

**Speaker: Chairman Stamatakis
Event: Papadakis Service at St. Luke
Date of Event: 14 April 2009**

I am Manny Stamatakis, a Drexel trustee and chairman of the Drexel University College of Medicine. Eliana has asked me to say a few words about Taki, my dear friend. I am honored to do so.

The enormous congregation here today and the phenomenal outpouring of affection and condolences reflect the love everyone had for Taki.

Today we mourn... we remember.... but mostly we celebrate Taki's life. Constantine "Taki" Papadakis, a wonderful name for a wonderful man.

It is almost impossible to sum up a life so well lived, so full of love, so full of passion and compassion. I can't capture the essence of Taki's life in a few minutes, any more than one can capture the spirit of a great novel in a one-page summary. It's the small details, the day to day moments that we shared that will forever be ingrained in my memory.

I first met Taki and Eliana 13 years ago when they moved to Philadelphia. I received a call from a friend who invited me to dinner to meet the new president of Drexel University.

By the end of dinner, I felt like I had known Taki for 10 years. There was an instant connection. Like almost anyone who met him, I knew immediately that this was a special individual.

Soon after, Taki called me to “get involved with Drexel.” I explained to him that I was a committed Penn State alumnus. “Of course,” Taki responded. And then he proceeded to explain what he wanted me to do. Before I knew it, he had me thinking about Drexel everyday. Thirteen years later, Drexel is part of my daily life. My years with Taki have been the best of my life. Because of him I came to love Drexel and what it stands for.

Taki was bigger than life itself. He was a true renaissance man, and a visionary who could see opportunities where others only saw risk. He had the courage to undertake transformational initiatives. And he had the ability, passion and conviction to successfully execute.

It was the combination of Taki's corporate experience and his love of education, his focus on "the business of higher education," that led to the outstanding growth and improvement that Drexel has enjoyed during Taki's tenure.

Those who worked with him will remember Taki for his integrity, his honesty, his vision, his persistence, his compassion, his charm, his positive and outgoing spirit. The success of his partnership with the students, faculty, staff and trustees of Drexel is evident in the way the University has prospered, and the esteem in which it is held today.

I can't remember a single instance when Taki complained about the day to day stresses of running Drexel. He was always quick to deflect praise to his hardworking employees. Taki never viewed his success as an individual accomplishment but rather as a team effort. Great men usually have strong enemies and great friends. Taki only had great friends.

Taki's talents were much sought after by civic, public and charitable organizations. And his contributions to our region,

to higher education and to causes throughout the world are evidenced by the more than 150 awards and honors he received. Taki Papadakis will be missed by so many.....

But Taki's greatest love was for his wonderful family, Eliana and Maria.

Taki first met Eliana Apostilides, who was from Cincinnati, when she came to Greece on vacation. It was no coincidence that Taki soon came to Cincinnati to begin his passionate pursuit of both his master's degree and his beautiful Eliana. Thirty-nine years later, look at the life they made together.

Taki's greatest achievement and his true pride and joy...was his daughter Maria. His love for her was obvious every time her name was mentioned. I know that one of his happiest and proudest moments was when he awarded Maria her Drexel degree last June.

As Taki said at the William Penn dinner when he was honored last year, "The one-way ticket from Athens to Cincinnati remains the best investment of my life, thanks to Eliana and Maria."

For me, Taki Papadakis is living proof that one person can make a difference. In Taki's case, it was a big difference.

So Taki, I know you are strong and happy in your new life, and probably looking down on us right now. I hope we did okay by you with this celebration. I promise you there will be much more to come. It is important that your life here never be forgotten.

As I think of you right now, you are probably on a stage in heaven, getting ready to sing the greatest aria ever.

Taki, my brother, we miss you here. But I know that someday we will all be together again.