

The MGSA salutes the following scholars who, as MGSA Presidents and Executive Directors, have supported its work and advanced its mission for many years. Please advise us if you observe any errors or omissions.

(list 1968-2017 compiled by Despina Lalaki, Leonidas Karakatsanis, and Gonda Van Steen, with the generous assistance of John Iatrides and Victor Papacosma)

List of MGSA Presidents

1968-69	Executive Committee, Chair Edmund Keeley
1970	Edmund Keeley
1971-73	Edmund Keeley
1974-76	John A. Petropulos, deceased (1929-1999)
1977-79	A. Lily Macrakis
1980-82	Edmund Keeley
1983-85	Peter Bien
1986-88	P. Nikiforos Diamandouros
1988-90	Van Coufoudakis
1991-92	Michael Herzfeld
1993-95	Adamantia Pollis, deceased (1923-2015)
1995-97	John Chioles
1997-99	Van Coufoudakis
2000-02	Peter Bien
2003-05	Thomas Gallant
2006-08	Stathis Gourgouris
2009-11	Stathis Gourgouris
2011-14	Gonda Van Steen
2014-17	Neovi Karakatsanis
2017-	

List of MGSA Executive Directors

1980-2004	John Iatrides
2004-2014	S. Victor Papacosma
2014-	Gonda Van Steen

Edmund Keeley, MGSA Executive Committee Chair, 1968-70, President 1971-73, 1980-82

My first term as president began some four years after the MGSA was created by a group of fewer than ten teacher-scholars specializing in various non-Greek disciplines who had gathered at the University of Maryland to explore the possibility of working together first of all to organize a symposium devoted to their shared interest in Modern Greek language, literature, history, and politics, and then to explore the feasibility of establishing an association for the purpose of promoting teaching and research in Modern Greek Studies in the United States. The story of this enterprise, along with the first years of the MGSA, is told in illuminating detail by Peter Bien as the Introduction to *Modern Greek Writers* (Princeton, 1972), and I encourage those interested in the history of the MGSA to begin there, where the vision of the new association, as it inspired the founders and me during my two early terms as president, is precisely delineated.

The major challenges we had to face after the election of a governing board and the approval of a constitution were identifying and recruiting new members, establishing biennial symposia, creating a scholarly journal, learning to cope with a discipline that had no steady source for funds other than membership dues and no secure academic home. That the membership grew to some hundreds over the years, that academic offerings in Modern Greek Studies have blossomed across the country, that a journal of high quality continues to exist, that the MGSA is now a fully established, enterprising, and generally prosperous association of devoted members seems to this founding member not only an extraordinary gift of the gods, but more important, one that honors the vitality of those who go on being faithful to the intellectual value and pleasure of the subjects that they continue to promote.



John A. Petropulos (1929-1999), MGSA President 1974-76 (information derived from his obituary)



Petropulos served as MGSA president in the mid-1970s. He was the E. Dwight Salmon Professor of History and Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst College, where he spent 41 years teaching. Petropulos specialized in early modern and modern Balkan and Middle Eastern history. He is best known for his book *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843* (1968), which was translated into Greek. He also co-edited *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830): Continuity and Change* (1976). Petropulos served the MGSA as president, vice-president, and as a member of the Executive

Board. He was active as well in the American Historical Association, chairing panels on refugees, resistance movements, and fascism in modern Europe. Members of the MGSA remember Petropulos as a generous colleague and friend, who was also an elegant practitioner of traditional Greek dancing.

Lily Macrakis, MGSA President 1977-79

Macrakis served as the first female MGSA president in the late 1970s. Under her watch, the MGSA organized one of its most pioneering symposia: the 1978 Symposium entitled “Greece in the 1940s,” hosted by The American University in Washington, DC. Papers presented at this forum, which saw an exceptionally high attendance rate, were subsequently edited and published by John O. Iatrides in *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (1981; also published in Greek with Themelio, 1984). A request from Greece to rerun the 1978 Symposium there could, however, not be granted. The MGSA office had moved to the seat of the President but, by the end of the three-year term,



the association was looking for a more permanent office space and home base. This is how the office of the MGSA Executive Director was created, and John O. Iatrides was elected to be the first holder of the position. MGSA membership reached an all-time high and surpassed the 500 mark.

Peter Bien, MGSA President 1983–85, 2000–02

My first presidency (1983-85) was driven by the rule that a scholarly society needs to issue its own scholarly journal. Since 1975, the MGSA had been collaborating with the Byzantinists to publish *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, under the editorship of Donald Nicol. By the early 1980s, however, we had a sufficiently strong and diverse academic membership to create our own journal. Thus *BMGS* continued and the MGSA’s new *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* commenced. Volume 1, number 1 (May 1983), edited by Lily Macrakis and Peter Allen, printed papers from the Association’s 1980 Symposium (“Women and Men in Greece: A Society in Transition”). Meanwhile, we had convinced William H. McNeill to become editor-in-chief of the new journal assisted by an editorial board consisting of Diskin Clay, Richard Clogg, Ernestine Friedl, John Iatrides, Kostas Kazazis, Edmund Keeley, John Petropulos, George Savidis, Speros Vryonis, and myself. Volume 1, number 2 (October 1983) was the initial result.



By the time of my second presidency (2000-02), the MGSA was already well established and had stabilized its income streams (via membership dues, grants, etc.). On May 19, 2000 I was able to present to the Greek Ambassador the Modern Greek Bibliography that Stratos Constantinidis had produced. In October 2001 we convened our biennial Symposium at Georgetown University despite the attacks of 9/11/01. Guests Rhea Galanaki and Thanasis Valtinos read from their work, Constantine Tsoucalas conveyed his hopes that the 2004 Olympics in Athens would strengthen international peace-making efforts, and Deborah Tannen spoke to us at the

banquet on how men's speech differs from women's. On February 22, 2003 Tom Gallant was elected the next MGSA president.

Michael Herzfeld, MGSA President 1991-92

My tenure was short and came at a challenging time full of both promise and premonition. Greece was passing through a period of combined optimism about the country's role in Europe and residual anxieties – often expressed as nationalism in both politics and scholarship – about its place in world affairs. The optimism was often misleadingly fueled by the more extreme forms of nationalism, posing risks, but also opportunities, for the ethical and intellectual integrity of scholarly discourse. For social scientists and humanists alike, this meant that intellectually the field urgently required a more comparative framing, while administratively the MGSA needed to create appropriate defenses against unscholarly interventions. These goals were well-served by the growing centrality of the social sciences to the field, a gradual shift, already in progress, that did not displace the humanities but

worked cooperatively with those disciplines toward a more balanced grounding of new research on Greece – a grounding that was especially evident in the increasing robustness of the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. In spite of some obvious setbacks at that time, today, at a new time of crisis, the field exhibits abundant evidence of the benefits it derived from the conceptual diversity and collegial interaction thus engendered.



Adamantia Pollis (1923-2015), MGSA President 1993-95 (information derived from her obituary)

Pollis served as the second female MGSA president in the mid-1990s. An early rebel armed with a PhD in Political Science from The Johns Hopkins University, Pollis broke the mold for young Greek American women and committed herself to doing what she could to promote social justice and gender equality. As a teacher, researcher, and activist, Pollis pursued knowledge and social change, and she became an internationally recognized scholar of Human Rights and Modern Greek Politics. Throughout a distinguished teaching career at Hunter College and at the New School for Social Research, Pollis mentored numerous students and engaged in significant collaborative research with many of them. A notable project was the weekly radio program on New York City's WEVD - Free Voice of Greece - a key component of the international movement that toppled the Greek military junta in 1974.

Thomas Gallant, MGSA President 2003-2005

When I became president of the MGSA, I had three major issues that I wanted to address: 1) reforms of the administration; 2) amending the Constitution; 3) revising the Association's finances.

I wanted the Executive Board to review and revise where necessary our administrative practices to make them more efficient and to ensure that they were in compliance with the relevant rules and regulations that govern non-profit corporations, such as the MGSA. On more than one occasion, for example, boards had passed new resolutions that duplicated or even contradicted existing ones. The problem was that we did not have a Corporate Resolutions Book (CRB), as is required by law. We undertook, therefore, to compile and review all of the resolutions that had been passed by previous boards. Another issue, however, was that the resolutions had not been properly processed. Before being placed into the CRB they were to have been embossed with the Association's seal, but we did not have a seal. So, we had one made and, in a series of meetings, we dealt with the discrepancies and duplications and compiled the revalidated resolutions into a CRB. Other actions were then undertaken to ensure that the Association operated in full conformity with the relevant regulations, which is now the case. The final element in the administrative reforms was to amend the Constitution in light of the reforms.

The Association's finances were the third area that I concentrated on during my presidency. For most of its history, the MGSA operated on a modest budget, and perennially, income barely managed to cover its barebones expenditures. The lack of funding put severe limitations on the Association's activities. The problem was that we had only one income stream: members' dues. Other possible sources of funds were not being utilized. Unlike comparable non-profit



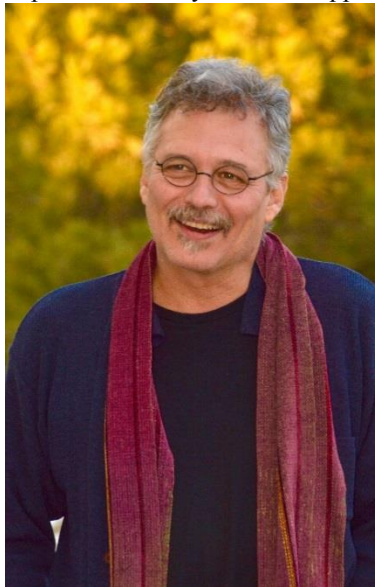
organizations, we did not draw any funds from the earned income of our endowment. Through a series of reforms, we revised this arrangement, so that now a percentage of the endowment's income is transferred to cover operating expenses. Another source of untapped income was the *Journal*. Each year the *Journal* earns more than it costs to produce it. The arrangement with the press was that they kept the surpluses in reserve in case there was a cost overrun. By the time I became president, this nest egg was a sizeable sum. So, we negotiated a new deal. Except for a small amount, the surplus was transferred to the Association, as is the annual income from the *Journal*.

I believe that the current state of the Association is healthy. The *Journal* continues to provide our membership with an excellent publication venue for their scholarship and maintains its status as the field's flagship periodical. The symposium is still a major event. Moreover, the new initiatives that recent boards have undertaken have multiplied and diversified the Association's activities. Especially laudable have been the efforts to support graduate students and junior faculty. These types of initiatives should continue. But in these uncertain times, we should increase our efforts to build stronger relationships with other professional associations and to expand the topical and geographical scope of what constitutes Modern Greek Studies.

Stathis Gourgouris, MGSA President 2006-2011

My aspiration when I became MGSA president was essentially threefold: 1) To actualize the inherent interdisciplinary capacities of the membership to their full potential and open up the Association to scholarly endeavors contiguous to the field. As a result, we had a number of high profile interactions with non-Modern Greek Studies scholars whose work was catalytic in our field. 2) To render the logistical processes of the MGSA less bureaucratic and more efficient, including the reconceptualization of the *Journal* (JMGS) and its opening toward new media technologies which, by now, have become fully integrated. Various initiatives, including the MGSA Innovative Initiatives Fund, were created with this in mind. It is fair to add that, during this time, the MGSA enjoyed exceedingly robust financial capacity, the subsequent conditions of which are not currently known to me. 3) To bring the MGSA closer to colleagues in Greece and facilitate scholarly collaboration outside North America. This led to the extensive presence of young Greek scholars at our symposia and in the *JMGS* that we enjoy today.

An idea to hold a MGSA Symposium in Athens never materialized, but I still hope that someday this will happen.



All organizations create obstacles for themselves from sheer residual habitus. It is always important for every incoming administration to reconsider inlaid patterns, to revise and improve. My tenure as president came at a crucial transition point, when a number of foundational members of the MGSA retired from long-term service on the Executive Board. Moreover, in my first term of service, for structural reasons that were since rectified, the entire Board was replaced and most incoming members had no prior experience. We saw this as an opportunity to implement more streamlined collaborative working methods, and I was fortunate to be surrounded by a great number of eager and hardworking colleagues, chief

among them the new Executive Director at the time, Victor Papacosma, who steered us all with a careful (and caring) impartial hand.

The basic parameters of my vision for the MGSA remain the same: pursuing broader interdisciplinarity and internationalization; strengthening and facilitating the conditions for graduate students and younger scholars in the field to collaborate beyond their institutions; fending off bureaucratic tendencies in favor of transparent decision-making; seeking out investment in daring and innovative initiatives.

Gonda Van Steen, MGSA President 2011-mid-2014

Van Steen, a native of Flanders, Belgium, served the MGSA as its third female president from her home base in Gainesville, at the University of Florida, where she holds the position of Cassas Chair in Greek Studies. She shares: “Fortunately, I had quite a bit of MGSA committee experience already when I came on board as the 12th MGSA president—and I needed it! In 2011, the stark dimensions of the Greek economic crisis were becoming increasingly visible. I set out with the vision and the (stubborn, some might

say) determination to assure that the MGSA finances would remain stable and that the symposium-related expenses, especially, would be contained. From that pragmatic but necessary plan grew a set of symposium guidelines that have thus far secured high-quality but cost-effective symposia. Our biennial symposia have also seen a wider geographical distribution across the United States and Canada, and they have enjoyed a broader diversity across faculty organizers and campus profiles (Symposium 2013: Bloomington, Indiana, at Indiana University, hosted by Frank Hess with Program Committee Chair Artemis Leontis, followed by the preparations for Symposium 2015: Atlanta, Georgia, at Georgia State University, hosted by Louis Ruprecht, Jr., with PC Chair Sakis Gekas). During my presidency, the stellar Executive Board, with whom I had the pleasure and the honor of serving, also implemented the shift to a new electronic format of our *MGSA Bulletin*, to a new editorial team for the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, and to a new location of the MGSA Executive Director’s office (from Maine to Florida). The successful realization of pioneering MGSA Greek Language Pedagogy Workshops must be entirely credited to the very capable and inspiring members of the workshops’ steering committees and the MGSA Undergraduate Studies Committees. My wish is for the MGSA to stay academically strong, financially sound, and united through testing times. I hope to personally contribute to that vision as the association’s current Executive Director (2014-).”



Neovi Karakatsanis, MGSA President mid-2014-2017

As current president, I am privileged to have inherited an Association that is financially sound, intellectually vibrant, and professionally administered. Due to the dedication of my predecessors—past presidents and other officers, executive directors, and countless executive board members—the Association is stronger today than ever. Thanks to their efforts, graduate

students presenting at our symposia today are supported financially through graduate student grants, making it possible for them to defer some travel expenses. The *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, many decades ago in search of a publishing home, is today the premier journal in the field and praised as “magnificent” by *Choice* magazine. Countless such accomplishments could be enumerated—all of them the work of MGSA members who have worked individually and collectively for fifty years to sustain the field and its professional home, the MGSA. To all of these people—especially the members of the current Executive Board—I say thank you.

Under my presidency, the Modern Greek Language Pedagogy Workshop was formalized as a standing workshop to be supported financially on a biennial basis, allowing teachers of Greek language to attend for free. A major “behind-the-scenes” activity has been the compilation and editing of hundreds, if not thousands, of Executive Board resolutions and the identification and cataloguing of those still active—a massive task that will make the operation of future Executive Boards more efficient. The current Board also amended the MGSA Constitution to allow for electronic voting,



greatly reducing mailing costs, increasing voter turnout, and finally bringing us into the 21st century! The board also finalized and approved the Symposia Guidelines that had been drafted under Executive Director Gonda Van Steen’s term as President, and it began (but has not yet completed) the drafting of a similar set of guidelines for future editors of the *Journal*. Finally, in addition to overseeing two Symposia (2015 and 2017), the current Board is also

planning to launch the MGSA’s first ever endowment campaign in 2017. Through such efforts, I have come to deeply appreciate all who have come before me, realizing that if future generations are to benefit from an equally vibrant and financially sound Association, all of us must do as our predecessors, making it our mission, our calling, to sustain and nurture this Association that has been bequeathed to us. My hope is that you will join me in that mission.

Executive Directors

John O. Iatrides, Executive Director 1980-2004

Iatrides shares: my involvement in MGSA work began at the 1971 symposium (Harvard) when I helped persuade then President Edmund Keeley that the association’s fields of interest, originally limited to literature, language, and history, be expanded to include the social sciences. In 1979, at



photo credit: April 2012
The Athens Review of Books

the end of Lily Macrakis’ presidency, the MGSA office she had established at Cambridge was closed. As vice-president, I offered to create a new office at my university, Southern Connecticut State University, where I had the institutional support needed to rebuild and expand the functions of the Cambridge facility. My offer was accepted, and I served as Executive Director during 1980-2004 from the MGSA’s new home base in New Haven, Connecticut.

In addition to providing secretarial support to the officers and Executive Board, the New Haven office handled the association’s dues collection, banking, membership drives, mailings, fundraising, support for symposia, and contacts with authorities and institutions in Greece and elsewhere. It produced the *MGSA Bulletin* (started by Julia Loomis and continued by Macrakis), a biannual publication recording the association’s activities and those of Modern Greek Studies programs in North America. I assisted President Peter Bien in negotiations for launching the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* and in securing William H. McNeill as its first editor. I also facilitated the production of two major MGSA publications: Dia Philippides’ *CENSUS of Modern Greek Literature* (1990), and Stratos Constantinidis’ *Greece in Modern Times: An Annotated Bibliography of Works Published in English in Twenty-two Academic Disciplines during the Twentieth Century* (2000). I was actively involved in the 1978 MGSA Symposium (Washington DC), and edited its papers (*Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis*), a seminal scholarly study of the Greek civil war.

As a pragmatist, I considered my “mission” to be to help the association become a broad-based scholarly community combining professionalism and cordiality and exploring all aspects of the Greek experience. I would like to believe that in a modest way that mission was reasonably successful.

S. Victor Papacosma, Executive Director 2004-2014

I had the good fortune to assume the position of Executive Director following the retirement of John O. Iatrides, who had contributed so much over more than two decades to solidify MGSA’s maturing foundations and expanding mission. My special challenge, I believed, was to maintain MGSA in this positive trajectory. In attempting to contribute to such a process, I benefited from the visionary leadership, commitment, and focused efforts of MGSA officers and Executive Board members. It was their work and determination that produced significant change and advances, and a partial list follows.



MGSA strengthened one dimension of its scholarly identity with the enhanced involvement of the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* in Project Muse, coordinated by The Johns Hopkins University Press. Readers around the world could now have electronic access to current and past issues of *JMGS*. JHUP also undertook the tasks of online membership and symposium registrations, which made MGSA housekeeping operations more efficient, and, importantly, facilitated easier payments by

overseas colleagues. A commitment to improve MGSA’s website and broaden its online scholarly resources produced major results reflecting MGSA’s increased intellectual diversity. A further advance came with the decision to call for electronic submission of symposium abstracts for the blind review evaluation and selection process. MGSA also established a Fund for Innovative Initiatives in support of conferences, workshops, and related activities to promote Modern Greek Studies (up to five grants of \$500 can be awarded annually on a competitive basis). The biennial symposia continue to play a preeminent role in MGSA’s mission, drawing participants from an increasing number of countries. To insure that younger scholars could attend

symposia, MGSA began providing financial support to help subsidize expenses for graduate students to deliver papers.

My ultimate satisfaction came from observing and participating in a complementary, if not seamless, overlapping of leadership and vision from older and younger generations. MGSA has become a more diverse organization in disciplinary and human terms, evolving from its earlier identity as a North American-based academic association into one with global membership and impact.



November 6, 1999: Princeton University: MGSA Endowment Committee, Past Presidents and Executive Director

Seated from left: Van Coufoudakis, Adamantia Pollis, John Chioles, Edmund Keeley, Peter Bien

Standing from left: John O. Iatrides, Lily Macrakis, Nikiforos Diamandouros (Courtesy of John O. Iatrides)