

**UNVEILING OF THE STATUE “THE SPIRIT OF  
MARATHON”**

**In Hopkinton, Mass., on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2006**

(a 5 minute speech)

Ever since I was a little boy and conscious of what was being discussed around me, the words Marathon, Boston, Hopkinton, Heartbreak Hill, Newton, Johnny Kelly, Harry Demeter and Jerry Nason were ringing in my ears all the time.

For me, to be here today in Hopkinton and Boston, in this very special occasion, is more than a dream come true.

Stylios Kyriakides was an exceptional man.

Not only he was a great long distance runner, champion of Greece, the Balkans, England, the US and many other countries, an Olympian in 1936 in Berlin and 1948 in London, but most of all he was a compassionate human being, who dedicated all his life into serving his country, amateur sport especially for the benefit of youth and to helping his fellow men.

He came to Boston in 1946 almost one month before the race, after not having run for almost 6 years, emancipated and alone, with a dream to win the most famous marathon in the world and to use his victory to get attention for his war-ravaged country and the starving Greek people.

With the help of the Demeter family and the Greek American community he gets ready for the big day.

Through out the race he held in his hand a piece of paper, given to him by his friend Harry Demeter before the race,

**which said, on one side “WIN OR DIE” and the other side “WE ARE VICTORIOUS”, phrases used by ancient Greeks before they went to war and after their victory.**

**When he crossed the finish line he shouts “FOR GREECE”.**

**After his victory, Kyriakides has many offers to turn professional, as well as an offer from MGM to take part in movies. all of which he declines. His aims are different.**

**He stays in the US for about a month and visits cities in the north west of the US, publicizing the problems of Greece, asking for help.**

**He achieves his goals with the help of the very generous American people, who collect and send to Greece not only a large financial assistance but also most needed material help, medicines and food.**

**The American people named this assistance the “Kyriakides package”.**

**On his return to Greece, he is welcomed in Athens by one million Greeks as a “HERO”.**

**In 1947, with the civil war still raging in Greece, he comes back to run in Boston at the age of 37, not so much to win (he finished 9<sup>th</sup>) but to try to get financial help and training equipment, so that the Greek national athletic team can participate in the 1948 London Olympics.**

**Once again the American people respond and are generous. He goes back to Greece with 50000 dollars and most needed athletic equipment.**

**He retires in 1948 and spends all his free time for reviving amateur athletics in post war Greece, as an official of the**

**Greek Amateur Association and especially in organizing sports programs for the young people.**

**In 1954, in the difficult economic years after the end of WW II and the Greek civil war, that ended in 1949, he single handedly builds the Filothei truck and the local Athletic Club, that is now named after him and has since become a popular training ground for the young people of the area.**

**Until his death in 1987 at the age of 77, the number of his bib when he won Boston, Kyriakides life is full of incredible stories of generosity, kindness, unselfishness and hard work for his fellow men.**

**He has left behind him a legacy that all people should try to learn from.**

**I want to thank Jim Davis and NB for their incredible generosity for the two statues, the one standing in the town of Marathon and the one we see here today.**

**I want to thank the Selectmen and the people of Hopkinton for this great honor.**

**I want to thank Mico Kaufman for creating a master piece. I think the whole concept of the statue “THE SPIRIT OF MARATHON” is historically and esthetically brilliant, and captivates perfectly the spirit of Kyriakides victory in 1946.**

**I want to thank Nick Tsiotos and Andy Dabilis for reviving the Kyriakides story and bringing it to the attention of a wide audience, with their book “Running with Pheidippides”.**

**I want to thank NBC, for producing the documentary about Stylianos Kyriakides that was aired in the US and worldwide during the ATHENS OLYMPICS and which won the EMMY AWARD as the “best sports documentary of 2004” and tells the story of this man and his achievements.**

**Most of all I want to thank Susan Julian Gates, whose enthusiasm and belief in the Kyriakides story, her incredible drive, her energy and her unique personality has made so many things happen.**

**It was the idea of Susan and I, almost two years ago when the statue of the “THE SPIRIT OF MARATHON” was being unveiled in the town of Marathon, to bring the historic cities of Marathon and Hopkinton together, as sister cities. We contacted officials of both sides at the time and put our idea to them.**

**I understand that discussions are now going on between the two city councils and I hope that an agreement can be finalized soon.**

**For me this is a must.**

**Finally I want to greet all the people present here today and thank them for their kind participation to celebrate this wonderful occasion with us.**