



Socrates School Centennial Celebration Committee | 1908 – 2008

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Greek School in the United States Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Socrates School's Centennial Ball to be held on September 27th at Hyatt Regency O'Hare

DEERFIELD, Illinois, August 10, 2008 – The year 2008 marks a historic milestone for Chicago's Greek community. It proudly celebrates the 100th anniversary of Socrates School, the nation's first full time Greek day school. This milestone will be formally celebrated on September 27, when the Socrates School Centennial Ball will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois. One thousand people are expected to attend this grand tribute to Socrates School's rich history. The theme of the Centennial Ball is Reunite, Reminisce, Revitalize.

In the early 1900's the city of Chicago experienced an exponential growth in its population, fueled in great part, by the arrival of immigrants from central, eastern, and southern Europe. Among these immigrants were the Greeks, forming the largest Greek community in the nation at that time. By 1897, the Greeks had established the first permanent Greek Orthodox Parish in the Midwest and third in the U.S., the parish of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Wishing to instill their language, cultural ideals and faith in their children and to perpetuate these values in their newly adopted homeland, the Holy Trinity Parish began offering Greek language classes on Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings in 1907 at Hull House, the institution founded by the great philanthropist and philhellene, Jane Addams. This was the precursor to the first full time Greek day school in the United States, Socrates School. Socrates Greek School opened its doors in 1908 at 742 Ada Street. In 1917 it became Socrates Greek American School, when an English curriculum was added. In the years that followed, Socrates would become a significant influence in the lives of countless children of Greek descent, as well as in Chicago's Greek American community at large. Notable alumni include Judge James A. Geroulis and Dr. Steven Economou, former Chair of the Department of Surgery at Rush University Medical Center. Since that time, Socrates School has undergone several relocations and has evolved into an integral part of the Hellenic American Academy, located in Deerfield, Illinois. From its humble beginnings at Hull House, to its evolution as a cornerstone of the Hellenic American Academy, it has steadfastly fulfilled its mission of providing high quality education, while instilling the ideals of the Hellenic language, culture, and heritage, as well as the Greek Orthodox faith.

The Parish of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church founded the Hellenic American Academy in 2004 to develop the pre-eminent educational and cultural center for Hellenism in the United States. The Hellenic American Academy's mission is to cultivate the body, mind and soul of its students through academic, cultural and spiritual programs, and to instill a sense of pride in and devotion to Hellenism and Orthodoxy. It includes Socrates Greek American School, a full time, dual language day school serving pre-K through 8th grades as well as part time Greek language instruction through the 12th grade level.

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If you would like additional information about Socrates School's Centennial Celebration, please call Dr. Spiro Karras, committee chairman at 847-732-7268 or e-mail him at drkarras@drkarras.com