

Paula Antonakos

	Interviewee: Paula Antonakos-Boswell, Calvin park public library Kingston, Ontario, Duration: 33:00, April 1st 2017		
	Interviewed by: George Katinas; Summary compiled by: Athina Peidou		
min:sec	File:	Place	Description
Interview Time	Chronology	Place	Description
0:31			Paula is the secretary of the community and assists with the KGHP.
0:51			Her name is Paula Antonakos-Boswell, and her Greek name is Polyxeni
1:05			It is the third time Paula has served as the secretary of the community, which she has been a part of for 31 years. Right now she is in the second year of her third term. She enjoys the position despite the high workload.
1:35			Paula aims to increase the communication channels of the community. Now, the community has a website, newsletter, and more.
1:42			Paula's objective is to fundraise for the community, aiming to obtain grants. She wants to initiate a Greek festival someday, and has been involved with various projects such as the KGHP.
2:04			Paula enjoys teaching Greek School and Sunday School the most, and has been doing so since 2000. It is her favourite volunteering activity she is involved with.
2:42			Paula was born in Montreal. Paula's family returned to Greece when she was 3 years old and they all finally returned to Canada, in the Ottawa valley, when Paula was 8 years old.
3:05			When Paula came to Canada, she barely spoke English, although she learned it quickly from her teachers. Her parents were very poor, but hardworking.
3:18			Paula's father's name is Angelos and her mother's name is Vasiliki.
3:30			Paula's parents came to Canada with only 10 dollars - the "proverbial ten dollars"... They were both members of big families in Greece. They were the first ones to come.
3:43			Paula's mother immigrated to Montreal to work when she was 18 and when her parents asked her to return to Greece to get married, when they thought she was of marrying age, she returned.
3:55			Paula's father comes from Amikli and her mother comes from a village called Gounari.
4:01			Paula's parents got married on January 10th 1963.
4:08			The couple decided to move to Canada, at especially her mother's insistence. They worked at various restaurants in Montreal and then at Winchester they worked for some relatives. Finally, they moved to the Ottawa valley where they leased to own restaurants, until they ended up owning their own restaurant. They worked hard and made many restaurants until they became wealthy.
4:42			They worked very hard until their 70s. They are still very active.
5:14			The way her parents raised her influenced how she cares about the Greek

			community. Paula is very passionate about maintaining the Greek culture, religion and language.
5:29			Paula attended Greek church and Greek school while she was young.
5:49			She was attending Greek school every Saturday and volunteered there. Paula's parents still volunteer at Brockville church.
6:00			At the age of 13 Paula was president of the Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA). She represented the Brockville area. They instilled this passion in her, which goes all the way back to Greece where her ancestors were avid churchgoers.
6:21			Paula's great grandfather built the church in Amikli. There is still a plaque with his name, "Sarantos Antonakos". She visits the church and the plaque, along with the cemetery, whenever she goes back.
7:22			<i>How was it, growing up the daughter of Greek immigrants?</i> She has learned a lot as she's grown up, but she used to find it frustrating. Paula's parents were very strict. The children were not allowed to date.
7:40			They had social contact with the rest of the Greek community. They attended dances, for example. But still very strict.
7:51			Even as an undergraduate student Paula had to return home every weekend, to work at their restaurant.
8:00			Paula's parents encouraged education. They also wanted their children to take over their restaurant. As they aged, they began to realize that this wasn't an easy life for them, so they changed. When all her friends went to Ogdensburg (lower drinking age), her parents would give her the midnight shift so she would have no opportunity to do so.
8:59			Paula worked very hard. She started working at the age of 10. She was washing dishes and working at the cash register.
9:19			At the age of 14 she took over payroll. She didn't enjoy being a waitress nor cooking, so she was working keeping the books and managing payrolls. That led to her interest in accounting and economics.
10:01			Paula raises her children with a very similar model as she was raised. She gives them more freedom than she had, although they are still regularly frustrated with their lack of freedom.
10:46			Paula believes in communication and honesty. Religion and culture have influenced the way she raises her children. That is her biggest influence on how she teaches her children.
11:31			Paula is married to a non-Greek.
11:44			Paula moved to Kingston in 1986 to study accounting, finance and economics. She met her husband during her post-secondary studies.
12:12			Paula's family at the beginning was a bit uncertain about her husband as he was not Greek, but once they met him they liked him. It still brought a lot of confusion and pressure into the relationship.
12:18			Paula got married in 1994 at the Greek church of Kingston.
12:24			Her two daughters were baptized in the Greek church as well.
12:52			They respected each other's cultures. They grew up to understand her parents' context. It was difficult, though, to love someone and to be told you need to marry someone Greek. Now, she tells her children they must marry for love.

			<i>Is there something rewarding about marrying a non-Greek?</i> Of course. It's introduction to new cultures.
13:57			Paula's husband comes from a Scottish background. His grandfather, Alexander Boswell, was a Scottish orphan. She has done research on his family as well as hers, even going back to Scotland to find his homestead.
14:49			Learning the culture of many societies is Paula's priority.
15:05			Paula's older daughter travels a lot. This year she will go to Serbia to study ethnography for 2 months.
15:28			Paula pursued business school education in Kingston. She has been working as a public servant for the last 28 years.
15:54			Paula loved Greek studies. She took a classics course in Queens.
17:00			In the classics course Paula found out that her professor had visited her village of Amikli. He asked her to stay until the end of class, and he returned with a book with the history of the village written by Sarantos Antonakos, Paula's uncle. It turns out he had visited her home in Amikli where an elderly lady had sold him the book; he was describing her grandmother, Polixeni. She found that fascinating. Even though she has a business school background, Classics is important to her.
17:19			Paula has 1 brother, Panagiotis (Peter) and 1 sister, Melpomeni (Melba). Paula is the oldest.
17:47			Paula is very close to her siblings. They have a great family connection. She instilled that in her own family, and they are all close-knit.
18:04			Paula visits Greece very often. It is very important for Paula. She visits her relatives. She visits museums and feels a real connection to her roots.
18:48			Once Paula retires she wants to return to Greece and teach English as a second language for a part of the year.
19:15			Paula has been a member of the community for 31 years so far.
19:33			Everyone calls Paula Theia (aunt) Paula. She enjoys working on different projects within the community.
20:18			Paula wants the community to thrive and survive for many generations. She loves it and wants to stay with it.
20:21			Paula plans to stay in Kingston and travel to Greece often.
20:51			There are challenges for Paula within the community, as within any group. There are misunderstandings that need clarifications. She is in an important role and of course makes mistakes but she self-checks and tries for the best.
21:40			She works on various projects. She wants to be a good role model. A problem she has is she finds many people apathetic to a lot of projects. But if young parents see Paula's involvement with the community, they might be influenced to be more active as well. If she influences one person to be more involved, she is happy.
22:37			Paula's husband cooks a lot of Greek foods like lentil soup (fakes), okra (mpamies), lamb chops etc. He contacts her mother and asks for recipes; he cooks the way Paula's mother cook. He makes traditional food.

23:24			Paula's parents worked 12 to 15 hours per day. She and her siblings were left alone at a very young age, left to take care of her siblings. Paula's mother was a great cook.
23:57			Although her mother worked that hard she always had a homemade meal for her children, so they could always be eating healthy. They brought olive oil from their olive orchards in Greece, which they still receive. They still have land there.
24:51			(brought pictures) Paula has many pictures of her parents. She has a picture of her parents' travel to Canada by ship. They came to Pier 21 in Halifax. This photo is from when they made their first stop in Italy to pick up more immigrants on the way to Halifax.
25:35			Photos are black and white. They seem very happy.
25:50			They were dressed very meticulously for their travels. She read that Greek and Italian immigrants were always well dressed for their trip. As we can see in the photo, they are arm in arm, happy, and they are full of hope.
26:43			Paula's uncle, Sarantos, who wrote the book, was an archeologist. He inspired in Paula a love for ancient Greece.
27:39			Underneath houses in Greece there are pots and instruments from ancient Greece, and so if people were digging around their houses they had to wait for the archaeologist to clear it. She remembers standing there outside a house while archaeologists were digging. Sarantos brought Paula along and told her many stories.
28:04			Paula has an interest in sharing her love for family trees and for teaching people how to dig for genealogical information. She is working on a big family tree with many generations going up.
28:30			In 1995 in Greece, Paula found an old black and white photo with her great grandfather Sarantos, her great grandmother Polytimi (they were at the bottom of the picture) and above them there was Paula's great-great grandfather Antonis and her great-great grandmother Stamatiki.
29:11			The great-great grandparents were painted. It was beautiful. She couldn't take it back with her, but she took pictures of it.
29:31			She took all these pictures and made a big family tree of her family. She gave it to her nieces and nephews.
29:54			When Paula gave her uncles the books, they were all fascinated.
30:03			Paula's great grandparents went to Ellis Island. Then they returned to Greece afterwards, but some of their children were born in America. One of their children, George, being an American citizen, returned to America and joined the air force. He was bombed by the end of the war, as he was a bombardier.
31:07			There is a picture with Paula's Great-uncle George, wearing the air force uniform. He was very handsome.
31:37			He was buried in Belgium. All the American soldiers have a white cross.
32:08			When Paula returns to Greece she wants to find out information about her great-great grandmother.
32:18			She also wants to travel in the States, to Georgia to meet her great-uncle George's children.

