activists and immigrants."

After returning to Greece in 1974, his father became prime minister in 1981. That year George entered politics as a member of parliament, and after an active career as President of Socialist International and leader of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, George became prime minister himself, stepping down after two years to allow a unity government to deal with the Greek debt crisis.

Many residents of King Township have had notable careers, but not many have had the global impact of George Papandreou.

Courtesy of King Township Historical Society